

# The Herald and the King

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you have your Bibles out, please turn with me to Luke chapter 3. So we are in the section of the baptism of Jesus.

A couple things that we're going to cover is, or a couple things that I want you to know about this whole passage, is that it's actually covered in all four Gospels. So the predominant time we're going to spend in the Matthew and Luke, but we're going to look back at Mark, and we're going to see something very important in the Gospel of John.

But before I go any further, I forgot there was one announcement. I know this is hard to believe, but Joanna Kearns is hurt.

Christmas holiday season is upon us, and I believe Joanna has offered to direct the building of the Christmas theme coming up.

So that's going to be one of the top needs that we have going into December. So please be here. I think there's going to, the kids are going to be, the kids, the youth, are going to be bringing some of the supplies down this week from the back, and then we're going to get to decorating.

[ 1 : 16 ] So if you could make some time for that, that would be great and much appreciated. All right. Let's get back to the text. So a couple things that I want to deal with.

If you're familiar with the baptism of Jesus and the time that John the Baptist had, there's generally several questions that arrive. And some of them are quite deep theologically when we consider the baptism.

First of all, what was the message that John himself was preaching? When he was saying that the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is near.

And just so you know, those are the exact same things. When there's references in Matthew to kingdom of heaven. Remember, Matthew the gospel is written to a primary Jewish audience.

To say God would not have been appropriate. So they say kingdom of heaven. But in the rest of the gospels, they freely use the kingdom of God. So we're going to take a look at what that looks like.

[ 2 : 15 ] So there's three components to that message. So we want you to understand what is significant about John's message. The other question I want us to understand is what is significant about John?

Why did John have to come? If you remember a couple of weeks ago, I had taught on the necessity for certain things happening in order for Jesus to be the Messiah.

And the big important one is he needed a forerunner. Jesus Christ, in order to be the Messiah, a forerunner needed to appear before him.

We're going to talk about another question that I want us to answer is what was significant about John's baptism. If John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, why did Jesus, the sinless Son of God, need to be baptized?

And the last one is what is the significance of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus? In case you don't know, that is one of the most talked about theological issues in regards to this position.

[ 3 : 27 ] So I'm hoping to bring some clarity, some hope, some excitement about the work that God does in the life of Jesus. And we're going to see the type of work that God can do in our lives as well.

So before I go any further, I just want to pray. Dear Lord, just as we dig into this text, may you give us understanding. May our spirit, through our understanding of your words and your teaching, would understand these things to be true, oh Father.

I pray that you would give both my mind and my mouth clarity as we talk about some of these issues. Father, it is such a, in fact, John the Baptist, there's so little said of him, but John, or Jesus himself saying there's no greater man born of woman than John the Baptist.

What an incredible saint and servant of your kingdom. And just an incredible man who is given over to your glory.

I pray that we would even catch a glimpse of this for encouragement in our own lives. The faithfulness that he demonstrates. The willingness to step forward.

[ 4 : 43 ] Even when there's uncertainty and chaos around him. He understands there's a task before him. And he does it.

And we're going to see why. So we ask these things in your most gracious and glorious name. So, like I said, I want to begin with Luke's explanation of the events.

Because Luke creates for us the understanding of where this happened in time. And by understanding this in time, we understand what the flavor of the people were.

And what they would have experienced. And why the events we're going about to read happen. So let's take a look at Luke chapter 3, verse 1. So, in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee.

Just so you know, that word tetrarch means an under king. So it is a leader type role, but it's not quite a king. It's a sub-king, for lack of a better word.

[ 5 : 57 ] And his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Aeturia and Tetracontus, and Licinius tetrarch of Abilene. During the high priesthood of Annas and Sapphias, the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

So this time frame tells us a few things. First thing it tells us, it's been 18 years since the last recorded event of Jesus Christ in Scripture.

Scripture has been relatively silent since the time of his birth. We read when he was 12 and consecrated to the temple. And since that time, it is now 18 years since.

So the event that is occurring, Jesus Christ is about to begin his ministry at the age of 30. What can we surmise about who Jesus would have been?

One, we read last week that he increased in wisdom, increased in stature, finding favor with God and man. So God, Jesus, began to grow mature.

[ 7 : 07 ] It's interesting. When we look at Luke 2.49 when he was in the temple, remember he's lost. Mary finds him and he's talking to the priests. And he's into this deep discussion.

And in that point, Jesus is actually giving us an understanding of his heart. He says, So you've got this 12-year-old who has an understanding of why he's here, what he's called for, and his motivation at that time is to be for his father.

But we learn two verses later, when Mary and Joseph called them home, he said he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them.

So Jesus Christ accepted his place in the world that time. You kind of get this feeling that there's going to be 18 years of wanting to get this job done, right?

God's got me here at 12 years old. We see that he has an understanding. And for 18 years, though, we understand that he functioned as a good son, worked for his father.

[ 8 : 25 ] We believe he was either a carpenter who worked with wood or a stonemason, that he would have been a surrogate father. Because we know in that time somewhere Joseph passes.

We don't know why. We don't know what year. But then he would have been a big brother, surrogate father. To his half siblings, which we read there was six of them. So he's busy doing family stuff.

He's being the man of the house. He's doing what any good son would do. And he just willingly submits.

But he's waiting. And he's waiting for the forerunner to come. Because he understands the prophecies that before he is to begin his ministry, a forerunner, one who would come out of the wilderness, must come before him.

Here he is, over 100 miles away, and word is coming to him. The fact of the matter, Israel has not changed much since the birth of Jesus Christ.

[ 9 : 35 ] It is still a mess. It's ruled by Rome. Luke tells us Tiberius Caesar is the emperor of Rome. We know through history that he ruled from 14 AD to 37 AD.

And the events of this baptism are around 29 to 30 AD. History tells us that Rome was an absolute moral decay.

50% of the population were slaves. And you needed to understand, slaves had no rights. If you wanted to kill them, you could kill them. Cruelty, barbarie.

What's interesting is Tiberius Caesar did away with the games. Like, this is how corrupt this whole society was. That they created games to entertain themselves where people would watch people kill themselves.

That they would take other people from other nations and feed them to animals, and it would be a spectacle. This is a society totally driven by Satan.

[10:44] You get that? This is a horrible, wicked society. And it is the hugest, largest, most powerful society at that time. And what's interesting is that Tiberius Caesar hates the Jews.

And in case you didn't know, out of one out of every seven Roman citizen was a Jew. And they believe that he exiled them all out of Rome.

In Rome, Jews were openly persecuted. In fact, they were exiled out. And historians estimate that there was probably more than two million Jews in the diaspora at that time.

So getting back to Israel, so that's what's going on in the Roman Empire. There's not a lot of wars at that time. But Herod the Great has died.

He was the one who ruled when Jesus was died. Power was given to Archelaus, his son, who turned out to be so cruel that the other rulers around said, Rome, you need to get rid of this guy.

[11:48] And so what Rome did is they made Pontius Pilate ruler over Judea. Actually, before then, they declared it, you're not going to have your own independent kingdom.

We, Rome, are going to rule over you. So in case you're not sure where Judea is, Judea is the southern part of Israel. It includes Samaria, and it also includes Jerusalem.

Pontius Pilate, who we all get to know, near the crucifixion, was a man who hated Jews. He was known for persecuting them, thieving from them, and carrying out what is known as judicial murders.

That means he could try them without a formal trial and put them death at his desire. And it was noted that he was especially defiant against the Jewish faith.

Now, when they noticed, when it said that the high priest was Annas and Sapphias, there's actually only one high priest at that time. And this now tells us what's going on in Israel.

[12:54] In fact, there was four priests that Pilate had thrown out. And what Rome did to control Israel is they found the most compromising guy that you could get who would be your high priest.

So it turns out they had a real high priest. He's put aside, but he's kind of controlling things. And remember, the priesthood is a political animal right now. And they're controlling things through Sapphias.

So he's kind of the real powerhouse, but Annas has got that official title. There's this quote that I found in this historian's book.

The author wrote, the Sadducees, who the priests, were ridiculed those who were the Pharisees. Although they praised morality, but they preferred lives of comfort and self-indulgent.

They were favored by the Roman authorities and in turn submitted to their tyranny without protest. Now, in fairness to Rome, do you realize that Israel had more rebellions than any other nation in the Roman Empire?

[14:10] Jews hated to be run. And there was massive uprisings throughout the year. Some big, some small. Some argue it's because of the land.

It's a very difficult land to control that you could have guerrilla warfare. But it was a place that they continued to try to dominate.

And it was interesting is that this pilot has now controlling the priesthood and this is how he's gaining control.

So you have an entirely perverted empire continually run by Satan over the land. Their emissary, that is their governor, is just as perverted and hates the Jews.

So this is the flavor of the culture that exists at the time. Notice, Luke tells us that Herod Tetrarch, under King over Galilee, so Herod Tetrarch is where Jesus will do most of his ministry.

[15:23] He will be ruling there. We know him to be a weak character. He's got absolutely no religious convictions. He's unscrupulous, uncaring, although not as cruel as his father.

He loved the same vices and as we know, he's the one who ends up beheading John the Baptist. The other son, Philip Tetrarch, he's more on the Gentile side, the Decapolis.

History tells us that he was actually a moderate and just ruler. In Licinius, history doesn't tell us much about him. So the two main characters that we understand that Jesus is going to play off of one another and we're going to see how strategically Jesus is, is going to be Herod, Tetrarch, and

Galilee and the Roman authority that exists in Judea.

So all these people, and the reason we're talking about this is they will all be in power as Jesus ministered in the land. And so, John appears on the scene.

Let's go back to Luke. So this is the flavor. This is what's going on. This is a depressed people. This is a discouraged people. This is a people who have not heard from God for over 400 years.

[16:37] There's been no prophets. There's been no writings. They don't know about what happened with Jesus and the angels. So it's been silence. They're just a beaten down people. And all of a sudden, verse 3, and John, and he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin.

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low and the crooked shall become straight and the rough places shall become level ways and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

If you are a Jew and you understand this prophecy, you are waiting for this Messiah. And before that, you are waiting for this forerunner, the one who would come and announce and say, repent for the kingdom.

of heaven is at hand. The first thing I think we need to understand this is we need to understand what exactly John's role is. As we stated earlier, we know that Jesus Christ needed a forerunner and we know through Luke that John the Baptist was to be the forerunner.

Now it's important for us to understand that John is a herald and he's not an evangelist. Okay? John is not calling new people to be saved for the kingdom of heaven.

[18:21] That is not his role. His role is a herald and the herald is one who goes before the people, before the king and announces the king is coming, the king is coming.

And the reason some people get confused that John the Baptist was some sort of evangelist is because he talked about the baptism of repentance and we're going to understand what that means.

But John's sole role is to call old Jews back to an understanding of what the Old Testament taught about the kingdom of God.

You with me on that? That's all he's doing. He's reminding them that what God promised in the Old Testament is going to be realized. But you've got these people who are defeated.

They're demoralized. They're broken. But now that he's here he's calling them back to the faith. Hey, have hope. God is coming.

[19:24] He's going to bring justice. And we're not going to get into all what he's going to call here. But hey, come back to the true faith. And there's one thing that a herald does when he calls out to his people.

He's calling for your loyalty. He's calling for your obedience. And he's calling for your allegiance. Those are the three things that John is calling. So for the first time in 400 years someone is speaking for God.

And you know what? The people are hearing it. They're hearing it. We're going to talk about how wide it goes. But take a look at verse 4. These are the words from Isaiah.

Prepare the way to the Lord. Make his path straight. Now what heralds did when they'd go to another nation or a part of the nation the king was going to come they had to fix the roads. Kings don't do very well on horseback. I guess they traveled in carriage. I don't know. But they would make sure there was no potholes. They made sure the way was clear. There was no dangers. So that is part of the process.

[20:28] It's preparing that way. That's what it says. Every valley shall be filled. Every mountain hill shall be made low. And the crooked shall become straight. And the rough places will become level.

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. So he would go before the king announcing his presence. And they would prepare the way.

Notice in Matthew 3.3 the voice of crying in the wilderness says the exact same thing. Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his path straight. Spiritually John is telling the people of Israel the king the promised one the Messiah the one whom the old prophets spoke about that kingdom is coming and it's really close.

And what you need to do now is you need to get your lives in order. If you were one of his people start acting like it. If you need to repent repent.

So what you need to do is you need to get your lives in order. Get rid of the compromise. If you happen to give your allegiance to another king get rid of it.

[ 21 : 48 ] Come back. Pledge your obedience allegiance and loyalty to the king. Matthew 3.4 says now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist and his food was locusts and wild honey.

Then Jerusalem and I want you to pay attention to this. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him.

They were baptized by him in the river Jordan confessing their sins. Okay notice I want you to notice a couple of things here. One all the people in that region heard this message.

Now the land where he is is I'm going to have Dave put up a little bit of a map to give you an idea of where he's ministering. So if you can see that end of the red arrow that is the arrow is that's what they believe Jesus' route which would have been over 100 miles to get to or 160 kilometers to get to the place where he was baptized.

But as you notice you can probably see Jerusalem over to the left. Can you guys see Jerusalem? It's the left of the top of the Dead Sea. So you have the Jordan River flows from the Sea of Galilee all the way into the Dead Sea.

[ 23 : 11 ] So this is a rough area and what's interesting about this area is let's just say if John were marking out his he says hey I wanted to be a missionary and he's going to come to our church and he says I'm going to call all these people to God and we'd be sitting there as a church board how are you going to do it?

Well I'm going to go out to a wilderness that's really hard to get to where nobody lives and I'm just going to start shouting. I don't know if we're going to be so inclined to give you any money John and next interview we suggest just leave the locusts at home.

But notice Luke 3.3 says and he went into all the region around the Jordan. Matthew 3.1 says the wilderness of Judea. Mark 1.4 says John appeared baptizing in the wilderness wilderness and we believe that he was just going up and down the Jordan calling people.

And like I said as a mission strategy it would have been one of the worst ones. You go where people are not aren't. But I want you to tell you something. This is how depressing it is in Israel. That someone is talking that there is hope. And there's someone talking about this hope. And it's way down in the valley.

[ 24 : 40 ] And just so you know the Dead Sea is the lowest point on earth. It is over 1,300 feet below sea level. Jerusalem is 2,500 feet above sea level.

So to go from Jerusalem down into the wilderness to Jordan is over 4,000 you're looking at around 4,000 feet elevation both down and up.

And the word that is used in scripture out to John it means that there's an actual struggle involved getting to John. There's no like Disney monorail that's going to get you to your place or a bus you can catch.

You have to fight your way to get to this man. But that is John. His message was so compelling that crowds wanted to hear it.

They were ready. They were ready for the Messiah. They wanted to throw this yoke. They were desperate. They knew they could not do it alone and they needed help. So they traveled through this rough rugged country to a place called the Jordan Rift.

[ 25 : 56 ] And they came. And they came. and they heard a message. The kingdom of heaven is here at last.

The reality is John's message was not for the lazy. It was not for the tender hearted. It was not for those that we would call easy believism.

John's message meant a physical change of your life. life. It took effort and you had to fight for it. So this is the frame up for John the Baptist ministry.

Rome's rule is brutal. Your own priests that are supposed to represent you before God in the temple are utterly corrupt and they're in line with this pagan foreign nation.

and now you have this dry tinder that is ready for the spark. So the people are waiting for this Messiah and they come and they come and they come and they're being baptized people from all walks of life.

[ 27 : 22 ] I believe that the ministry of John the Baptist began six months before Jesus gets baptized. That he was there doing his work proclaiming the kingdom of heaven and as people are

repenting and coming to him the crowd is growing larger and larger and larger.

Mark 1 5 says and all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan confessing their sins.

How much of an impact was that now having on Israel? Take a look at Matthew verse 7. So this is chapter 3 so you're going to keep Luke and Matthew kind of between your fingers but verse 7 we see that the crowds of John are getting so big so influential the religious leaders of the day now want to check him out.

We read this in other parts when Jesus ministry starts to get big religious rulers want to know what's going on let's go check him out. So Matthew 3 7 says but when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism.

Okay now this is fascinating. Okay first of all Pharisees Sadducees are not friends. Remember Sadducees they're of the priesthood they're involved in the temple they have the easy life that's what they're doing and then you have the Pharisees that are calling for a very rigorous legalistic lifestyle.

[ 29 : 07 ] They want to be pure I believe they're good of heart as you could guess but they've come up with man's way in order to live for Christ. They set down these rules because they don't want any more judgment to their people and to their land.

So they're trying to do something. So they all come to him and you'll notice it says he said to them you brood of vipers who warned you to flee from the wrath to come.

Now before we go any further in this I want you to flip over to Gospel of John chapter 1 19. John chapter 1 19.

Because it actually tells us what they asked of John. What's amazing here and I'm going to give you guys the overview of John the Baptist's life.

So we believe he's been baptizing for six months. Jesus Christ is going to come and be baptized. And then what happens is Jesus Christ goes to the wilderness.

[ 30 : 12 ] Remember? He's going to go to the wilderness. It says the Spirit of God forces him out to the wilderness where he's going to endure those 40 days of temptation. During those 40 days and then we also know that Jesus is going to recuperate.

Remember Jesus is living as a total man. He's tired. The angels actually come and work with him. During that time John the Baptist is going to continue working.

Alright? He's going to be and his message is going to change and we're going to see it. And it's a very nuanced but he's no longer saying the kingdom of God is coming.

He says the kingdom of God is here. Okay? So there's going to be this message. And then what happens is if you notice Matthew, Mark, and Luke and as you guys know those are called the synoptic gospels.

Okay? those are optic eyewitnesses to the event of Jesus Christ. They're all very similar written from different points of view. The gospel of John is written many decades later.

[ 31 : 19 ] And I believe it's done with the reason to kind of fill in the blanks that didn't get reported in the first three gospels.

So by the time John writes the gospel of John, everyone knows the gospels of Mark, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Matthew, Mark, and Luke. So now we jump into Matthew 119.

And it says, and this is the testimony of John. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who are you? He confessed and did not deny but confessed, I am not the Christ.

And they asked him, what then? Are you Elijah? He said, I am not. Are you the prophet? And he answered, no. So they said to him, who are you?

We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself? He said, I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness.

[ 32 : 23 ] Make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said. All right. These men who were representing the head of the religious, notice they knew the exact right questions to ask.

They asked him if he was the Christ. They asked him if he was Elijah. Are you the prophet? prophet. They all knew this had to happen.

And this man who's acting like a forerunner, who's fulfilling the law that we read, and they're coming and they're answering. But they're rejecting his message.

Now, all of them don't reject it. So what happens is, and a lot of people get this messed up, is you see this time after the wilderness, people believe that some of the Gnostic Gospels demonstrate that after Jesus comes back from the wilderness, he immediately goes to Galilee and begins his ministry.

But that's not what really happens. In John 1-4, Jesus is going to take between 8-12 months ministering in Jerusalem.

[ 33 : 45 ] So just think John 3. We know those passages, we know those discussions, guess who those discussions are with? Those Pharisees.

Some of those people of the law. Nicodemus, right? They're starting to have the questions because they see that everything about Jesus is fitting perfectly with the Old Testament prophecy.

So we're going to learn this next week, but what happens is, for about 8-12 months, God then transitions John's message to the kingdom of heaven is here and it's right there in Jesus Christ. Because after Jesus Christ comes to him, and remember his disciples start saying, hey, Jesus is taken away from your crowd, are you not bothered by that? And then John says the most wonderful world is, listen, he must increase, I must decrease.

And that's when John's testimony and ministry ends right there. He provides the perfect, humble response to becoming a barrier. And those people, this crowd that John is ministering to eventually go to Jesus.

[ 34 : 55 ] So when we read about the crowds, many of those people are the ones that first came to hear John speak. So the first thing that I want you to bring your attention to, these crowds are significant to the story, but number two, the rulers knew.

The rulers knew that what Isaiah said, they knew there was to be a Christ, there was to be an Elijah, there was to be a prophet, and they knew all these things.

Luke records the exact same thing in Luke 3, and we're going to go back to verse 8, and it says, this is Matthew, going back to Matthew, it says, and so he's saying, bear fruit in keeping with repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father, for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.

Now the Mishnah taught, and that was extracurricular, and it wasn't codified at this time, but the Pharisees taught that because they were related to Abraham, and because of Abraham's obedience to God coming out and being God's people, they were now safe.

So any kind of judgment that was going to happen to Israel was only going to be to Rome, and any other Gentile that was there. They did not really believe judgment was coming for them.

[ 36 : 22 ] But John gives them a beat down right here. Listen, if we wanted these, I could lift these rocks and make these Abraham's people. And we're going to look at why that is so in a second.

He says, I baptize you with water repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I. Oh, sorry, I'm going to go back to verse 10. We don't want to see this. Even now, the axe is laid at the root of the trees.

Guess who's that axe? It's Jesus Christ. He's coming. He's going to be making judgment on them. Every tree, therefore, that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I'm not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

His winnowing fork is in his hands and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire. Take note, wheat chaff.

[ 37 : 21 ] We're going to see that throughout Jesus' ministry. He uses that visual a lot. So what John is challenging here is there was a belief, like I said, that if they were children of Abraham, they would be saved.

But he's telling them, hey, your blood's not going to do it. The sacrifices that you do are not going to do it. Even now, the axe is laid at the foot of the trees.

Amos 5 tells us, verses 21, 24, this is God speaking through the prophet. He says, I hate, I despise your feasts, your legalism, your religiousness, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. In the peace offerings of your fatted animals, I will not look upon them.

Take away from me the noise of your songs to the melody of your harps. I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

[ 38 : 30 ] God's calling his attention that God desires justice and righteousness than the legalism, the sacrifices that you are offering. Keeping the laws are not going to save you.

Jeremiah 7, 22-24 says, For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices, but the command I gave them was, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people and walk all the way that I command you, for it may be well with you.

Psalms 40, 6-8 says, In sacrifice, in offering, you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear, burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

Then I said, Behold, I have come in the scroll of the book that is written. I delight to do your will, O my God.

Your law is within my heart. We get caught up thinking that God's command was to do these sacrificial laws and this whole thing that was going on in the temple.

[ 39 : 53 ] people and these people missed it. And what these verses that I read to you were not like unpopular verses. I read out of Jeremiah, which they knew of the prophecies that were coming.

And they knew the story of Samuel and David. This is interesting. Samuel the prophet basically says, Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is in the sin of divination and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you, Saul, from being king. Sacrifices isn't what saves you.

It's obedient to God. So now, John is calling them to turn away from their way of living and live in preparation for the prophet's call.

[ 41 : 01 ] John's call has essentially three elements to it. Repent. Repent means to turn away from something and go the other direction.

Whatever mess or life you're living, whatever idol you're serving, whatever life you're living, whatever, turn away from it and turn to what we've talked about, to obedience to God.

Turn to obedience to God. Two, prove it with your actions. Luke 3.10, it says, and the crowds asked him, what then shall we do?

And he answered them, whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none and whoever has food is to do likewise. Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, teacher, what shall we do?

And he said to them, collect no more than you are authorized to do. Soldiers also asked him, and we, what shall we do? And he said, do not exhort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation and be content with your wages.

[ 42 : 04 ] All right. And just look at those people that were coming to him. You had the ultimate, you had the tax collectors. You had soldiers that would have been seen working for Rome.

You had all these people from all walks of life. What can I do? And John is essentially saying, walk in light of who you follow. And how do I show that?

Get baptized. That's essentially what it's done. You get baptized. So John is calling them to do works keeping with their status as followers of the one true king.

Amen. Does that message resonate with us today? That's the same call. We've been created for good works.

We've been created to be representatives of our father. And our actions speak louder than words. That a redeemed heart leads to a redeemed life.

[ 43 : 10 ] A life fixed on our own works and faith does not change the heart. But the heart changes the actions.

So why is John making this hard? John calls the great masses to fight to get to him.

He calls them to change their lives. He's calling those that know the prophecies and believe that the king is returning.

And the axe is at the root of the trees. Because the king is coming to judge. Now this baptism.

I want to talk a little bit about what the baptism that John offered. The baptism that John offered was not a baptism that saved you.

[ 44 : 24 ] Okay? You with me on that? You aren't saved because that work of the baptism. Now don't forget how we think about baptism. We think of it in a New Testament context. We die with

Christ and we raise with Christ.

That is not a visual that is in their mind. Secondly, the Old Testament speaks very little about baptism. It talks about sprinkling.

But what it does is it talks about after going through a time of cleanliness or you've come out of a period of being unclean to be able to come to the temple.

After you'd be unclean, you would clean yourself as a demonstration that you have gone through the rituals. What we do know is that somewhere in the intertestamental period, this habit of building what was called mikvahs and they're like tubs.

And these tubs have a lot of rules about cleanliness, uncleanliness. For one, it has to be naturally occurring or it has to be rainwater or river.

[ 45 : 31 ] You can't actually be a person to pick up the water and put it in a tub. That actually would not work. But the idea is when you had, you would go into the mikvah, you'd dip yourself in, you'd be totally, you've cleaned yourself off.

It's not a bath. You've totally cleaned yourself off and it would be the ritual to go in underwater and then come out and then you could go to the temple or do an act that was to be done before the Lord.

And the best way I've heard it described by scholars is you would do this as you prepared to meet God.

That would be the final thing before you met the king, the one you were cleaning yourself off for. So you would bathe through these things and you would go in. And that's what I believe we see represented here.

The people who are getting baptized are saying, I'm ready to meet the king who was coming. And I want to demonstrate this by turning back on my old life. I'm confessing that life of sin.

[ 46 : 41 ] I'm done. It's over. And I'm, and I fixed things and here I am. And I'm, I'm taking this, this baptism. So why it gets confused later on is when it's called a baptism of repentance.

Repentance. If you had something to repent, you would do it. But if you didn't have anything to repent, you would still do it. You with me on that one? Because that answers the question is why could Jesus get baptized?

And we're going to talk a little bit, but a bit more of that. But it would be like a ritual cleaning as you were prepare yourself that the king is coming and you were ready.

Luke 3 15. You want to turn to that passage? We're back to Luke. Notice as the people were in expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ.

Just think he's got them. They're fired up. They're ready. They know the one is coming, the Messiah, the king, who's going to. And if you understand, this is the kingdom guys, and this still gets talked about today.

[ 48 : 02 ] For their understanding of kingdom, one, God had to rule in heaven. God had to rule on earth and he had to be the government. Okay. His righteous government would flow over everything.

The Jews understood that there was two barriers to this. The first barrier was Rome. There was already, that's why they're so desperate to make Jesus Messiah, as we're going to read.

They want him to overthrow the Roman empire. And number two, though, the other barrier is their inward hearts are garbage. Their religion is false.

So the two barriers, what God is, is calling them to the kingdom of heaven, is both this, it has to begin with a heart that is actually turned towards God.

That acknowledge that is God indeed on the crown. And the ultimate kingdom will have God ruling in heaven and God on earth. So they understand that this is that first step.

[ 49 : 00 ] I got to fix what's in here. And the other barrier, guess what? I can't change that barrier. I can change this barrier, but I can't change the Rome barrier.

And as many Jews have tried, so that was this, this was this, this fever that is going on as the people were in expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ.

John answered them all saying, I baptize you with water, but who he is mightier than I is coming. The strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into the barn and the chaff.

He will burn with unquenchable fire. And then we simply read in Matthew 3.13, then Jesus came to Galilee, to the Jordan, to John, to be baptized by him.

[ 50 : 09 ] Next week, we're going to look at this baptism and we're going to look at the significance of both the baptism, the message that will change from John. And ultimately, I think the big question is, what does it mean when that we see the Spirit come upon Jesus like a dove and affirm him for the role that he has?

Let's pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, there's just messages here, words written over 2,000 years ago in a context that is still familiar to us in this day.

It's so easy to draw the parallels to our current situation. There is a spirit that rules over this land that is not good.

Death is accepted in abortion. Perversion is accepted. We have people are now determining that wrong is right and right is wrong.

We see violations in the homes and churches, both of the people of God and to people who may not be you, but still deserve justice. It's almost as if you're creating the perfect time for the second coming that echoed this time.

[ 51 : 43 ] The fact of the matter is we cannot affect what goes on around us, but we can certainly affect what goes on inside of us.

that our heart's disposition can be changed by simply putting our faith in you, by repenting of our works, our deeds, our selfishness, our hatred, our anger.

Even those things we do out of loneliness, hurt, frustration. The message that John preaches is the message that we all need to hear.

The only thing that we have power over is ourselves. Do we personally receive the King? Jesus has now come.

He's now died on the cross and he's proven himself without a doubt that he was indeed the perfect son, the ultimate lamb to be sacrificed for our sins. And all we need to do is to claim that in faith.

[ 53 : 04 ] To simply understand that we are sinners separated from God. Because of that separation, we are lost, broken people.

There's nothing that we can ever do to fix our way back to God, but to put our faith in Jesus Christ.

As we get into this study, we understand that God is, or Jesus is both 100% man and 100% God.

He's the one who can stand as the mediator, knowing what it is to be man and knowing what it is to be God, to be offered up as this perfect sacrifice for us.

Which is why we come to God, not through Mary or any other means, but solely through the blood of Jesus Christ that paid for our sins.

That upon our acceptance of his kingship in our lives, we become immediately and eternally sons of God and daughters of the King.

[ 54 : 15 ] And the command we have been given to obey is to follow him. To teach others about your son, Jesus Christ.

And to call them to be baptized. To repent, to turn away and accept the truth that Jesus Christ is the only way.

So Father, just through these sermons, I pray that we'd get a sense of the times and we would learn something that we can apply to our own lives, our own thought processes.

Perhaps we're feeling purposeless. We may be Christians, but there's a sense of purposeless there. A sense of not knowing what to do.

How to prepare. Father, I pray that they would be led to others to be discipled, to be equipped. So we can engage this broken, destitute world with the truth.

[ 55 : 29 ] Because we live in the wilderness. And I know there's people calling out for help. Let us be the voices in the wilderness, bringing truth, harmony, and love, and an understanding of your justice to this cruel, broken world.

I pray these things in your most gracious and powerful name, Jesus Christ. Amen.