

The King is Baptized and His Ministry Begins

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Preacher: BK Smith

[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Please take out your Bibles and turn with me to Matthew chapter 3. Matthew chapter 3. You know you live in a different type of city when rubber boots is the expected clothing choice, eh?

If you're new, just joining us, visiting us, we are in a series entitled The Life of Christ. As we examine the entire life of Christ from all four Gospels as we track through who He is and the significance of the main events that surround Jesus.

This morning, the sermon is entitled The King is Baptized and His Ministry Begins. I'm going to redo that and I'm just going to say the final preparation for the King before He not sits on His throne, but He begins the long march to the cross.

And He takes on the form of a suffering servant. So please just pray with me as we go to our King to prepare us for His Word.

[1 : 13] Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, just as even we think about the theme of Advent this Sunday, the idea of God taking on human flesh.

And you did so not because you could take the throne and the glory that is due you as Messiah, but you became like us.

As we learn through your birth that is the most humblest of birth. There would be no accusation that could be made against you for special status.

But that as you came to take on the form of human, you did so with all humility. Thank you. For we get to live in the fruitful, wonderful result of your obedience to the Father.

Father, that we, despite being only flesh, are no longer distant from God, but we are brought near the great throne of grace because of your great love for us.

[2 : 30] So, Father, I just pray that this sermon would attune our hearts and our minds to exactly what you did for us. In that road to become human and prepare yourself to become that suffering servant for us.

We thank you for the testimony of these saints who came before us, who wrote these Gospels. We ask these things in your most gracious and precious name.

Amen. As you know, 30 years prior to the event of the baptism of Jesus, John the Baptist was announced to his parents that he would be the great forerunner to the King, to the Messiah.

That John the Baptist would fulfill the role of a herald. For whenever a king comes to town, the herald comes before him announcing that his kingdom.

This herald had been prophesied some 700 years prior to this time. And now, 700 years later, a man walks the Jordan River crying out, prepare the way of the Lord.

[3 : 51] Make his paths straight. If you remember from a few years, from a few years ago, from a few weeks ago, we talked about four conditions for the Messiah to happen.

The first one is the Messiah needed to be born of a woman. He needed to be a human being. He needed to live life as a human being in order to be the perfect sacrifice to us.

We learned that he had to be a child of Abraham, which meant he had to be Jewish in family, in his race, or however you want to frame it.

But he needed to be a child of Abraham. The third condition that needed to be met for Jesus to be the Messiah is he needed to be of the house of David. He needed to be of the royal house, for that is where God had prophesied the Messiah would come from.

And the fourth and last condition that needed to be met is that a forerunner, a herald, needed to come and needed to announce his presence.

[4 : 54] We learned last week, boy, did John the Baptist herald. John the Baptist, we believe, commenced his ministry probably around six months prior to the coming of Jesus.

At the time, Israel is a mess. They are ruled by a pagan kingdom who literally hates them, hates their faith. And then you have these priests that God had set up to be the mediators between us and God, and they were a totally incorrupt political office that served self and not God's own. So in the eyes of history, there's only one person that could make things right. A Messiah was needed. One, to call people back to true belief, true faith in the king, and two, to overthrow the foreign oppressors.

So here comes John the Baptist. For this time, he's got a three-part message. The first is the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The king will soon be here. Here, to repent, repent. And remember, we talked about this. This repentance that he's calling for is not repentance unto salvation, but repentance into identifying yourself with the king.

[6 : 23] And we're going to talk about, there's three issues about being under the king. One, you obey. Two, you're loyal. And three, you will have allegiance to the king. So these are the things that John is proclaiming.

And you will testify to turning away by being baptized. And we learn that people came. And they came.

And they came from all walks of life, from taxpayers to soldiers to religious people. They watched. They questioned. They believed. They knew.

They were desperate for a Messiah. And they came. And they lined up. And many were baptized during that time. The historian Josephus noted that the multitudes were so great that King Herod feared for an uprising and an overthrowing of his throne.

Some speculate that John the Baptist during those six months would have been the most celebrated person in the Jewish world. And think of this.

[7 : 32] For the first time in over 400 years, there was a man speaking for God. A cry in the wilderness, calling people back to the true faith.

Just think of the patience, the hardship that they had endured. But there was this man who came. The Gospel of John records in John 1.6.

They describe him. John, the writer, describes John the Baptist this way. There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

He came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

So to this point in the Gospels, we know very little of Jesus Christ. We know that he lives in Nazareth. He's taken over the profession of his father, that of a carpenter or stonemason.

[8 : 44] He has six siblings. We believe by the time that Jesus comes to be baptized, his father, Joseph, is now dead. And Jesus has taken over the head of the family.

And he's waiting, waiting, and waiting for the herald to come. And until that time, Scripture records that he grew in wisdom and stature.

And then, we do not know the means, but he hears, the herald has come. He's in the wilderness. Some 100 miles away, Jesus leaves for whatever he's doing, and he's coming to that call. Many believe that Jesus' baptism is the beginning of his public ministry.

My desire this morning is to argue before you that this isn't the beginning of his public ministry, but it is the end of his private ministry.

[9 : 51] It is the final act of preparation that God has for his son before he becomes the Lamb of God who would die three and a half years from this time to take away the sins of the world.

And I'll do that by looking at three areas of his preparation. One, we're going to look at the preparation of what it meant for Jesus to be baptized. Two, we're going to look at the significance of Jesus being anointed by the Holy Spirit.

And three, we're going to look at the significance of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness. And it's all going to come together, and I don't know of a better word to say this, but to be the perfect suffering servant that was meant to die on the cross for us.

So we have a baptism, we have an anointing, and we have a temptation. So let's take a look, and we're going to take most of our time is going to be spent in the Gospel of Matthew.

And we're going to be looking at chapter 3, and we're going to begin in verse 13. And Matthew just simply writes, then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan, to John, to be baptized by him.

[11:07] Now, one of the major significant questions that happens in the part of the text is, why did Jesus need to be baptized? If Jesus, being the Son of God, being perfect, without sin in any way, why would he need to repent?

And I argued last week that the idea of repentance that John is calling them to, is not the idea of unto salvation, but into identification. He's going to be identifying with the people.

Okay, so that's the first thing that happens here. And this question is so foremost, because look at verse 14. It said John would have prevented him.

So John has this, hey, hey, hey, Jesus, you don't even need to do this. You're already perfect. You don't need this. He goes, I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?

But Jesus responds, or he answers him, says, let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.

[12:11] So remember, we see John is the herald, calling people back to the true faith, to become a true Jew, looking at the Old Testament messianic prophecies.

And part of that was repenting, turn away from your old ways. But the call is still to be baptized in order to identify with the Old Covenant call of a Messiah.

All right? So in order to identify with that call, Jesus elects to be baptized. But he says this curious statement, to fulfill all righteousness.

Now, I'm sure if we had about 10 different commentaries and 10 different people looking for the answer on this, you'd come up with 10 different answers.

But I believe there's a common thread through all of them. So one of the threads is that we understand is for the number one condition for Jesus Christ to be the Messiah is that he needed to be human.

[13:21] He needed to be the seed of the woman. This goes all the way back to Genesis 3, verse 15. For Jesus to be the Messiah and to be our representative, Jesus needed to not only be human, but he needed to identify as human.

So bear with me. This is a theological point, but there is a richness to this point that I really want you to understand. Back in Genesis, the first book of our Bible, we read that Adam, the first man, represented us.

He was the one that represented the human race. When he sinned, he plunged all of us into corruption and darkness. So our greatest need is a new representative, a new Adam, as it were, to live the life that Adam could not live to redeem us and his people from the bondage of sin and death.

If you ask any Sunday school child, what did Jesus do for you? You will hear, Jesus died for my sins. And that is the right answer. But what's interesting is in order to qualify to be a redeemer, it wasn't enough for him to simply die.

For if that were the reason, as I stated a couple of weeks ago, all he would have needed to redeem us is to show up a couple of days before he goes to the cross.

[14:52] Hey, I'm your redeemer. I'm going to die. There you go. You're all free. But I want you to understand what would have happened if that is what Jesus had done.

If Jesus was only our sacrifice, then we are simply going back to Adam. And what I mean is, he would have just pardoned us of all our sins, but how would we have gone forward?

Now remember, Adam had no sin. And we're going to look at it and compare and contrast between Adam's time with Satan and Jesus' time in Satan, there's some exceptional compare and contrast we're going to do.

But Adam had everything going for him. He was without sin. He had Eve with him. He wasn't alone. And he lived in a perfect paradise. He was fully fed, fully rested, enjoying all the fruits of life.

No sin in his body, nothing, not deteriorating. He was as strong as any human being could be strong. But yet he fell. Now, my contention is, if Jesus Christ had just come to this earth on that day, died and crucified, we'd be back to being Adam.

[16:10] Perfect, but for how long? So what's happening here is that Jesus Christ needed to be born of Mary. And by doing so, he lived our life that we could not live.

So not only does Jesus die for a sin, he needed to live a life of perfect obedience, a righteousness that he fulfilled all the law.

So at that moment of salvation, the life that Jesus lived, his righteousness, is credited to my account. And the sin that I have goes to Jesus.

It said, my sins are transferred to Jesus on the cross when I place my faith in him. And his righteousness is transferred to my account in the sight of God.

You see, that's what's happened at the cross. Jesus bore the penalty for our sins from the wrath of God that was poured out on him. And that perfect life that Jesus lived that makes you and I acceptable in the sight of God was the life of Jesus Christ.

[17 : 25] Amen? That when Jesus looks upon us, he sees the perfect life that Jesus Christ lived. And that is what allows us to go on. This, my friends, is the essence of the gospel.

This is what it means to be justified in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul explains this to us in 2 Corinthians 5.21. He says, So it's not praise God that he died on the cross for my sins, but praise God that he was born of a virgin, that we have Christmas, and that he lived a life that you and I cannot live so that we can essentially trade places.

You getting with me? So this is a big theological point that a lot of people miss out. It's not just the death of Jesus that saves us, but the way he lived his life saves us as well.

This is something we need to rejoice in. This is all a part of the gospel. Paul, in the book of Philippians, states, I have a righteousness, not of my own, but the righteousness of God through faith in Christ.

So the reason why Jesus is submitting to baptism is for us. He clearly is without sin.

[18 : 52] 1 Peter 2.22 tells us clearly that Jesus was without sin and no deceit was found in his mouth. So in this baptism, we see God's love for us.

His submission to something he did not need to submit to. But you and I needed so desperate. So this part of him needing to be human and living here for 30 years is to fulfill the law.

And getting baptized by John was the right thing to do. So let's go back to the text, the end of verse 15. It says, then he being John consented.

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water and behold, the heavens were open to him. And he saw, now this is John the Baptist testifying to this.

We're going to see this later in the Gospel of John. But he says, this is John seeing this, the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him. And behold, a voice from heaven said, this is my son, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.

[20 : 12] Now what's interesting is that the Gospel of Luke that Dave read for us today said, this is my son. Whereas, what we're reading here in Matthew, it says, it's not my son, but this is the son whom I am well pleased.

One is talking to Jesus and one is from an idea, the perspective of John. As Dave read today, it says Luke 3.21 says, now when all the people were baptized, now notice this is later in the day when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were open.

And the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove and a voice came from heaven, you are my son, rather than this is my beloved son.

Are you catching that difference between the two Gospels? One is saying it's almost, this is my son to the people, but this is now to Jesus. You are my beloved son.

With you I am well pleased. And then we read, a voice from heaven said that this is whom I am well pleased in. The testimony that John is hearing, and we're going to get into this.

[21 : 22] Now, first, let's get to the question. Why did the Spirit need to descend on Jesus when he is already the Son of God? If he's already born perfect, he's already the Son of God, this is the second biggest question that comes out.

Why on earth would he need to be anointed by? Now, what theologians call this is what's known as a theocratic anointing. And don't worry, you're not going to be tested on this.

But going back, we know that Jesus Christ is fully man and fully God. And remember, he's not 50% God and 50% man put together.

He's 100% man and 100% God put together. He's not God in disguise. He's fully flesh and body. He's fully human, but he's still God.

But we know from Philippians 2 that God, that Jesus Christ chose to self-empty himself to take on the form of a servant.

[22 : 21] He's born in the likeness of man. And he did this to submit to his Father in order to be our perfect sacrifice.

Now, remember when we're in the Gospels, and I'm sure a lot of you guys know this, there's an Old Testament and a New Testament. In the Old Testament, they function by what is known as the Old

Covenant, the old promises that God made for his people.

In the New Testament, and Ezekiel 36 prophecies, says there will become a new covenant. It's not going to be like the old one. You're not going to need all those sacrifices, all those things you do at the temple.

I'm going to send one perfect sacrifice that's going to be the end of all things. And it's going to be, as we all know, in the form of his son, Jesus Christ. But Jesus hasn't died yet.

He's still Old Testament. In the New Testament, remember Acts chapter 2? They preach, Jesus ascends into heaven in Acts chapter 1, and the Holy Spirit comes and pours out into everyone who believes.

[23 : 31] So in the New Covenant, anyone who becomes a Christian is indwelt with the Holy Spirit. However, it wasn't like that in the Old Testament.

And this is called the theocratic anointing. That there was times when God wanted to use someone for the express purpose of forwarding his kingdom, the Holy Spirit would come upon him.

We read Joshua, who succeeded Moses, was a man filled with the Spirit. David was another man that we read the testimony when he became filled with the Spirit.

And probably the most famous one is Saul. Do you remember Saul? Saul was a man not of good repute. He was kind of a good-looking, larger man. But he wasn't a man of courage until God indwelt him with the Holy Spirit.

And he was actually a righteous ruler. He was a fierce warrior and a great king. But then he fell into sin and God removed that Spirit, that anointing from him.

[24 : 35] And after that, it was not anything but a destiny into destruction. But there's this interesting story. And it's funny. I've read it obviously many times, but I really didn't think of it in this way.

But it's Exodus 31. How about you guys turn back with me to Exodus 31. And this is kind of probably the best example of the Bible explaining what this theocratic anointing is.

So it's Exodus 31. So remember after Exodus, Moses has led all his people out.

What's interesting, before I say anything, one of the most curious stories is Moses. The Bible actually doesn't tell us that there was a verse that's saying the Spirit came upon Moses.

But this is a guy who saw the glory of God, right? This is a guy who talked personally with God.

There was an anointing because later on, if you remember in Numbers 20, they're about to go into the promised land and God commands Moses to speak to the rock so water will come out.

[25 : 42] He ends up striking it with a stick because he's angry. Psalm 10.33 says that Moses rebelled against his spirit. That rebellion that he did at that moment was against his spirit that was within him.

God didn't take it away, but it's evidence to us that he was definitely indwelt by the Spirit. But let's look at Exodus 31. Starting in verse 1. It says, The Lord said to Moses, See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, son of Hur, and the tribe of Judah.

And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting and in carving wood, to work in every craft.

Now remember at this time, they have no temple. They've just come out of Israel. There's no time to worship. So this is God kind of laying down what future worship is going to look like.

And he's called these men who he's going to anoint with his spirit. And he says, And I have given to all men ability, able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you, the tent of the meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent, the table, and its utensils, and its pure lampstand, with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering, with all its utensils, and the basin in its stand, and it even, finally, where garments, the holy garments of Aaron the priest, and the garments of his stones, and their servants as priests, and the anointing oil.

[27 : 29] And it just simply concludes, according to all that I have commanded you, they shall do. So we have this spirit that God pours out on his people for special projects.

And we see this in all avenues where God is furthering his kingdom. Okay, you with me on that?

There's no greater furthering in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Amen? And we see Jesus Christ in this moment becoming the perfect man for us. And what we're going to learn through this, and my contention is, is that as we see Jesus Christ live his life here on

earth, he's going to be doing so through the strength of the Holy Spirit.

So this is the beginning of him receiving that spirit. So one, we've seen this baptism, and the reason he's baptized is to identify with us. Two, he sees this spirit which will empower his ministry, and the final area of preparation is the trials in his wilderness.

So we're going to be looking at Matthew chapter 4, so please turn back to Matthew chapter 4. But before I read this section to you, I want to, I want to let you know what the other gospels say.

[28 : 44] And I want you to pay attention. A lot of people think it was Satan that came and attacked Jesus. It didn't go down that way. Mark chapter 1, 12 says, the spirit immediately drove Jesus out into the wilderness.

Luke 4, 1 says, and Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the spirit in the wilderness.

my point is that this battle that's going to happen in the wilderness is one spirit led and it was planned by God right from the very start.

So let's take a look at what Matthew says. Same thing. Then Jesus was led up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

So there's the purpose. God is setting Jesus up. This is his last area of preparation for the life that he's going to live for us. And after fasting 40 days and 40 nights, he was hungry.

[29 : 53] And the tempter came and said to him, notice, he doesn't happen before the 40 days. And in case you're wondering, 40 days is pretty much with water the outer limits that man can survive without food.

Any further he dies. So Jesus Christ has been pushed to the ultimate limits of his humanity out in the desert. And this is when Satan appears.

Jesus Christ at his most weakest point physically. And after fasting 40 days, 40 nights, he was hungry. The tempter came and said to him, if you are the son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.

But he being Jesus answered as written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple.

He said to him, if you are the son of God, throw yourself down for it is written, he will command his angels concerning you. And on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

[31 : 00] Jesus said to him, again as written, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test. Verse 8, again the devil took him to the very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

And he said to him, all these I will give you if you will fall down and worship me. Then Jesus said to him, be gone Satan, for it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.

Then the Lord, then the devil left him. and behold, angels came and were ministering to him. So as I said, there's a couple things that I really want to call your attention to.

One, the 40 days Jesus encounters Satan at his most physically weakest point. Two, it's the Holy Spirit that pushes him out there to confront Satan.

It's not Satan attacking him just because he's going through a fast. This was pre-planned all along. So now I want you to see just how human and how much Jesus Christ is the second Adam.

[32 : 12] Remember the first Adam. Like I said earlier today, he was without sin. But when Satan came, guess what Adam had?

A full belly. He lived in paradise. He wasn't isolated for 40 days. He had perfection all around him. Notice, Satan engages Adam, not Adam engages Satan.

Now let me just read for you in Genesis 3. And this is what Satan says to him. For God knows that when you eat of it, the fruit, your eyes will be open and you will be like God knowing good and evil. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one rise, she took of it its fruit and ate.

She also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate. What's interesting, and a lot of theologians try to draw a correlation, that the three things, temptations, that are mentioned here, one, who is good for the food, good for food, which is desires of the flesh.

[33 : 27] Are you guys familiar with 1 John 2.16? It says, For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life is not from the Father but is from the world.

All right? That is what tells us in 1 John. And here we have Satan playing on that very thing right from the very beginning. Desires of the eyes, the fruit was pleasant to the eye, and notice he said to make one wise, that was to experience the pride of life.

The exact same thing Jesus undergoes is the exact same thing that Adam underwent. So here we have the devil challenged Adam with Jesus.

It was God challenging the devil. Adam had every possible advantage. Jesus was starving, alone in great need. With Adam, the devil is victorious.

With Jesus, Satan is defeated. How did Adam respond? He responded to his human desires and he twisted God's word and fell into sin and condemned us all.

[34 : 35] What did Jesus do? He trusted God's word, stood true to God, and resisted every sin. If I can just take a sidebar, every sin that we fall into, you and I, it's because we twist God's word.

You know that? We make an excuse. We make a condition. God will be okay with that. He will dispense his grace on me.

I really need this. I pursue this relationship because God doesn't want me lonely. I need to do this in order to fit in. If I cut the corners at work, I will be rewarded.

I will be seen as, do you understand this? This is the same trick Satan has been doing since day one. He takes us to make us think we're doing something good and he twists it against God's word.

And that's why when Jesus Christ trusts God's word, how much more are we to, even when we don't understand, just go with the word. And here, Adam, who stood for us as the head of the human race, dooms us to sin because he fails.

[35 : 56] But this is Jesus Christ who's lived this perfect life, who now becomes the head of us.

What's interesting is after these temptations, Satan departs. But notice what it says. The angels tended and ministered to him. This is a theme we're going to see.

Jesus just doesn't snap and make himself well. He stays in the wilderness probably for several weeks as the angels would come and bring him food to heal him.

We've all seen those stories of people coming out of Auschwitz and those camps after they've been malnourished. That would have been Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ at 30 years old would have been the peak of physical condition.

He would have worked as a stonemason or carpenter. He would have been strong, virile, just absolute man. And now he's at this point where he's this withered body, weak in not spirit, but in physical being.

[37 : 09] And God in his great love sends these tender angels to care for him. Now I want you to turn with me to the Gospel of John. We're going to be looking at John chapter 1 here.

And we're going to be in Gospel of John next week because I want you to see something here. If you noticed, at the end of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, after the wilderness, it's all, they all say the same thing.

And Jesus went to Galilee. Jesus went to Galilee. But what they did is they're actually skipping an 8 to 10 month period in the life of Jesus. Remember how David read about John the Baptist being beheaded?

We're going to see when that time transpires. And all these events that transpire between the wilderness and Jesus in Galilee occur in John chapter 1 to John chapter 4.

And next week, we're going to talk about the significance of that life left. So Matthew 4.12 says, And when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee.

[38 : 16] Mark 1.14 says, Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee. Luke 4.14 says, And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. All three of this text gives us the impression that Jesus went straight to Galilee from the wilderness.

But that's not true. We have these very important events that happen in John chapter 4.1. So look at verse 19. Now remember when we talked about the significance of the Gospels.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known as what's called synoptic Gospels. They're eyewitness accounts for the life of Jesus. Okay? And we all know they're written with three different themes.

You have Matthew, highly reliant upon the Old Testament, written to a Jewish people. So those are the people that would have been in the Old Covenant. So when the Apostles were going about and ministering in the first century, the first place they went, they'd go to a synagogue.

And this is how they would, this is the Gospel that they would use in order to communicate these truths. Number two, we have the Gospel of Mark, which was written in Rome.

[39 : 29] And it's a very action Gospel. Very little teaching, a lot on the actions of Jesus. Because we know Rome, right center of the worship of Caesar at that time.

There's idols all over the place lifting up all these gods. And Mark's essentially saying, no, this is the real God. Look what he can do. And then we have Luke. And Luke approaches it from a historical perspective.

He goes and interviews. So after this time, I'm sure, we see these very thoughtful comments.

Right? And Mary treasured these things in her heart. Those are all Luke's, I'm betting Luke went and interviewed Mary.

Tell me, what was it like? What happened at that time? And just through the power of the Holy Spirit, he puts this Gospel. But John's Gospel happens years and years later. And it's almost John, and he's very aware of the other Gospels, fills in the blanks of the important parts of the story that were missed.

And remember, they only had a limited time. And the limited time was based on the size of a scroll. So what you'd have is that's the way you'd write. So whatever you could fit on that scroll would be your Gospel.

[40 : 37] Mark apparently was a little bit lazy, kind of short. No, I'm just kidding. But he kind of shortened it up. But Luke's, or John's filling in this stuff. And I want you to know, notice that John is using some exceptionally specific legal language for us.

And you guys might not think this is amazing, but I do. Because I just think it's the power of the Holy Spirit working through these words that sometimes we just don't appreciate. But his hand is a part of every word that's written to us here.

So, so let's, so verse 19, notice it says at the very beginning, and this is the testimony of John. All right? He's saying, this is, I'm testifying.

And at that time, don't forget, other Gospels were being written by false prophets. They were trying to muddy the water as to who Jesus was. So, John is going to, hey, we're going to do away with this.

I'm going to give you this, and I'm testifying. Now, go down to verse 25. So, John the Baptist is in the wilderness, and at this point, he's already baptized Jesus Christ, but all the religious leaders are coming to hear him out.

[41 : 48] And at this point of John 25, Jesus is in the wilderness. So, remember, when John the Baptist first came, the Messiah is coming. The Messiah is coming, ready yourself.

But he's going to take a different tact with his words. So, it said, now they asked him, verse 25, then why are you baptizing if you are neither the Christ nor Elijah nor the prophet?

Now, remember, these guys knew the Old Testament prophecies. They knew that Christ needed a forerunner, a herald.

And John says, John answered, I baptize with water, but among you, notice it's no, there's one coming. He's stating, there among you, there's one, he's already here now.

Guys, the Messiah isn't in the future, he's here now. Okay? Now, among you stands one who you do not know, I don't know where he is right now, but I know he's here, he's somewhere, even who comes after me the strap of whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie.

[42 : 56] Now, go down to verse 29. Jesus is returning from his time in the wilderness. He's been strengthened by the mending of the angels, and the next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

So his first message was the Messiah is coming. The second message is he's here, he's walking among us, I don't know where he is right now, but he's here, guys, trust me on this. Then all of a sudden he shows up.

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. My argument is this is the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. It's out there, the religious leaders, everybody's there. This is the one.

Make no mistake, it is this guy, Jesus Christ. Now notice, this is what he said of whom. After me comes a man who ranks before me, I'm in verse 30, because he was before me.

I myself did not know him, but the purpose I came baptizing with water that he might be revealed to Israel. 32, and John bore witness. This is specific legal language.

[44 : 06] I saw the spirit descend. Remember Matthew reports the perspective from John's point of view. This is supporting that. You get that? Like there was no accident that Matthew's doing it from John's point of view and Mark and Luke do it from our point, or Jesus' point of view, but he says, I saw the spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and he's telling all the leaders and rulers, and it remained on him.

I myself did not know him, but he who sent me baptized with water said to me, he on whom you see the spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit, with the Holy Spirit. And they all knew, this is going back to Ezekiel 36. This is the promised covenant. This is the one that you guys have been living this whole religious life for.

You guys were hoping that he would eventually come. He's here now. I've seen it. I've testified. The spirit came down. And they knew from Ezekiel 36 all the transformation that would come up. And I have seen and I have borne witness that this is the son of God.

[45 : 21] Amen? Like I said, here's the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus Christ. What's interesting and the sad thing is the religious leaders of the day knew the promises.

They knew the prophecies that existed for hundreds of years. They knew the right questions it was. And all of a sudden when they hear this man testify that Jesus Christ the son of God, we're going to just see a story of complete rejection over and over and over.

All right. Make sense to you guys? You guys were a little bit of a theology class today rather than a sermon, right? A little bit of a change. But I hope you guys will be blessed by that. And just pay attention to some of the unique words that are in there.

And of course, you guys have the weekly readings. So we're going to be looking at John 1 to 4. And what John's going to be doing at that time is, or what's going to happen is John's going to continue his ministry for a little while.

But this is the time where the crowd that is following John are finally going to believe him and start following Jesus. So when we get to Galilee, when we see the big crowd, John 1 to 4 explains to us why that crowd is there.

[46 : 37] And it's because we see the growth that happened with John and all of a sudden all the guys are going to go, that's the Messiah. That's where I need to go.

And we're going to see probably one of the greatest humble men that ever lived in his response to the greatness of Christ. Let's pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, there's so much to the idea.

Even when we thought about just the words that we read for the Advent reading of what it was for you to become human, it wasn't easy.

It wasn't simple. But to become our Messiah did not mean glory and power here on earth. But it meant setting yourself up as a servant who would suffer for us so that we might not be eternally condemned.

The story is absolutely amazing. And Father, if anything, I pray that our love for you and appreciation and worship of you would increase correspondingly to how much we've been given to understand these truths.

[48 : 02] The significance of being baptized, the significance of the Spirit, and the significance of these trials. that you ultimately did for us.

Father, I'm in awe of it and I'm excited to be studying your life and to understand deeper truths that bring new meaning to what was it like for Jesus to be human.

Father, my prayer for this church is that we would see our need for you. as Jesus Christ, as we will see, will be totally reliant on the Holy Spirit, I pray that in this new covenant we all have that Spirit.

That we would live by the Spirit, speak by the Spirit, walk by the Spirit. That we would be consumed with doing your will and not ours. If it means to suffer, it means to suffer.

If it means to serve, it means to serve. If it means to lead, it means to lead. But Father, let us never be ignorant of what our calling is, which is to make disciples of men and women for Christ, to teach all that you did.

[49 : 18] So God, on this Sunday, as we start thinking about Christmas, may we look at it from a point of worship and wonder.

May we treasure these truths in our heart as Mary did. May we understand how they fulfilled the prophecies. How they made sense that even the religious rulers knew them and yet still rejected. Father, let us pray for cold, broken hearts. Let us pray for our family members who come and hate you, that are cold or not interested.

Pray that your Spirit breaks forth and would revive their hearts because that is exactly the testimony of Jeremiah that our old, stony hearts would be taken from us and we'd be given hearts of flesh. hearts that will beat for you. So God, on this kickoff of Christmas, may we truly comprehend the significance of all the events that surround it.

[50 : 29] We thank you for the glory of your word that preaches you so clearly and may we wonder in even the things that we don't always see right away. Your Spirit is amazing and magnificent and we thank you for every gift that is from above.

In your most holy and precious name, Amen.