

January 22, 2012 by Steve Brandon



# Here Comes Jesus

## Mark 1:9-20

In His baptism, ...

1. Jesus Identified With Us (verses 9-11)

In His temptation, ...

2. Jesus Conquered For Us (verses 12-13)

In His preaching, ...

3. Jesus Leads Us to Life (verse 14-15)

In His calling the disciples, ...

4. Jesus Calls Us to Join Him (verses 15-20)

In our exposition of this book, we have come to Mark, chapter 1, verses 9-20. Let's read it now.

Mark 1:9-20

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

Immediately the Spirit \*impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.

Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.

Now, this is a big chunk of Scripture with lots happening. We see the baptism of Jesus in verses 9-11. We see the temptation of Jesus in verses 12-13. We see Jesus beginning to preach in verses 14-15. We see Jesus calling His first disciples in verses 16-20. My message this morning is entitled, "Here Comes Jesus".

My tendency in preaching through these verses would be to take each incident by itself and look at it and gaze upon it and understand it. And then, move on to the next incident the next week. And yet, Mark pushes us to go a bit more quickly. Four times in our passage, Mark repeats the word, "immediately." 1:10: "Immediately coming up out of the water..."; 1:12: "Immediately the Spirit \*impelled Him..."; 1:18: "Immediately they left their nets and followed Him."; 1:20: "Immediately He called them...".

In fact, this word, "euthus" in the Greek, occurs some 11 times in the first chapter alone. <sup>[1]</sup>The feel that you get from Mark is a sense of urgency, a sense that drives us on to move quickly through these words. And so, we will drive on to look at these four events in the life of our Lord -- His baptism, His temptation, His preaching, and His disciples.

**Let's begin with His baptism.** Verse 9, ...

Mark 1:9

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

In Mark's gospel, Jesus came from nowhere to arrive on the scene. There is no mention of His genealogy. There is no mention of His birth. There is no mention of His parents. We merely get a reference to the hometown of Jesus: the city of Nazareth, which is so obscure that it isn't even mentioned in the Old Testament. Nazareth is in the region of Galilee, north of Jerusalem, some 60 miles or so. It didn't have the greatest reputation in the world. In fact, Nathanael said of Nazareth, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). But, this is where Jesus came from to be baptized by John in the Jordan river.

Now, if you are anything like me, immediately a big question comes into your mind: "Why was Jesus baptized?" When John appeared in the wilderness. He was preaching a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (1:4). In other words (as we looked at last week), John baptized those who were repentant, those who acknowledged their sins, those who were turning away from their sins, those who were making a turn in their life to follow the Lord, rather than their own ways. This is clear from verse 5, "they were being baptized by him in the

Jordan River, confessing their sins." And yet, when it comes to Jesus, he "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). He had no sin to confess.

This is the clear testimony of the Scripture. 1 John 3:5 says, "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin." 1 Peter 2:22 says, "[Jesus] committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth." And Hebrews 4:15 tells us, "we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." Do you remember when Pilate sentenced Jesus to death? It wasn't because Jesus had committed some crime. In fact, it was because of the crowds that forced Pilate's hand. He, himself, said to the crowds, "I find no guilt in [Him]" (Luke 23:4). And when he finally handed Jesus over to be crucified, he washed his hands in the front of the crowd saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood" (Matt. 27:24).

So, why was Jesus baptized by John, if John's baptism was a "baptism of repentance" (verse 4) and Jesus had no reason for repentance? Mark gives no explanation. He just merely mentions it and goes on, "Jesus ... was baptized by John in the Jordan. ... Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him." I debate even going into this discussion, because Mark doesn't give it a second thought.

And yet, it's a question in my mind. It's probably a question in your mind. And when you read Matthew's account, you find out that it was a question in John's mind as well. When Jesus came to be baptized by John, "John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and You come to me?'" (Matt. 3:14). John knew how his baptism didn't work for Jesus. John knew that Jesus was far more righteous than he was. And so, he sought to prevent Jesus from being baptized.

Yet, the response of Jesus was enough to convince John that it was okay for him to baptize Jesus. Jesus said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). Jesus saw His baptism as being a "righteous" act that He wanted to do to fulfill all righteous requirements. Obviously, the baptism of Jesus was unique. At no other baptism did the heavens open up (verse 10). At no other baptism did the Spirit descend like a dove (verse 10). At no other baptism did God speak from the heavens (verse 11). And so the baptism of Jesus was unique. It was "to fulfill all righteousness."

Here's the key to the baptism of Jesus.

In His baptism, ...

#### 1. Jesus Identified With Us (verses 9-11)

That's the takeaway that we need from the baptism of Jesus. He identified with us. It wasn't that Jesus needed to be baptized for His own sake. It's that Jesus needed to be baptized for our sake!

In other words, when Jesus came into the flesh, it wasn't merely that He would put on flesh and blood like we have. But, it was more. It was that He would entirely enter into our existence -- sharing our struggles, sharing our burdens, and directing us in the paths of righteousness.

One path of righteousness is baptism, which is a symbol of repentance. And so, I repeat it again. If you have repented of your sins and trusted in Christ, but have not been baptized, come and talk with me. It's important for you to follow in His steps. Jesus was baptized, "to fulfill all righteousness" as a model and an example for us to follow. I'm not going to force you. I'm not going to push you. But, I do want to press upon you the importance of baptism.

In verses 10-11, we see God's approval of the baptism of Jesus.

Mark 1:10-11

Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

While Jesus was still sopping wet with the water of the Jordan River, He looked up to the heavens and saw "the heavens opening and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove." Again, a question ought to come to your mind. "What is this? What does this mean?"

First of all, the opening of the heavens "reflects a metaphor for God's breaking into human experience".<sup>[2]</sup> Several times in the Scripture we read of the sky opening up. In each instance, God comes down for judgment and salvation. Isaiah 64:1 says, "Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down." Judge your enemies and save Your people. In Revelation 6:12, when the sixth seal was opened, "the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up" and God was coming to judge the world in His wrath (Rev. 6:16-17). And in so doing, He seals and saves his people (Rev. 7).

Indeed, that's what took place when Jesus was baptized. The heavens opened, signifying God's breaking into human experience.

The second thing that we see is "the Spirit like a dove descending upon [Jesus]" (verse 10). I believe that this is the anointing power of God that came upon Jesus. In the Old Testament, the Spirit came upon people to empower them, such as Samson (Judges 13:24), Saul (1 Sam. 11:6), and David (1 Sam. 16:13). The same with Jesus. This is what took place at His baptism. Peter would later say that "God anointed [Jesus] with the Holy Spirit and with power, and ... God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). This anointing took place at His baptism. What's particularly encouraging here to us is that Jesus conquered in the flesh the same way that we are to conquer in the flesh, ... by relying upon the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Thirdly, the voice coming from heaven is none other than God, the Father, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased." This phrase sets up the entire ministry of Jesus. God set His seal of approval upon His Son. God approved of Jesus' baptism. God approved of everything that He had done. God would approve of everything that He will do.

This phrase draws us back to one of the servant songs in the book of Isaiah. In Isaiah 42:1, we read, "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him." He is the Servant who will suffer for our sins (Isaiah 53). He will carry our sorrows (Is. 53:4). He will bear our griefs (Is. 53:4). He will take the iniquity of us all upon Him (Is. 53:6). He is the servant who will save.

Now, before we leave this scene, just a few more comments. Note the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit all together in one place. That's significant.

Jesus is no Bruce Wayne -- wealthy business man by day, but Batman by night. Jesus is no Clark Kent -- mild mannered reporter by day, but Superman by night. Such is the heresy of modalism, which says that God the Father is God the Son is God the Spirit, just in different forms. This doctrine, by the way, is alive and well today. Steer clear from it. Because, we see something different here. We see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all present in the same place at the same time. We believe in One God, but three persons.

My second comment is this: when the Spirit came upon Jesus, it didn't change Him at the moment. There are those who say that Jesus became the Son at His baptism. In a sense, God "adopted" Jesus at His baptism. This is called, "Adoptionism." It too is heretical. Jesus wasn't adopted as a son at His baptism. Jesus was always the Son. When the Spirit came upon Jesus at His baptism, He anointed Him for His messianic role.

In His baptism, Jesus Identified With Us (verses 9-11).

**Let's look now at His temptation.** I'll give you the working of my point later. First, I want to work through the temptation. We see this in verses 12-13.

Mark 1:12-13

Immediately the Spirit \*impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.

Again, much can be said here. It took Matthew 11 verses to tell this story (Matthew 4:1-11). It took Luke 13 verses to tell this story (Luke 4:1-13). Mark tells it in two verses.

Matthew and Luke both focus their attention upon some specific temptations that came upon Jesus. Mark gives us no particular examples of temptation. But, what Mark tells us is certainly helpful.

We see here in verse 12, that the Spirit "impelled" Jesus to go into the wilderness. Literally, the Spirit "threw Jesus out into the wilderness." The NIV's usage of "sent Him out" doesn't quite capture the force (or even violence) of this word. The ESV's "drove Him out" is good. The Spirit pushed Jesus out into the wilderness. What a way to start your ministry! Jesus was baptized, and identified as the Son of God. He was anointed as the Messiah by the Holy Spirit. And instantly is driven to the wilderness to face a very difficult trial.

The path that Jesus underwent is the path that all of God's servants will undertake. The anonymous poet said it well, ...

When God wants to drill a man,  
And thrill a man,  
And skill a man  
When God wants to mold a man  
To play the noblest part;

When He yearns with all His heart  
To create so great and bold a man  
That all the world shall be amazed,  
Watch His methods, watch His ways!

How He ruthlessly perfects  
Whom He royally elects!  
How He hammers him and hurts him,  
And with mighty blows converts him

Into trial shapes of clay which  
Only God understands;  
While his tortured heart is crying  
And he lifts beseeching hands!

How He bends but never breaks  
When his good He undertakes;  
How He uses whom He chooses,  
And which every purpose fuses him;  
By every act induces him  
To try His splendor out-  
God knows what He's about.

-Anonymous

And that's what was happening with Jesus. His being driven into the wilderness was all calculated. It was calculated to test Jesus and to strengthen Jesus. Hebrews 5:8 says that, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." In His suffering, Jesus demonstrated His strength.

And here was Jesus -- all alone in the wilderness. At His weakest point, being attacked by the strongest foe in the universe, Jesus comes out victorious.

Now, it is interesting here to note that Mark makes no mentions of any details of what transpired in the wilderness. Only that it was rugged (the wild beasts were there in the wilderness). Only that Jesus was being strengthened by angels in the wilderness. Mark merely says that He was there for "forty days being tempted by Satan." The sense that you get here is that he faced forty days of powerful temptation by the tempter, Himself. Matthew and Luke show us three temptations that took place during the end of His forty days in the wilderness.

But, Mark identifies that much more was going on than the three temptations that we know about. Jesus faced the onslaught of the devil every day for forty days. And though it doesn't explicitly say it here, we may safely say that Jesus succumbed to none of the temptations brought by Satan, thereby demonstrating His power and authority over Satan. Jesus is qualified to be our Messiah.

Or, as I have chosen to say it, ...

In His temptation, ...

## 2. Jesus Conquered For Us (verses 12-13)

This is the great reality of the sinless life of Jesus. "Since He, Himself, was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). Jesus knows what it's like to be tempted. He can sympathize with our weakness, as He was "tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). And He can come to our aid in our own temptations (Heb. 2:18).

By way of application, this is easy. "Draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that [you] may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). He has conquered Satan's deepest attacks. He can surely help us in when we are under attack. In your sin and in your temptation, go to Jesus. He has conquered!

**Thirdly, let us look at His preaching.** We see His preaching in verses 14 and 15, ...

Mark 1:14-15

Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

So now we come to the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus. The morning star has faded, and now the sun comes into full view! The ministry of Jesus took Him initially to "Galilee" some 80 miles north of Jerusalem. He knew the area well, as he grew up in the region of Galilee.

Verse 14 begins with a time element. When John had been taken into custody. There's a vast amount of chronology in the life of Christ that Mark skips over, like about a year of His ministry (John 1:19-4:45) when the ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist intersected. But, Mark is merely getting to the point. And the point is the message of Jesus.

Jesus came "preaching." This was His task. This is what He was called to do. Look over to verse 37. After days of healing many, Jesus was off praying in a secluded place (verse 35). The disciples came to him and Peter said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You" (verse 37). Jesus said to them "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for" (verse 38). This was the primary task of Jesus. He came to preach. "And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons" (verse 39).

And Jesus had a message. In verse 14, it is identified as "the gospel of God" (verse 14). In verse 15, we see a summary of the message. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (verse 15).

The beginning of the gospel has begun. The time is right. All has been prepared. The prophecies of John the Baptist have come about. Jesus has been identified as the one to come. And his message is simple: "The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel."

This is the same message that John the Baptist preached. He preached a "baptism of repentance." In fact, not only was this John's message, but it has really been the message of God's people from long ago. J. C. Ryle says, "This is that old sermon which all the faithful witnesses of God have continually preached, from the very beginning of the world. From Noah down to the present day the burden of their sermon has always been the same: 'Repent and believe.'" [\[3\]](#)

But, Jesus adds a few things to this message. He adds some context. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." This was not the message of the faithful from the beginning of the world. They had been saying, "The time is coming!" But, Jesus now says, "The time is fulfilled." What was anticipated in the Old Covenant had now dawned. Jesus, the Messiah, was now on the scene.

These words bring an urgency to the message. Do you remember the message that Jonah brought to Nineveh? "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4). The time frame brought an urgency to the people of Nineveh, and they repented. Do you remember what Manasseh (the wicked king of Judah) did when taken captive by the Babylonians? In a Babylonian jail, He repented and believed in the Lord (2 Chron. 33:11-13). Well, there was an urgency in the days of Jesus to repent. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." "The kingdom is near." Or, you might say it this way: "the king is here!" It's time to repent!

About a year and a half ago, our refrigerator at home started to make this "clunk"-ing noise. It would turn on to cool the unit, and suddenly, we would hear a "clunk!" I looked up the problem on Google, and found that the problem could cause the refrigerator to die soon or it could endure for a few years longer. Well, we waited about a year, and the "clunk" noise was still happening. Then all of a sudden, about six months ago, it got much louder. We heard, "Whirrrrrrr...CLUNK!" when the unit turned on to cool.

So, I was writing a blog post [\[4\]](#), thinking, "Well, we'll just keep using our refrigerator -- stretching this out as long as we can -- until it suddenly stops working, and then we will rush out and buy a new one. This new one, will be sort of an emergency purchase, and we won't really get the one we want, but that is what we will do. We will lose all of our food in the process, probably, too..." And, really, what I realized was that was a silly idea. We knew the problem was coming. We knew the fridge would soon die. But, we were going to wait to act on it? Why? So, instead, we went out and bought a new refrigerator that we liked, and had no "emergency purchase" and no lost food in the process. Now our new fridge just says, "Whirrrrrrr..."

Here is Jesus. When He says, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand", He is saying, "Whirrrrr...CLUNK!!!!" The time is here! It's time to repent! Don't wait another day. Today is the day. The time of procrastination is over. Don't put it off another day, because repentance "tomorrow" is not repentance. "Tomorrow" never comes.

The time of procrastination is over. The king is here! The kingdom is at hand. So, repent and believe in the gospel -- today! And do not delay. God doesn't tell us to repent and believe for no good reason. God tells us to repent and believe because it is good for us. It will lead us to life. It has always led people to life. It will always lead people to life. This is the wording of my third point:

In His preaching, ...

### 3. Jesus Leads Us to Life (verse 14-15)

When Nineveh repented, God gave them life. When Manasseh repented, God gave him life. When the people of Judah repented at the hearing of John the Baptist, God gave them life. When Job repented, God gave him life. When Israel repented after the failure at Ai, God gave them life. When David repented after his moral failure, God gave him life. When Judah repented after the exile, God gave them life.

This has always been the case. Repentance and faith are always the path to life.

Near lunch time in our house, when the lunch has been prepared and it's time for us to eat, there will be a call to all of us, "Come and eat!" That's what this call is like. It's a call to come and feast at His banquet. It's a call to enjoy the living waters that God supplies.

The call to "repent and believe" are really two sides of one coin. The first call is to turn away from something. The second call is to turn toward something. We repent from our sin. We believe in God. We turn from our sin. We trust in God.

Particularly here, Jesus calls his hearers to believe in the gospel. That is, believe in the good news. The good news is that the king has come. Jesus has come to redeem His people.

Surely, those who first heard the message didn't understand the full scope of Jesus' role as we understand it today. But, there was some understanding of hope. A new day was dawning in Jesus.

And today, we stand as much better than the disciples. We can see from the vantage point of history the fullness of this gospel that Jesus began preaching early in His ministry. We can see that Jesus didn't come to establish an earthly kingdom. Rather, Jesus came first to deal with our sin, thereby bringing the first-fruits of His kingdom to us. And He will come later to fully establish His kingdom. To use His own language, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

It was His life for our life. We were bound in our sin. But, by the grace of God, we were released from our sin through His blood. This is the best news that you will hear today. No, this is the best news that you will ever hear. That's why it's called, "the good news." There is hope for your life in Jesus Christ. Have you turned from your sin? Are you believing in the gospel? That is the path to life.

**Let's turn our attention now upon Jesus calling his first disciples** (our final point). We see this in verses 16-20.

Mark 1:16-20

As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.

Jesus will formally call his twelve disciples in chapter 3. But, here He begins to gain a following, by calling four fishermen.

It's a remarkable story. He's walking along the shore of the sea. He sees these men busy at their trade, either casting their nets into the sea or mending their nets so that they can cast them into the sea later. He calls out to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (verse 17). Immediately, these men follow Jesus.

I have always been amazed at the authority in the voice of Jesus. How can Jesus merely invite these men to follow Him and leave everything to follow Jesus? These men were fishermen by trade. It's all that they knew from childhood up. And they left it all. Simon and Andrew left their nets where they were and followed Jesus. James and John left their father Zebedee in the boat and followed Jesus.

It didn't take them any long conversation. It didn't take them a long time to really think about their decision. They left it all to follow Him.

Nor is this a one-time thing. Later, as recorded in Mark 2:14, Jesus will call Levi, the tax collector, to follow Him. Jesus called him at work, while in the tax booth. "And he got up and followed Him" (Mark 2:14). Can you imagine Jesus showing up at your work? If you are working retail, you are behind the counter. If you are working construction, you are on the job. If you are in an office environment, you are behind a desk. He enters into your work environment and says, "Follow Me", and you get up and walk out the door, leaving your nametag, your tools, your computer all behind.

How did Jesus do this? Certainly, His voice carried great authority with these men. But, also, I don't believe that this was their first encounter with Jesus. I believe that they had heard of Him. I believe that they had seen Him and known Him a bit.

But, there came a time of definitive action. Jesus was ready to call them. Jesus knew that they were ready to follow Him. And follow Him, they did.

And we can bring the application to us. Here's my point of application.

In His calling the disciples, ...

#### 4. Jesus Calls Us to Join Him (verses 15-20)

Now, of course, it's going to look different for each of us, because God doesn't expect everyone who follows Him to drop their jobs. Jesus had many followers who didn't forsake their occupations to follow him. But, the call to follow Jesus is radical. It's going to cost you everything.

Jesus says, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (Mark 8:34). This is the core of repentance: turning from your own life to follow His life. This extends to all who follow Jesus. He calls us to join Him.

But, look at the call of Jesus. It's not merely the call to join in following Him. It's a call to join in His work. The work of Jesus was to preach His message and gain followers. He calls others to join with Him in that work. "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."

God calls each of us to join Him in the work as well. See, as Jesus builds His church, it's not as if it's just Jesus at the top, and He calls everyone individually to follow Him by His audible voice. No, Jesus had His disciples who joined Him in the work. He works through men. At times, He sent them out to proclaim the good news of the kingdom. And when Jesus left the earth, it was only His disciples left on the earth to speak forth His name.

Jesus engages each of us in the work of spreading the good news. And people come into the kingdom as others -- like you and me -- go fishing for people. You cast your net into the sea by telling others of Christ. You bring them in, as God stirs in their heart. You direct them to Jesus, calling them to repent and believe in the gospel.

This is hard work. It takes some effort. It takes the effort of knowing people, talking with people, salting your speech with God-talk, and spreading the glories of His name. Will you join Him?

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For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] Mark 1:10, 12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 28, 29, 30, 42, 43.

[2] John Grassmick, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p.105.

[3] Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of Mark, p. 5.

[4] <http://enjoyinghisgrace.wordpress.com/2011/09/21/its-gonna-die>.