

**The Opportunity for More**  
John the Baptist Prepares for Jesus Christ  
**The Greatest Opportunity Series – Part 1**

Mk 1:1-8  
March 16-17, 2024

**Introduction**

- **Checking in on ‘who’s your one person?’** – have you invited them yet or are you still praying for them?
- **One of the great travesties of mankind is their willingness to live as less than what God intended for them.** For example:
  - When **trauma** identifies us while God waits with **healing** in the wings
  - When **fear and depression** dictates our joy, yet Jesus is the **Prince of Peace** regardless of circumstance.
  - When human lives are frittered away in **meaninglessness** instead of walking in the pre-determined **plan of God** that is filled with **purpose**.
  - When **addictions and habits** keep us trapped in a small cage while God has **broken us free to roam** the world with Him.
  - When we think that our **lack of resources** hinder God from doing **great things**.
  - When we allow **toxic relationships** to shape us more than what **God tells us** we are.

**God Has MORE for You**

- **Brand New Book = context**
  - **Four gospels, four perspectives**
    - **Matthew (disciple) – Jesus the Jewish Messiah (KING);** Jewish audience, O.T. fulfillment focus, genealogy proves Jesus is the rightful King of the Jews. Teaching focus (long narratives; parables). Shows fulfilled Jewish prophecies. Bridges Old Testament with New.
    - **Mark (for Peter) – Jesus the Authoritative Servant (GOD/MAN);** Action gospel (shortest – ½ Luke). Jesus is the Suffering Servant of prophecy. Focus on the Works of Jesus
    - **Luke (Outsider journalist analysis) – Jesus Son of MAN;** Companion to Acts. Gentile author & audience. Salvation focus. Highlights: Jesus’ prayer life, women in ministry, Holy Spirit, supernatural. Genealogy points back to Adam: Jesus is our human representative. He is Savior of All Mankind. Orderly account/organization (longest book of the New Testament).
      - **3 are similar or “synoptic” Gospels:** Matthew, Mark & Luke
    - **John (disciple) – Jesus as GOD** (son of God); The “different” one, Jewish mindset, Evangelism focus. Written long after the others. Focus on Signs. Miracles are evidence for faith and salvation. Starts with “In the beginning” (big picture focus).
  - **Mark’s Gospel Specific – short w/action** – let’s get into it (no nativity narrative)
    - **Written by John Mark – Who’s he?**

- **Christian heritage (saved in Paul's ministry)** - First mentioned as having a believing mother who opened her house to the early church that Paul started (Ac 12:12).
  - **Paul's helper at beginning & end (Barnabas' cousin)** - Mark was the one called into ministry as the helper to Paul and Barnabas (his cousin – Ac 12:25) on their first missionary journey which he later deserted them at Perga (Ac 13:13). Paul rejected ever taking him again (Acts 15:36-39) so Mark later hooked up with Barnabas for further missionary work. By the end of his life Paul and Mark were back in ministry together (Col 4:10; 2 Ti 4:11).
  - **Peter's storyteller** – tradition tells us that John Mark connected with Peter significantly and served with him in ministry and Mark's account is really Peter's eyewitness account told through Mark's pen.
  - **Location** - Most likely this gospel was **written and sent from Rome, Italy.**
  - **Audience = Gentile readers**
  - **Believed to be primarily an account of Jesus Christ as provided by Peter.**
- **This Series – “The Greatest Opportunity”** – We are in the **Year of Opportunity** at Bridgeway (2024). This whole year we are trying to recalibrate our thoughts and refocus our lens to see the world through God's lenses instead of our own.
    - **God has exciting things He wants to do in us and through us. He has ministry for us to do EVERYDAY.** But it's difficult to partner with God in those things when we ignore them and walk past them.
    - **Our goal is to dial into the voice of God, learn how to see the world rightly, and make the most of the opportunities that God puts around us.**
    - **The point is not to stress more or work harder** or even to come up with new opportunities, but simply to **seamlessly walk into the opportunities HE ALREADY PREPARED!**

## Lesson

- **Good News**
  - **Understanding the Gospel**
    - **Mk 1:1 – “The beginning<sup>1</sup> of the gospel<sup>2</sup> of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**

<sup>1</sup> “The word “beginning” has biblical overtones which lend an awesome ring to the opening phrase, and serves to recall that it is God who initiates redemption on behalf of men. What Mark celebrates is not merely the prophetic activity of John the Baptist but the redemptive activity of God in providing salvation for men.” William Lane, NICNT

<sup>2</sup> “The term “gospel” or “evangel” was not a word first coined among the Christians. On the contrary, the concept was significant both in pagan and Jewish culture. Among the Romans it meant “joyful tidings” and was associated with the cult of the emperor, whose birthday, attainment to majority and accession to power were celebrated as festival occasions for the whole world. The reports of such festivals were called “evangels” in the inscriptions and papyri of the Imperial Age. A calendar inscription from about 9 B.C., found in Priene in Asia Minor, says of the emperor Octavian (Augustus): “the birthday of the god was for the world the beginning of joyful tidings which have been proclaimed on his account” (Inscr. Priene, 105, 40). This inscription is remarkably similar to Mark's initial line and it clarifies the essential content of an evangel in the ancient world: an historical event which introduces a new situation for the world. In this perspective the Roman would understand Mark's proclamation of Jesus the Messiah. Beginning with the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry, Mark announces Jesus' coming as an event that brings about a radically new state of affairs for mankind. There is, however, another aspect to the meaning of “gospel.” Mark's own understanding of what constituted “joyful tidings” drew heavily on the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament, as the twofold citation of Ch. 1:2–3 makes clear. The explicit reference to Isaiah indicates that the gospel receives its proper interpretation only in the light of the coming salvation promised in the prophetic word. Especially in Isaiah the Hebrew terms signifying “good news” concern the announcement of future salvation, or of the time of salvation. In this context to proclaim salvation on God's authority is itself a creative act; in a sense it inaugurates the reality of which it speaks.<sup>18</sup>

- **The beginning** – Why did Mark say, ‘the beginning’ of the good news about Jesus Christ? Did he mean that in a bigger picture perspective of God’s great plans through time, or simply did he mean it was the beginning of the story? Perhaps both. It’s not fully clear.
  - **The beginning for us is not the beginning for God** – We cannot look at any story in history (ours or anyone else’s) without looking at both Genesis 1:1, 26-27 and John 1:1-18. **Whatever story we have is never truly the beginning.** Since God is outside of time there was ALWAYS His thoughts, intentions, and plans. He supersede all of our stories. He is the Prime Mover. He is the initial cause to all things. What this means is that whatever is occurring today it first began with Him. The comforting element is that **God already knew about it long before it was revealed to us. Nothing catches Him off guard.**
- **The gospel** – Romans thought of **evangel** or evangelion as, “**joyful news.**” Most popularly they would think of it being used of special events usually involving the emperor. A good definition would be, “...an **historical event which introduces a new situation for the world.**” Roman festivals celebrating the emperor were called **evangels** meaning they were celebrating how great things are in the world since the emperor has come. Obviously, **the tie in here**, when the **Christians** grabbed on to the term and started using it for their purposes (they didn’t make it up, they accommodated it), is that **Jesus Christ, a new ruler, has come into the world and things are infinitely better because of it, now here’s the good news I’m talking about...** If you think about it in terms of a noun (Gospel), it would be ‘good news’. So, we have to ask ourselves as modern day Christians, what is the good news that we are actually sharing with people? We are all told to ‘share the gospel’ with people, but what’s interesting is that usually what follows isn’t really good news. Usually it starts with, ‘you are worse than you think you are (sinner)...’ Now, if that is followed up immediately with the solution for their newfound concern it can be good news, but if it’s left at that, it’s only bad news.
  - **What’s the essence of the gospel we are supposed to share?** – What’s the good news that we are sharing? For those of us who have been in the church for a long time, we would answer like this: That **Jesus died for our sins so we could have eternal life.** The bible nerds like me would cite Paul’s definition of the gospel in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15**, which says the **facts**: Christ died as prophesied, he was buried, rose on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, and showed himself to his followers and the public. So it’s all about Jesus dying for our sins, right? **Sort of.**
  - **What good news did Jesus preach?** – Next week we are going to read that Jesus proclaimed the good news (v. 14), but I think it’s worth mentioning it right now to examine our current passage. A parallel passage to verse 14 is found in **Matthew**. It says that Jesus went through all the cities and villages

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This fact points up the difference between the biblical concept of joyful tidings and that found in the imperial cult. For the Roman an evangel was retrospective, a reflection of the joyous event which has already taken place. In the prophetic word there is a distinctively forward-looking eschatological perspective. The messenger of joy will announce the beginning of the time of salvation and thereby introduce it (cf. Isa. 52:7–10).”  
NICNT

proclaiming the GOSPEL of the kingdom and healing people. It says that He had compassion on the people who were struggling. So, here's my question, 'what gospel did Jesus proclaim if he not only didn't mention early on that He was the Messiah, but He certainly didn't mention that He was going to die (other than to His closest disciples). What's the other part of the good news if it didn't have to do with sin and salvation?

- Mt 9:35–36 – “And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”
- **Are we selling the gospel short?** – **Where I'm going** with all of this is the question: are we selling the gospel short? **Is there more to the good news than we are telling people.** Have we missed key parts of the gospel that we need to be talking about OR operating in?
- **The gospel Jesus preached** - **What I think Jesus talked about was that there was a new king in town,** and He treated people different. **There were now options that people didn't have before.** Before sickness did or didn't lead to death but there wasn't any healing available. Before, there were varying degrees of **demonization** but there wasn't true deliverance. But now, **Jesus has come. Now, heaven is present on earth. Now, there is a different reality at play. For us today we can cite that the Holy Spirit has gone worldwide and is operating in believers all the time. Now, ambassadors for God are everywhere.** No one should be too far from God's help because a Christian should be in proximity to you. Now, help and hope is present. **So, yes, the greatest hope and the greatest good news is eternal life, BUT there's MORE. There's also hope and help in THIS LIFE!**
- **Why supernatural ministry matters so much** – This is one of the key reasons why I think that supernatural ministry is so important: **It brings hope and help TODAY.** Yes, in the end all true believers will receive what they need and dream of, but a cool part about the good news of the Holy Spirit (which was made active in our lives by the cross) is that God doesn't always wait to do miracles in the next life. He does them in this life too!
- **Mark's focus on Gospel = Action** – The gospel of Mark has very little of Jesus' teachings but is loaded with Jesus' actions. Therefore we can deduce that for Peter/Mark, **the gospel is not just about theoretical or theological truths as much as practical impact.**
- **Jesus Christ<sup>3</sup>** – Jesus was the common name for Joshua (Yeshua) and it was His regular name (given to him on His 8<sup>th</sup> day due to divine prophecy). Christ means

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<sup>3</sup> “Χριστός Christós; fem. christḗ, neut. christón, adj. from chrīō (5548), to anoint. Anointed, a term used in the OT applied to everyone anointed with the holy oil, primarily to the high priesthood (Lev. 4:5, 16). Also a name applied to others acting as redeemers. (I) As an appellative and with the art. ho, the, Christós, Christ, it occurs chiefly in the Gospels and means the Messiah (Mark 15:32, “the King of Israel”; John 1:41; 4:42 “the Christ, the Savior of the world”;... (B) More often joined with Iēsoús (Matt. 1:16, “Jesus the One called Christ” [a.t.]); Iēsoús Christós in the Gospels (Matt. 1:1, 18; Mark 1:1; John 1:17; Acts 3:6, “In the name of Jesus Christ”; 4:10; 8:12; 10:36; 28:31; Rom. 1:1, 6, 8; 1 Cor. 1:1; 5:4).

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Christós Iēsoús, stressing the deity of Christ first and then His humanity only after His resurrection beginning with Acts 19:4 and often in the epistles (Rom. 3:24; 8:2, 39; 15:5; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; Gal. 3:26; 4:14; Phil. 2:5; 3:3, 8; Col. 1:4; Heb. 3:1). For the use of ho Kúrios (2962), the Lord, in connection with the names Iēsoús and Christós, see Kúrios (2962), Lord (cf. II, B, 2).” The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament “MESSIAH (ἠΐψῃ, mashiach; “anointed” or “an anointed one”; “messiah”). Rendered into Greek as Χριστός (Christos), cognate to the verb χρίω (chrīō, “to anoint”). In this sense, it is essentially the same to say that Jesus is the “Messiah,” or the “Christ.” In contemporary Bible translations, the former is sometimes used when the term is functioning as a title (the Messiah) and the latter when the term is functioning as a name (i.e. Jesus Christ). Introduction - The substantival adjective mashiach (“anointed [one]”) appears in the Old Testament primarily with reference to the ruling king—Saul, David, or a later Davidic king. As Yahweh’s representative before the people, the king is “the Lord’s anointed” (never in the absolute: “the anointed one”). Originally referring to physical anointing, the term took on metaphorical significance as one chosen and appointed by God to be His instrument. The patriarchs are referred to in this way (Psa 105:15; compare 1 Chr 16:22), and even Cyrus the Persian king could be called “Yahweh’s anointed” (Isa 45:1), since he is God’s agent to deliver Israel from her Babylonian captivity. In Leviticus, the term is used four times in reference to the “anointed [high] priest” (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:22). The anointing of a prophet occurs in Elijah’s commissioning of Elisha in 1 Kgs 19:16, and in the “Spirit-anointing” of a prophetic figure in Isa 61:1, a passage Jesus applies to himself in the Nazareth Sermon of Luke 4:16–30. The only Old Testament use of the term that may refer to a coming “messiah” appears in Dan 9:25–26, where a chronology of 70 “weeks” is set out between the decree to rebuild the temple and the coming of an “anointed prince” (if attributive), or “messiah, the prince” (if nominal). Even in the literature of the Second Temple period, mashiach/christos appears only rarely with reference to an individual savior and almost never in the absolute (“the Messiah”). It is only in the early Christian literature and later rabbinic material that “the Messiah” appears as the standard designation for the coming deliverer from the line of David. The Messiah in the Old Testament - The Davidic Covenant - The so-called “messianic idea”—the expectation for a king from the line of David who would reign over Israel in justice and righteousness forever—has its origin in the legitimization formulas of the Davidic Dynasty. The primary statement of the promise appears in the oracle of Nathan in 2 Sam 7:5–16 (compare 1 Chr 17:4–14) and its poetic interpretation in Psa 89:4–5, 20–30 (compare Psa 132:1–18; 2 Sam 23:1–7). The context of the oracle is David’s decision to bring the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6) and his desire to build a house for the Lord (2 Sam 7:1–2). Yahweh responds through the prophet Nathan (2 Sam 7:5–16). In a play on words, the prophet tells David that he will not build a house (= a temple) for the Lord—that will be done by his son, Solomon. Instead, Yahweh will build a house (= a dynasty) for David...The Messiah in Isaiah and His Contemporaries - The division of the kingdom after Solomon and the subsequent collapse of the northern kingdom resulted in hope for a return to the glories of the united kingdom with a new “David” on the throne. While the court prophecy of an earlier period merely affirmed the legitimacy of the Davidic Dynasty, the eighth-century prophets began to announce a period of judgment and woe, after which a restoration would take place. In the southern kingdom, the spiritual failures of the Davidic kings brought this hope to its most developed form in the prophecies of Isaiah. Isaiah 9:1–7 predicts a time of hope following the defeat by the Assyrian invaders. The occupied lands—now in darkness—will be enlightened through liberation; Israel’s enemies will be crushed (Isa 9:1–5). This liberation will coincide with the birth of an ideal Davidic king, whose reign will inaugurate an eternal era of peace, justice and righteousness (Isa 9:6–7). Whatever the exact significance of the “throne names” given to the child (Isa 9:6)—Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—they clearly exceed titles previously ascribed to the Davidic king. Isaiah 11:1–10, with its context depicting a return to the conditions of paradise (Isa 11:6–9), has even stronger eschatological implications. The image of a shoot or sprout coming from the stump of Jesse (David’s father; Isa 11:1), reminiscent of the “sprouting horn” of Psa 132, will become a common metaphor for the coming Davidic king in the exilic and postexilic prophets. Shared with the royal psalms, the king is portrayed as a righteous judge who shows mercy to the downtrodden and destroys the wicked. The king’s permanent possession of the Spirit of God (Isa 11:2–3) draws its precedent from the anointing of David (1 Sam 16:13; compare 10:6, 9–10), where “from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David.” Distinctive features of the prophecy—and those repeatedly taken up in postexilic Judaism—include the king’s extraordinary powers of wisdom and discernment by virtue of his Spirit-endowment and the spectacular way he destroys the wicked “with the rod of his mouth” and “the breath of his lips.” He merely speaks and judgment is accomplished. The Davidic shoot here takes on prophetic as well as royal traits. The messianic expectations of Micah show affinity with his contemporary Isaiah (Micah 5:1–5). He too predicts the raising up of a ruler in Israel, but he adds that his origin is from Bethlehem, the birthplace of David (Micah 5:2; compare 1 Sam 17:12). Micah portrays this ruler as one whose “greatness will reach to the ends of the earth” and a man of peace, feeding his flock in the strength of the Lord (Micah 5:4–5). This shepherd image, based no doubt on the vocation of David, will arise again in Ezekiel and in the pseudepigraphic Psalms of Solomon. The prophecies of Hosea and Amos also contain royal messianic expectations. Hosea 3:5 predicts that after God’s judgment of the Assyrian exile, “the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king.” An eschatological context is indicated in that this will occur “in the last days.” Amos similarly states that though the nation will be devastated in judgment, “I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob” (Amos 9:8). Following her punishment and dispersion, a renewal will take place: “In that day I will restore David’s fallen shelter ... so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name” (Amos 9:11). The last clause is translated in the Septuagint as “so that the remnant of people and all the nations that bear my name may seek me.” This text will be taken up at the council of Jerusalem in Acts 15:15–18, where James uses it to justify the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles. Prophecies of Exile and Restoration: Jeremiah and Ezekiel - In the period leading up to and including the Babylonian exile, Jeremiah and Ezekiel affirm that God will raise up a Davidic “shoot” or a new “David” to reign over a restored and united kingdom. While predicting God’s judgment against Jerusalem, Jeremiah affirms Yahweh’s faithfulness to His covenant promises, including His promises to David. Though the Davidic covenant is surpassed by the promise of a new covenant (Jer 31:31–40), this is an expansion rather than an abrogation of earlier ones, and God remains faithful to his promises to David and his seed forever. In Jeremiah 23:5–6 Yahweh declares that the days are coming “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely ... This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.” Ezekiel, the priestly prophet and younger contemporary of Jeremiah, continues to affirm the Davidic promise tradition while placing primary emphasis on the restoration of the temple. Ezekiel refers explicitly to the future coming of “David” (Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25). The context is renewal and restoration. Yahweh will gather His people and re-establish them in the land. They will be sprinkled clean and given a new heart and a new spirit. They will be united as a single nation again and will live in peace and prosperity. Yahweh will dwell with them as their God; and they will be His people. Yahweh will set over them one king and one shepherd, “my servant David,” who will feed them and be their prince forever.” The Messiah in the Postexilic Prophets - The return of the exiles under the decree of Cyrus and the subsequent appointment of Zerubbabel, grandson of King Jehoiachin, as governor of Judah, raised hopes that God was about to fulfill His covenant promises to David. Both Zechariah and Haggai view Zerubbabel as the Davidic heir appointed by Yahweh to rebuild the temple (Hag

‘Anointed One’ and we would think immediately ‘Messiah’ since the Jewish messianic figure was the promised anointed one.

- **The Son of God** – The title ‘son of God’ is a tricky one. We tend to use it in modern Christian circles as a way of saying that Jesus is God or deity. Although that is true, there are a couple issues with it.
  - **1.) Son doesn’t mean lesser** - for some people they don’t understand why Jesus wasn’t just called God pure and simple. Why be the Son of God? Usually we think of sons as being less than or smaller than the father. But of course if we think about it, that’s not true. I’m taller than my father. I have more influence than my father ever did. That doesn’t change my status or his status. But still, we think of dependency in some way. Clearly, that is not the

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2:22–23; Zech 6:9–14). Zechariah’s prophecies also bring together royal and priestly messianic imagery. In Zechariah 6:9–14, the prophet is told to make a crown and place it on Joshua the high priest, saying, “Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord. It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two” (Zech 6:12–13). The “branch” or “shoot” here is an allusion to the “righteous shoot” of Jer 23:5–6, the coming Davidic king. Some interpreters see this as the introduction of two messianic figures—a royal and a priestly one—an idea that will be developed in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Others see the two offices merging in a single figure, as in the early Christian testimony to Jesus as both priest and king. Expectations for a messianic king also appear in Zechariah, where daughter Jerusalem/Zion is told to rejoice at the coming of her king: “See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zech 9:9–10). The donkey serves both as a symbol of royalty (Gen 49:11; 1 Kgs 1:38) and a sign of humility. As the ideal king, the coming Messiah is given universal dominion “from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth” (Zech 9:10; compare Pss 72:8; 89:26). He will be a man of peace, wholly dependent for his rule on the grace and power of Yahweh...The Messiah in the New Testament - Jesus the Messiah - The most pressing question regarding the historical Jesus concerns whether Jesus considered Himself to be the Messiah. In the Gospels, Jesus almost never explicitly claims the title, and frequently silences those who identify Him as such (Mark 1:34; 3:11–12). William Wrede treated this so-called “messianic secret” as evidence of Jesus’ lack of messianic self-consciousness and claimed the secrecy motif was Mark’s means of covering up Jesus’ essentially non-messianic life (Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien, 1901). The only two Synoptic passages where Jesus accepts the title are disputed. In Mark’s version of Peter’s confession, Jesus does not respond to Peter’s claim that “you are the Messiah,” instead referring to the suffering of “Son of Man” (Mark 14:62). Similarly, when the high priest asks Him at His trial, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?” Jesus responds in Matthew with the cryptic “you say so” (Matt 26:64). On the other hand, there is evidence for Jesus’ messianic self-consciousness. Most significant are His claims to extraordinary authority as the inaugurator of the kingdom of God (Mark 1:15; Matt 12:28), over demons and disease, over the law and the Sabbath (Matt 5:21–48; Mark 2:23–28; 3:1–6), to forgive sins (Mark 2:1–12), and as the final judge of all people (Mark 8:35–38). The request of James and John for chief seats in the kingdom (Mark 10:35–37) indicates messianic expectations among the disciples (compare Acts 1:6) and Jesus’ response assumes that He will indeed sit upon the messianic throne (Mark 10:40). Many of Jesus’ actions are also implicitly messianic: 1. calling 12 apostles, a reconstitution of the remnant of Israel (Mark 3:13–19). 2. entering Jerusalem on a donkey in fulfillment of the messianic prophecy of Zech 9:9 (Mark 11:1–10). 3. clearing the temple of sellers and moneychangers in an implicit act of judgment (Mark 11:11–17). The charges leading to Jesus’ crucifixion also imply His messianic claims. During His trial, Jesus would certainly have been questioned concerning His motives and actions. Had He denied messianic authority, it is unlikely He would have been put to death or turned over to the Roman authorities. Indeed, there is good evidence that Jesus was crucified as a messianic pretender. The placard on the cross announced the charge against Jesus as “king of the Jews” (Mark 15:26). The placard is almost certainly historical, rather than invented by the early church, since “king” was not a title Jesus used for Himself, nor was it taken up as a messianic title by the early church. Other incidental details in the crucifixion scene such as the crown of thorns, the purple robe, and the mocking of the soldiers of him as a “king” all reinforce this claim that Jesus was executed as “king of the Jews,” and that the charge was based on messianic claims. Jesus’ preference for the title “Son of Man” (compare Dan 7:13–14) and His reticence in identifying Himself explicitly as the Messiah were probably due to the political and militaristic connotations of the title in first-century Judaism. Jesus avoided the title because it did not adequately communicate the suffering role of the Messiah. At His first advent, Jesus had not come to defeat the Roman legions but to establish the kingdom of God by offering himself as a ransom for sins. The Messiah in the Four Gospels and in Acts - In the Gospels and Acts, *christos* is generally used as a title (“the Messiah”) rather than a second name (“Jesus Christ”). Matthew, for example, records the genealogy from Abraham to the coming of the Messiah (Matt 1:17–18). Simeon is longing to see “the Lord’s Anointed” before he dies (Luke 2:26), and the angels announce to the shepherds that the Messiah has been born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:11). The people are anxiously awaiting the Messiah and wonder whether John might be the one (Luke 3:15). Demons cry out in recognition of Jesus “because they knew he was the Messiah” (4:41). Peter confesses that “you are the Messiah” (Mark 8:29) and throughout His trial the charge is claiming to be the Messiah (Matt 26:63, 68; 27:17; Mark 14:61; Luke 22:67). In the apostolic preaching in Acts, Jesus’ messianic identity is on center stage (Acts 2:31; 5:42; 17:3; 26:23). Another distinctive of the Synoptic Gospels is the use of “Son of God” as a messianic title. While in many New Testament contexts, Jesus’ divine Sonship is primarily ontological, expressing His essential deity, in others, it is primarily messianic. This latter is linked to the Davidic promise tradition, where the coming king from David’s line is said to have a unique father-son relationship with God (2 Sam 7:14; Pss 2:7; 89:27–28). The angel Gabriel connects Jesus’ identification as the “Son of the Most High” with His reception of the throne of David (Luke 1:32). When demons see Jesus, they cry out “You are the Son of God” because “they knew he was the Messiah” (Luke 4:41). Peter confesses that Jesus is the “Messiah, the Son of God” (Matt 16:16) and the high priest interrogates Jesus as to whether He is “the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed” (Mark 14:61). In these contexts, “Son of God” is almost synonymous with “Messiah.”

case with Jesus in essence because the Father, Son & Holy Spirit are co-equal in essence. So what does, 'son' mean? It means a couple of things: A.) it means that the Son emanates from the Father (the Father spoke the world into existence and the Son came out – logos - to be that reality and the Holy Spirit shaped it) in a sense. B.) It means that while on earth the Son was subject to the Father in all ways. Jesus didn't use His deity on earth. He submitted totally to the Father's voice and the Holy Spirit's power. C.) It means that He is not the full Trinity but one member of it. D.) a son of something else is the same in type (dogs have dog babies, birds have bird babies, God has god babies). And deity is all deity, not partial deity. So, the Son of God is just as much fully God as any other member of the Trinity. God begets God. It's not lesser in any way. Deity can't diminish.

- **2.) Son of God isn't as clear as we hope** – Although a regular Jewish man wouldn't normally called God his 'father' (that sounded too intimate), he could say that in a sense he is a son of God. The nation of Israel was called the 'son of God' because God made them special (Hos 11:1). A Jew would be a member of that son of God status so in a sense he could be a son of God (Dt 14:1; Heb 1:5). Sometimes angels were called 'sons of God,' (Gen 6:2; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) to describe a certain relationship they had with Him. Additionally the concept of 'son of God' means 'like God in that way' (Rom 8:14; Mt 5:9; 1 Chron 22:10). So, as you can see, there are a lot of 'sons of God' references. We Christians are called 'sons and daughters of God' (Gal 3:26; 4:6 and yet we aren't Messiahs.

- **Cosmic Herald**

- **John the Baptist is foretold in an ancient prophecy of Isaiah**

- **Mk 1:2–3** – *“As it is written in Isaiah<sup>4</sup> the prophet [40:3 + Ex & Mal], “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, <sup>3</sup> the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’ ”*
  - **Who is Isaiah?** – Isaiah was an Old Testament prophet who ministered c. 700 BC<sup>5</sup>, or 700 years before this story.
  - **Where in Isaiah the prophet** – the quote is actually a mash up of passages but specifically it centers around Isaiah 40:3. It's a passage of comfort for Israel talking about how in the future God will make things right.
  - **What was Isaiah & Co, talking about in context?** – The Isaiah passage is one of comfort for Israel, talking about how in the future God will make things right. The Malachi passage is a warning to Israel that in their disobedience, God is going to

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<sup>4</sup> “The citation which follows is a composite quotation from Ex. 23:20; Mal. 3:1 and Isa. 40:3, passages which evoke the image of the forerunner Elijah. In the exegetical tradition of the rabbis these texts had already been combined, in the conviction that the “messenger of the covenant” (Ex. 23:20) is Elijah (Mal. 3:1; 4:5). Mark’s first statement is from the Law, and agrees verbatim with the text of Ex. 23:20 in the Septuagint. It is enriched by a formulation originating in the Hebrew text of Mal. 3:1, although the first person has been altered to the second in the interest of the messianic interpretation of the passage. This fused text may have been selected from a testimony-collection in which the conflation had already taken place. The second statement introduces a word from the Prophets, and agrees with Isa. 40:3 LXX, with the single alteration of “the paths of God” to “his paths.” By this change the text becomes applicable to Jesus, who was known in the early church as “the Lord.” NICNT

<sup>5</sup> 739-681BC. <https://insight.org/resources/bible/the-major-prophets/isaiah>

come and call them to account, and fix things in a severe way. The Exodus passage is God promising to send an angel to guide them through the desert safely.

- **Why is Mark highlighting it here in the NT?**<sup>6</sup> – Each of the **OT references cited are talking about times when God met His people in the wilderness and promised to show up and fix things and to guide them where they needed to go.** (Exodus = through the wilderness to Canaan; Malachi & Isaiah are promises that God would lead Israel through difficult times to glory). So, here Mark is citing that there is both a tie-in to the past and a harkening to the future. **The key elements are wilderness, guiding, fixing.** It's a bridge passage from the Old Testament to the New Testament to show **continuity.**
  - **Why wilderness matters so much**<sup>7</sup> – in addition to what was just said above, the wilderness after the Exodus is considered, by the Jews, to have been the **birthplace of their nation (prior they were the Hebrew "people").** God took them out of Egypt where they saw themselves as slaves and made them His people in a strong and unique way. God revealed Himself to them directly (Mt. Sinai) and began **shaping them from scratch into a people group with His identity.** The 40 years in the desert/wilderness was a training time, a discipleship, raising them as God's son.
- **I will send my messenger:** what messenger? – The **Malachi passage** is VERY clear who is going to come as the messenger/forerunner/herald of God, it's the Old Testament prophet **Elijah.** How is that possible since Elijah lived a long time ago. Malachi prophesied c. 430BC, so that means that **Elijah (who ministered c. 875) lived roughly 450 years before Malachi and 875 years before this story.** Was he supposed to come back alive? No. Just as prophecies talk about the Messiah by saying, 'King David will lead them', it means 'one like that, in the spirit of that person, in the lineage of that person, etc.' A new herald that will remind everyone of Elijah will come in the same spirit. We know that to be **John the Baptist.**
- **Who will prepare your way:** In what way? How? Why? – I find the whole concept of preparing your way complicated. I totally understand the concept of a herald proclaiming that the important one is about to come. I understand getting the hearts of the people prepared to receive the new ruler. I understand all that. What's complicated for me is that it seems to entail a lot of work to fix things ahead of time. The whole point of the ruler to come is to fix things when He

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<sup>6</sup> "the three OT passages, blended in this fashion, are all related to the wilderness tradition and have a significant function in the prologue itself. Ex. 23:20 contains God's promise to send his messenger before the people on a first exodus through the wilderness to Canaan. In Isa. 40:3 the messenger announces the second exodus through the wilderness to the final deliverance prepared for God's people. In both the citation from the Law and from the Prophets the theme of an exodus through the wilderness is dominant and appropriate to Mark's conception and purpose. The blended citation functions to draw attention to three factors which are significant to the evangelist in the prologue: the herald, the Lord and the wilderness. In the verses which immediately follow, the significance of each of these elements is emphasized by Mark, who sees in the coming of John and Jesus to the wilderness the fulfilment of the promised salvation of which the prophet Isaiah had spoken. In stressing the element of fulfilment at the beginning of his account Mark conforms the narrative to the apostolic preaching, in which the theme of fulfilment was of strategic importance." NICNT

<sup>7</sup> "This means a return to the beginning of God's history with his people, a return to the wilderness. Essential to the prophetic concern with repentance in Hosea, Amos and Isaiah is the concept of Israel's time in the wilderness as the period of true sonship to God, a status into which the Lord is going to lead his people once again in a future time." NICNT

arrives. But perhaps, like normal, I'm making too much of it. For now it's just announcing and preparing the hearts of the people.

- **The voice of one crying in the wilderness** – what does this mean? It means someone lifting up their voice with **an important message** that would be **in a desert**. The importance of the desert location is explained in other portions of my descriptions.
  - **Prepare the way for the Lord** – this is a command for people to do something very important. What is it? Are we supposed to do it? As mentioned above it is **a preparation of hearts for people to receive their coming ruler. Should we do that? Yes. It's actually what evangelism is really about.** We don't save anyone. We prep the heart so that as they meet Jesus, they are ready to receive HIM, the One who saves.
  - **Make his paths straight** – what does this mean? How do we do something for the Lord? Can't He do it Himself, better? He could do it better and do it Himself with a sudden arrival (and He actually will do that as part of His future plan), but He prefers to involve His people as a connection point and blessing to them. He prefers to work relationally and gently whenever possible (not surprise visits in a negative way). He's interested in winning hearts not scaring hearts.
- **The Baptizer**
    - **John Baptizes in Judea**
      - **Mk 1:4–5** – *“John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan,<sup>8</sup> confessing their sins.*
      - **John appeared** – Who is this and what does it mean he ‘appeared’? It's a poetic way of shifting from a prophetic statement to the fulfillment. A future Elijah would come, and ta-dah! John showed up (was born into history)! He's the new Elijah.
      - **Where the Old Testament left off<sup>9</sup>** – **Between** the close of the Old Testament period in history and the launch of the New, there is **roughly 400 years** (end of Malachi's ministry – 435BC – to the birth of John the Baptist (c. 1AD) - - which encapsulates **Alexander the Great** and the rise & fall of the **Greek Empire as well as the rise of the succeeding Roman empire<sup>10</sup>**). **God was largely silent** during that time. The OT didn't end with the Jews being in a good place. Although they were back in their land after the exile, their lives weren't good. The prophet Malachi talks about how after all the judgments and corrections God made, the hearts of the Jews had not fundamentally

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<sup>8</sup> “Mark's interest in the wilderness is not primarily geographical; the reference to the lower Jordan River valley fails to provide any specific information about the locale in which the Baptist ministered.” NICNT

<sup>9</sup> <https://bibleproject.com/articles/sense-ending-real-last-book-old-testament/> ; <https://www.ravstedman.org/bible-overview/adventuring/the-400-years-between-the-old-and-new-testaments>

<sup>10</sup> Also the period of the rise of the Samaritan people, the Sadducees (Royal, liberal, Hellenistic Jew group) vs. Pharisees (separatists, Zionists), the stopping of the official high priest of Israel (Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes IV), the profaning of the temple, the 2300 days (6 ½ years) before it was purified by the Maccabees.

changed. Thankfully it ends with a note of hope that God would come and sort it all out.

- **Where does the Old Testament story close?** – As the Bible Project explains, although our Bibles stop the Old Testament with the prophet **Malachi** (the Bible is organized now based on theme: Torah/Pentateuch, History books, Wisdom Writings; Prophets: major then minor), the majority of history had the Hebrew Old Testament canon (collection of books) end with **2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles** (which was once only one long book but was later broken into two: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>). Jesus would have only known the original organization ending with Chronicles (the thematic shift happened likely a few hundred years after Jesus).
- **Why Chronicles ending matters with Mark's<sup>11</sup> opening** – The book of Chronicles seems very redundant. It catalogs mostly the same information as 1-2 Kings, but it has a slightly different groove to it (it focuses on a storyline from Adam thru the post-exilic Jewish period – along the way it highlights God's promise – through David's lineage – to bring redemption for His people through a future new Davidic king, a new kingdom, and a new Jerusalem.). **It ends with the 70 year exile period and the arrival of a new king (Persian king Cyrus) who was going to let the Jews go back home. It was their 'try again' time.** They failed the first go around (actually, every go 'round), and now it's time to try again after being corrected. It actually closes with a suggested question: **How would it go?** (The Hebrew ending is literally an incomplete sentence about someone needing to go out and do something...).
- **Relatively fascinating sidenote** – The Bible Project highlighted that the whole Jewish system revolves around 7's. 7 day week (creation + rest; work week + sabbath), the 7 years renewal process, the 49<sup>th</sup> year Jubilee, etc. So it's fascinating to know that from King David's reign to the exile, it's 490 years (like a massive year of Jubilee – letting the ground rest).
- **Astonishing tie-in** – So we have 490 years of Israel messing up and breaking the covenant so badly that God has to kick them out of their land for 70 years (exile). Once they come back it's clear that they didn't totally change. They are immediately falling back into the same patterns. The prophet Daniel<sup>12</sup> is reflecting on Jeremiah's prophecy of the exile and wondering when everything is going to be made right again. He is told to calculate 70x7 or 490 years before the covenant will truly be restored and the Messianic kingdom would come. So we have **490 years (from David's reign) of Israel breaking the covenant, a 70 year short-term attempt to restart Israel, then another 490 years of 'spiritual & civic exile' (Israel under foreign rule).** It was never going to be over for the Jewish people

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<sup>11</sup> Or any of the gospels, really.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel 9

until a new Messianic king came to set it right. If we calculate **David's birth c. 1040 to Jesus' birth c. 5BC-1AD, it's about 1,000 years. If you calculate the 490 + 70 + 490 = 1050.** Shockingly tight window of accuracy.

- **Why Malachi's ending matters to Mark's beginning – Malachi ends with a direct prophecy about God sending Elijah the prophet who would usher in the great and awesome day of the Lord and leading to revival of hearts.**
  - Mal 4:5–6 - *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. <sup>6</sup>And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."*
- **Baptizing<sup>13</sup> in the wilderness<sup>14</sup> –** Why set up way out there in the desert? There were closer locations of water accessible. Part of it may have been practical for him (he was a desert) guy but it certainly wasn't accidental to God. It's more likely that he was using it as part of an **exercise** or illustration to highlight that they needed a camp experience, a **RETURN TO SONSHIP<sup>15</sup>** back in the desert like they did at Sinai at the beginning.
  - **The key to baptizing in the wilderness<sup>16</sup> –** it's a call not only to the wilderness, but it's via the water just like **passing through the Red Sea to get to their new identity as a nation at Sinai.**
  - **Baptism<sup>17</sup> –** Water baptism, the way that John did it was **relatively new. Jews knew everything about ritual cleansing with water, washing. They knew that it was symbolic of impurity being purified and washed off.** They would be ritually cleansed all the time (one writing says it should be every day because they need to be cleansed every day). By the Temple mount there were mikvah's or ritual cleansing areas. **But the immersion** of a body, or an official baptism, that was **only** done for people wanting to **convert** to Judaism (Gentiles). **Jews didn't do that.** Actually, converts had to do 3 things: Males

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<sup>13</sup> "It has been conjectured that John's baptism was derived from the Jewish practice of baptizing proselytes, or from the rites of initiation practiced at Qumran. <sup>35</sup> No clear line of dependence can be shown in support of these theories. Baptism appears rather as a unique activity of this prophet, a prophetic sign so striking that John became known simply as "the Baptizer." NICNT

<sup>14</sup> "This means a return to the beginning of God's history with his people, a return to the wilderness. Essential to the prophetic concern with repentance in Hosea, Amos and Isaiah is the concept of Israel's time in the wilderness as the period of true sonship to God, a status into which the Lord is going to lead his people once again in a future time." NICNT

<sup>15</sup> "The correlation between the wilderness and repentance was not John's innovation and must have been understood by his contemporaries. John's call to repentance and his call to come out to him in the wilderness to be baptized are two aspects of the same reality. It is a call to renew sonship in the wilderness." NICNT

<sup>16</sup> "The summons to be baptized in the Jordan meant that Israel must come once more to the wilderness. As Israel long ago had been separated from Egypt by a pilgrimage through the waters of the Red Sea, the nation is exhorted again to experience separation; the people are called to a second exodus in preparation for a new covenant with God. Both John's call to repentance and his baptism are intelligible as aspects of the prophetic tradition which expected the final salvation of God to be unveiled in the wilderness." NICNT

<sup>17</sup> "John came announcing a baptism of repentance. Jews were familiar with ritual washings. Leviticus 11–15 details them. 'The Jew', said Tertullian, 'washes himself every day because every day he is defiled.' Symbolic washing and purifying was woven into the very fabric of Jewish ritual. Gentiles were necessarily unclean for they had never kept any part of the Jewish law. Therefore, when a Gentile became a proselyte, that is a convert to the Jewish faith, he had to undergo three things. First, he had to undergo circumcision, for that was the mark of the covenant people; second, sacrifice had to be made for him, for he stood in need of atonement and only blood could atone for sin; third, he had to undergo baptism, which symbolized cleansing from all the pollution of his past life. Naturally, therefore, the baptism was not a mere sprinkling with water, but a bath in which the whole body was bathed. Jews knew baptism; but the amazing thing about John's baptism was that he, a Jew, was asking Jews to submit to that which only a Gentile was supposed to need. John had made the tremendous discovery that to be a Jew in the racial sense was not to be a member of God's chosen people; a Jew might be in exactly the same position as a Gentile; not the Jewish life, but the cleansed life belonged to God." William Barclay Commentary

were circumcised; animals sacrifices were offered; they were immersed in water (baptism). What was interesting about John's baptism was that he was saying **EVERYONE needed it**, period. There were no righteous ones. Jews and Gentiles alike needed cleansing through washing. It was a symbol of what needed to happen on the inside. It's not the washing of outside dirt that cleanses someone but inner sin. What I find fascinating, whether it was intended or not, I think it was, was that **immersion baptism is not done by yourself**. You can't baptize yourself. You can rinse yourself, and ritually purify yourself (hands, feet), but you don't go under the water alone or come up alone. You are lowered down and raised up again. To me this is the most powerful image/illustration that we are dead in our sins, and we can't do anything about it. We need it to be done for us. We are incapable and must surrender to another lowering us and raising us up in new life, then we can walk out in victory alive.

- **The two key parts of baptism** – there are two main definitions of baptism that are important to know when reading the bible: 1.) Immersion – it means dunking and it can be anything being immersed under water. Although Bridgeway believes that sprinkling and pouring over methods are legitimate, we prefer to stick with the truest sense of the word, to immerse. 2.) identify with. This is the tricky one. To be “baptized into” means to be connected with. In other words there are passages that say a group of people were baptized into someone. It means connected with that person on a deep level. For modern day it means to be identified with or connected with the local church. Water baptism done in conjunction with a church publicly is an acceptance of that person and the person's desire to be identified with that group (Church = all true believers).
- **Proclaiming a baptism of repentance<sup>18</sup> for the forgiveness of sins** – John was doing prep work for hearts. He was telling people the bad news and how to get ready to receive the good news. He was explaining that their sins were so great that they needed a Savior. All they could do is repent (see below), confess (see below) and surrender to God and await His salvation answer.
- **Repentance** – for John (and the early Church) **baptism and repentance went together**. Repent means to **'change your mind into alignment with God's'**. It means to admit that you are going to wrong direction and to adjust that thinking to wanting to go God's direction. Too often we think of repentance as a negative thing (degrading ourselves as we dwell on the terrible things we have done), but that's actually not the point of repentance. Confession has some of that, but repentance is about **action and determination, not**

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<sup>18</sup> “As the people heed John's call and go out to him in the desert far more is involved than contrition and confession. They return to a place of judgment, the wilderness, where the status of Israel as God's beloved son must be re-established in the exchange of pride for humility. The willingness to return to the wilderness signifies the acknowledgment of Israel's history as one of disobedience and rebellion, and a desire to begin once more. John's proclamation of the forgiveness of sins provides the assurance that God extends grace as well as judgment. It is in the context of judgment and grace that the people of Jerusalem and Judea go out to the wilderness to be baptized by John.” NICNT

**emotional dwelling.** To get baptized was to own up to what was true now and wanting to surrender (fall under the water) and be raised again in God's purposes.

- **Side note on baptism and salvation** – one of the things that launched and fused the Baptist movement in modern days is the idea that water baptism was necessary for salvation, which it's not. I understand their confusion. Passages like Mark 16:16 seem to suggest that belief and baptism must both be checked off to get salvation, but if you look closely, it's actually the belief that saves (rom 10:9), not the water baptism. The water baptism is a symbol of the accompanying repentance (remember, they go together) that causes a shift of loyalty to God (belief) and a surrender to allow God to save us.
  - Mk 16:16 – *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."*
  - Ac 8:12 – *"But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."*
- **All the country of Judea** – Be careful not to over assume or be a stickler on word usage. First of all we are reading an English translation of a Greek book, and secondly, it's using ancient idioms (ways of saying things). So, it doesn't mean ALL as in everyone from Judea (a massive region), but that people from all over came. It wasn't only one town.
- **All Jerusalem** – again, it wasn't all the people of Jerusalem (clearly there were the majority that weren't into this – thus the tensions in the New Testament). It was people from all over Jerusalem.
- **Were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan** – There is not enough indicators to say WHERE in the Jordan river, John baptized. People guess and there are big areas in Israel today saying that it's the exact location where it was, but it's not. It's all a guess. The Jordan river is 223 miles long going from Mt. Hermon in the north and flowing down through the Sea of Galilee and out all the way South to the Dead Sea where it stops. It was likely any portion of the last 20 miles nearest to the Dead Sea since it mentions Judea & Jerusalem which were southern. Technically the Jordan River only flows through the strict boundaries of Judea at the very end, but people can come FROM Judea a bit up to another technical part of the Jordan river to be baptized. So let's say 0-30 miles north to be safe.
- **Confessing their sins** – what's confession and why is it helpful? – Confession is **an acknowledgment and verbalization** (although it can be done internally if the receiver of the confession can read minds – e.g. God) **of what we have done wrong.** It's both an emotional and intellectual pouring out of **ownership for choices and behaviors that are sinful.** Because of the nature of the information, it makes a lot of us want to avoid it because of embarrassment, shame, guilt. But we need to remember 2 key things when confessing to God (confessing to people is valuable too and messier): **1.) He already knows** – you aren't telling Him anything He doesn't already know and observed. **2.) His heart is grace-filled.** Yes, He's a good dad and will handle the discipline element anyway, whether you

confess or not, but He is good hearted and wants to bring forgiveness. He's the one telling you to bring it to Him to cleanse it. The Bible tells us that when we confess, He is faithful and just to cleanse us.

- 1 Jn 1:9 – *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

- **Fashion Backward**

- **John Dresses in an Unusual Style**

- **Mk 1:6–8** – *"Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey."<sup>19</sup>*

- **John was clothed** – who cares what John is wearing? **[COMPLETE]**
- **Clothed with camel's hair** – The animal hair cloak was a common garb for ancient **prophets**. It was almost like their **uniform** in a way. It was a distinguishing item.
- **Wore a leather belt around his waist<sup>20</sup>** – the combination of the camel's hair cloak and the leather belt was a **direct reference to** a passage in 2 Kings that explains what the prophet **Elijah** wore.
  - 2 Ki 1:7–8 – *"He said to them, "What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?"<sup>8</sup> They answered him, "He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."*
- **Ate locusts and wild honey<sup>21</sup>** – what the heck? It's telling you that he was **living in the wilderness as a normal occurrence**. His diet was whatever was available. Locusts are considered kosher-clean animals so they can be eaten, and they can get rather large. They are protein based of course. The honey is about the flavoring I would imagine. John is not a rich man. He would be what we call a minimalist.

- **Big Dog's Comin'**

- **John Prophecies about Jesus Christ**

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<sup>19</sup> "The reference to John's clothing and diet serves to emphasize that he is a man of the wilderness. Both his garb and his food are those familiar to the wilderness nomad, and characterize life in the desert... Cf. C. H. Kraeling, op. cit., pp. 10 f., 14 f. The desert nomad does not hesitate to eat small insects, including locusts. Locusts are listed among clean foods in Lev. 11:21 f. An interesting parallel is offered by the first century A.D. Martyrdom of Isaiah 2:8–12. Isaiah withdraws from Jerusalem to Bethlehem because of the lawlessness of the people, but the men of Bethlehem are also wicked. With a company of men he withdraws further south into the Judean desert, settling "on a mountain in a solitary place" (Ch. 2:8). Isaiah and his companions are "clothed with garments of hair" (Ch. 2:9) because they are all prophets. Their food consists of wild herbs (Ch. 2:11). They spent two years in the wilderness lamenting over the sins of the people (Ch. 2:12). For the hairy mantle as the garb of a prophet see Zech. 13:4." NICNT

<sup>20</sup> The reference to the leather girdle about the Baptist's waist recalls a characteristic feature of another man of the wilderness, the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 1:8)." NICNT

<sup>21</sup> "The desert nomad does not hesitate to eat small insects, including locusts. Locusts are listed among clean foods in Lev. 11:21 f." NICNT  
"There was the food he ate—locusts and wild honey. It so happens that both words are capable of two interpretations. The locusts may be the insects, for the law allowed them to be eaten (Leviticus 11:22–3); but they may also be a kind of bean or nut, the carob, which was the food of the poorest of the poor. The honey may be the honey the wild bees make, or it may be a kind of sweet sap that distils from the bark of certain trees. It does not matter what the words precisely mean. In any event John's diet was of the simplest." William Barclay commentary

- **Mk 1:2–8** – “And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.<sup>22</sup> <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”<sup>23</sup>
  - **John preached<sup>24</sup>** – in what sense did he ‘preach?’ the Greek word *kerusso*, means to publicly announce. When used in a religious setting it means to proclaim religious truth. It simply means John went public with his message.
  - **After me comes he – He’s not the Messiah.** He needs to be clear up front that he is not, nor would ever claim to be the promised One (Messiah, Christ, etc.). He is a humble forerunner.
  - **He who is mightier than I** – John is awesome. He is so humble and straight-forward. He wants to be very clear, over and over, that he is nothing compared to Jesus Christ the Messiah. He is not there to compete. His famous words summed it up, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30).
  - **The strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie** – Even the Hebrew slaves of a household didn’t need to untie a master’s sandals. They were released from that even though they may well wash the master’s feet.
  - **I have baptized you with water, but** – I’m doing something helpful here by water baptizing you, but it’s really a preparation thing for the main event to come.
  - **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit** – This is a tie in to the Israelite time in the desert for 40 years. The Narrative is clear that they were guided by the Holy Spirit of God (actually all 3 of the revealed members of the Godhead were named guides). Therefore, the Holy Spirit and desert get tied together.
    - **Baptism in the Holy Spirit** – There are a lot of opinions about what baptism of the holy Spirit means. Some people say that it’s a second baptism (beyond water) that gives believers extra power to live the Christian life. They would cite parts of Acts. Although that’s somewhat true, it’s better to go back to the actual definition of the words. Baptism has two meanings: **1.) Immerse into;** **2.) Identify with.** It seems most likely that although the first is true in a sense (fusion), it’s really talking about the second: Identification with. It means that we are connected to the Holy Spirit. But here’s the thing: The **ONLY** way to get saved is to allow Christ to cleanse you with His blood and then to have the Holy Spirit indwell you (identification with). Therefore EVERY believer

<sup>22</sup> “he affirms that he is not worthy of performing the most menial task, from which even the Hebrew slave was released, the removal of the master’s sandals. In no stronger manner could the mystery and the dignity of the Coming One be emphasized.” NICNT

<sup>23</sup> “Isaiah describes Israel’s trek in the wilderness as a march under the guidance of the Spirit of God (Isa. 63:11); it was the Spirit who gave the people rest in the wilderness (Ch. 63:14). As the first exodus had been a going forth into the wilderness under the leadership of God’s Spirit, the prophet announces the second exodus as a time when there will be a fresh outpouring of the Spirit (Chs. 32:15; 44:3). With this concept in mind John calls the people to the wilderness in anticipation of the fulfilment of the prophetic promise.” NICNT

<sup>24</sup> “*κηρύσσω* *kērússō*; fut. *kērúxō*. To preach, to herald, proclaim. (I) Generally, to proclaim, announce publicly (Matt. 10:27; Luke 12:3; Acts 10:42; Rev. 5:2; Sept.: Ex. 32:5; Esth. 6:9, 11; Joel 2:1). In the sense of to publish abroad, announce publicly (Mark 1:45; 5:20; 7:36; Luke 8:39). (II) Especially to preach, publish, or announce religious truth, the gospel with its attendant privileges and obligations, the gospel dispensation. (A) Generally of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1; Mark 1:4, 7; Luke 3:3; Acts 10:37); of Jesus (Matt. 4:17, 23; 9:35; 11:1; Mark 1:14, 38, 39; Luke 4:44; 8:1; 1 Pet. 3:19); of apostles and teachers (Matt. 10:7; 24:14; 26:13; Mark 3:14; 6:12; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15, 20; Luke 9:2; 24:47; Acts 20:25; 28:31; Rom. 10:8, 14, 15; 1 Cor. 9:27; 15:11; Gal. 2:2; Col. 1:23; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:2). “To preach Christ” means to announce Him as the Messiah and urge the reception of His gospel (Acts 8:5; 9:20; 19:13; 1 Cor. 1:23; 15:12; 2 Cor. 1:19; 4:5; 11:4; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 3:16).” Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament

MUST be baptized in the Holy Spirit just to be saved. This means that there aren't any true believers that don't have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, so it can't be a second baptism. You are either saved or you are not. The confusion, I believe comes with terms. I think the extra empowerment that so many people are referring to is better titled 'filled with the Holy Spirit'. Filling can happen more than once and should be continually sought since we are leaky. It's not getting the Holy Spirit in your life again, it's getting a refreshment of His anointing power (and perhaps authority renewal – but maybe that's consistent). The reason its complicated in the book of Acts is that the Holy Spirit coming into people AND coming on them with power were both new. It was a mixture of everything happening at once. Now, distant from Pentecost it's more clean and clear that **we get the Holy Spirit's presence at salvation and eternally have it, but we need His continual filling to do the work of the ministry powerfully.**

### **Conclusion**

- **There's More!**
- **Prayer for more.**