



The Ministry of John

Isaiah 40:1-5; Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 3:1-17;
Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-22

Isaiah 40:1-5

1 “Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God. **2** “Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the Lord’s hand Double for all her sins.” **3** A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. **4** “Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; **5** Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Malachi 4:5-6

5 “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. **6** He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”

Matthew
3:1-12



Mark 1:1-8

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. **2** As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, Who will prepare Your way; **3** The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight.’” **4** John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. **6** John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and his diet was locusts and wild honey. **7** And he was preaching, and saying, “After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. **8** I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”



Luke 3:1-18

Concerning John the Baptist

- **Note: Be careful to distinguish this man from other men named “John” in the Gospel records, especially from John the son of Zebedee, the author of the fourth Gospel.**
- **John the Baptizer is now about to commence his ministry as forerunner of the Messiah; the Gospel records have been silent concerning him since the time of his supernaturally enabled birth.**

John the Baptist

- Was a **PROPHET**; he conducted himself as a prophet, and he spoke with the boldness and authority of a prophet.
- Having heard no prophetic voice for more than 400 years, the nation of Israel responded hungrily to the ministry of this man.

J.W. Shepard, *Christ of the Gospels*

“...dressed in the rough sack-cloth customarily used by the poor, made of camel’s hair and bound about his loins with a leathern girdle. His food which was the simple diet of the ascetic, learned perhaps through contact with the Essenes or more probably after the example of Elijah, was of locusts, a kind of insect, and wild honey taken from the clefts of the rocks in this rugged wild desert country. He was a bold and fearless spirit, calling the people to repentance. He held aloof from the common life and was a dweller in the desert where he had been reared.”

His Character (from Shepard)

“...not a reed shaken by the wind,’ but unbendingly firm in deep and settled conviction; not ambitious nor self-seeking, but most humble in his self-estimate, discarding all claim but that of lowliest service, and pointing away from himself to Him Who was to come, and Whom as yet he did not even know. Above all, there was the deepest earnestness, the most utter disregard of man, the most firm belief in what he announced. For himself he sought nothing; for them he had only one absorbing thought: The Kingdom was at hand, the King was coming—let them prepare!”

His Message

1. The **KINGDOM** is at hand; the **KING** is soon to arrive!
2. Therefore, **REPENT** and prepare yourself to receive this blessed Messiah.
3. Come and be **BAPTIZED** as testimony that, in the midst of this wicked and perverse generation you have turned from your sin and accepted the truth concerning the Messiah, and that you are anxious to identify with this promised, soon-coming Christ.

Concerning John's Method

- John 1:33 –

I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to **baptize** in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’

βαπτίζω – baptizō

“to immerse, submerge; to make whelmed”

The Curious Thing:

**Ethnic Jews never
participated in
baptism.**



An Important Note

It was well understood that John's baptism did not accomplish repentance or acceptance of the individual before God; that rite was a testimony to the fact that such repentance—and thus, acceptance before God—had already become a reality in the individual's life.

It is a baptism of allegiance or identification *by believers*.

Josephus said:

“John...commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that washing would be acceptable to him, if they came to it, not in order to the putting away of some sins, but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified before-hand by righteousness.”

Concerning His Ministry

- John appeared about six months before Jesus, when he was about 30 years of age.
- Beginning near the Dead Sea, in the Judean wilderness, John travelled up the Jordan Rift, until he came to Beth-abara (“Bethany beyond Jordan”) where Jesus came to be baptized by him.
- The response of the Jews to the ministry of John the Baptist was overwhelming.



“Bethany Beyond
the Jordan”

Reasons for the Response

1. This was a time of great expectation; a number of factors had come together to convince the nation of Israel that her Messiah was soon to appear.
2. John was a genuine prophet, a voice from God; it had been a long time since a prophetic voice had been heard in Israel.
 - “Now at length a prophet’s voice is heard with that ring of assurance and note of authority that never fail to awaken a response in the souls of men” (David Smith, *The Days of His Flesh*).

Reasons for the Response

3. The nation of Israel was absolutely desperate for the appearance of Messiah.
4. John made a specific demand, and would accept only real obedience, even from the spiritual “leaders” of the Jews.



The Baptism of Jesus

The BIG Question

Why Was
Jesus
Baptized?

Deficient Responses

1. John and Jesus attended the event to gain attention of Jesus as He set in motion an ingenious plot of deceit and guile to convince the people of Israel that He was indeed the long-awaited Messiah.

John 1:31, 33

31 I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.

33 I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’

The Testimony of John Here

**Is best taken as insistence
that the first time Jesus and
John the Baptist had ever met
face to face was at the Jordan
when Jesus was baptized by
John.**

Alfred Edersheim,
The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah

“Again, and most important of all, we must not seek for any ulterior motive in the coming of Jesus to this baptism. He had no ulterior motive of any kind; it was an act of simple submissive obedience on the part of the Perfect One - and submissive obedience has no motive beyond itself. It asks no reasons; it cherishes no ulterior purpose.”

Deficient responses

2. Jesus came to the
representative of a
sinful race as He
designed for time to
symbolize His own
purification for sin.

Deficient Responses

3. Jesus intended His death to be a picture of His death, burial, and resurrection. He knew that it was going to be difficult to get His followers to grasp the concept, so He seized the opportunity to introduce the idea very early in His public ministry.

Deficient responses

4. Jesus' baptism is an act
of ceremonial purification
unto righteousness,
because Jesus here
commenced his ministry
as our Great High Priest.

Deficient responses

5. The sacramentalist view:
“He did not much get
cleansing by baptism as
important to it. He
sanctified the used
sacrament in the future.”

So, Smart Guy...

WHY WAS JESUS BAPTIZED?

**The simple reason Jesus went to
be baptized by John:**

**He knew it was the right thing
to do!**

The Events of Jesus' Baptism

1. Jesus traveled to the Jordan River specifically to be baptized by John the Baptist.

IMPORTANT: I believe it is best to conceive of the baptism of Jesus to be not the first act of His public ministry, but *the last act of His private life.*

- Luke 3:21 –

“Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized...”

The Events of Jesus' Baptism

2. John hesitated, but submitted when Jesus instructed him.

- **Matthew 3:14-15 –**

14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” **15** But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”
Then he permitted Him.

Matthew 3:16-17

16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, **17** and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

**Also Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22*

The Events of Jesus' Baptism

3. Notice that each Person of the Triune Godhead was involved in this event:
 - **The Father** spoke audibly from heaven
 - **The Son** was being baptized
 - **The Spirit** was seen descending on Jesus as a dove

Do We Have a Problem?

- **Matthew 3:17** – and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “**This is My beloved Son**, in whom I am well-pleased.”
- **Mark 1:11** – and a voice came out of the heavens: “**You are My beloved Son**, in You I am well-pleased.”
- **Luke 3:22** – and a voice came out of heaven, “**You are My beloved Son**, in You I am well-pleased.”

Important

As Jesus emerged from the waters of the Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him.

I believe this is the “theocratic anointing” of Jesus.



Numbers 27:18, 20

18 So the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him...**20** You shall put some of your authority on him, in order that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey him.

This Ministry of the Holy Spirit

- Is identified by Alva McClain as a “special enduement” which “had to do primarily with the regal functions of those who stood as mediators of the divine government of Israel.”
- John Bright connects this Holy Spirit enablement to the theocratic arrangement, which he defines as “the direct rule of God over His people through His designated representative.”

From R.C. Sproul:

“This distinctive ministry, which might be termed a ‘theocratic anointing,’ was a special intervention by the Holy Spirit by which an individual was equipped to fulfill some responsibility pertaining to the theocratic kingdom.”

Isaiah 11:1-3

1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. **2** The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. **3** And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear

Larry Pettegrew,
The New Covenant Ministry of the Holy Spirit

“The theocratic anointing was poured out on Christ at His baptism when the Spirit descended as a dove (Matthew 3:16). Christ Himself, in fact, explains His own ministry in this light shortly after His baptism when He read from the prophet Isaiah at the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-20).”

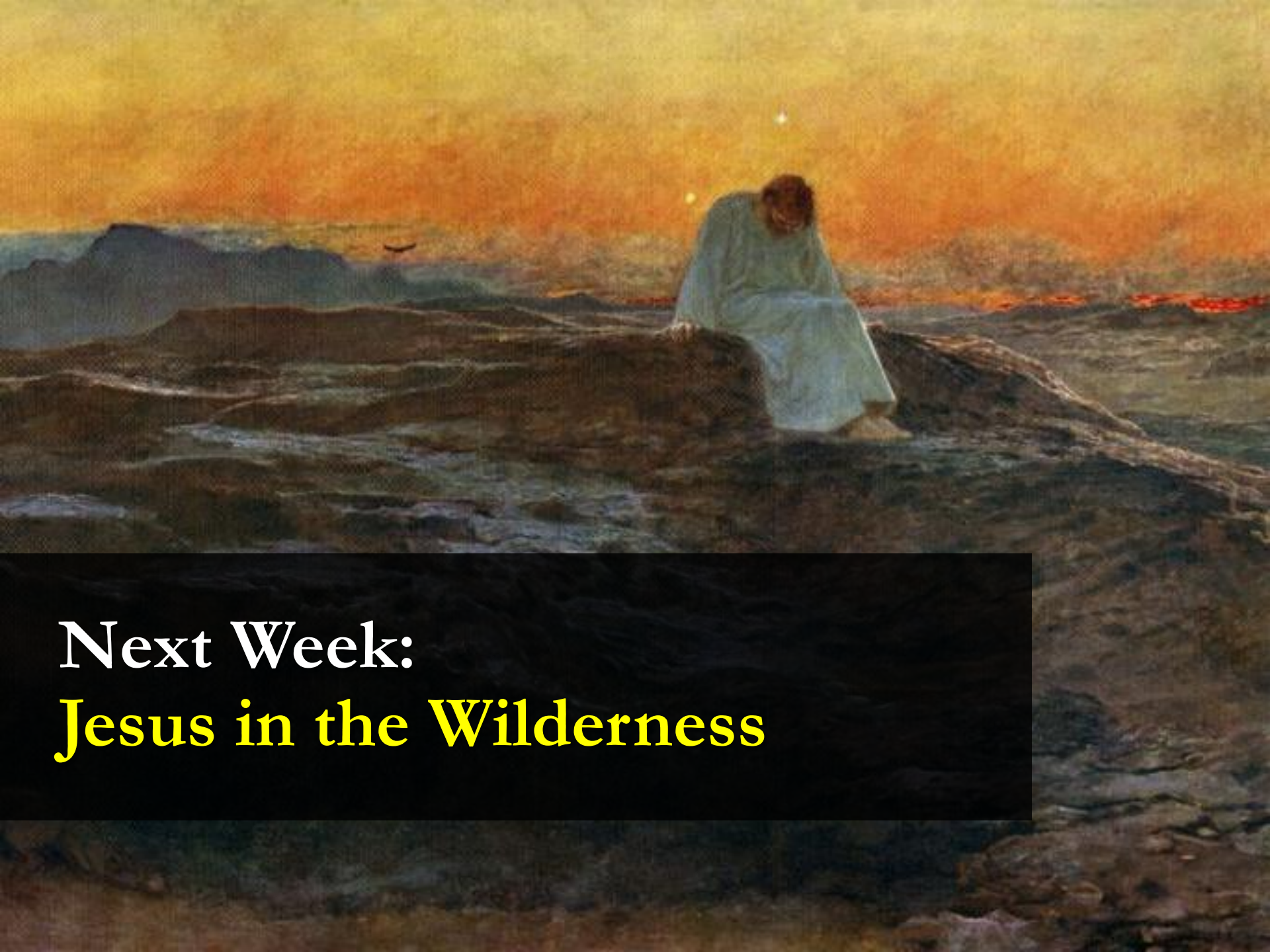
Theocratic Anointing of Jesus

By the Holy Spirit, Jesus – in His *kenosis* – was equipped to set out on the mission He had been given to offer the Kingdom to the nation of Israel.

And I think it is no coincidence that immediately following this event...

We Read:

- **Matthew 4:1** – “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”
- **Mark 1:12** – “Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness.”
- **Luke 4:1** – “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness”



Next Week:
Jesus in the Wilderness

