

Sunday School Lesson

**Matthew 3&4: Jesus' Ministry Begins (December 10, 2023)**

**I. Jesus' Baptism**

Relation to John the Baptist:

*“And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.” Luke 1:36 (KJV)*

If Mary and Elizabeth were cousins, then Jesus and John were second cousins.

What was John's message? – read **Matthew 3:1-3**

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Specifics of John's perspective are in Luke 3:10-13

<sup>10</sup> *“What should we do then?” the crowd asked.*

<sup>11</sup> *John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”*

<sup>12</sup> *Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”*

<sup>13</sup> *“Don't collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.*

Describe John and his followers:

<sup>4</sup> *John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup> Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. – Matthew 3:4-6*

The word “baptism” means to be brought under the control of a superior power or influence.<sup>1</sup>

What was John's view of Pharisees and Sadducees? – read **Matthew 3:7-10**

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<sup>1</sup> Augsburg, P. 43.

What did Jesus think of John? – read **Matthew 11:7-11**

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What did John think of Jesus? – read **Matthew 3:11-12**

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### The Baptism of Jesus

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

<sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

<sup>16</sup> As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” – Matthew 3:13-17

5 ways the Christian church speaks of baptism with (in) the Spirit:<sup>2</sup>

1. Historical interpretation – given on the Day of Pentecost to the church and He has been in the church ever since.
2. Wesleyan interpretation – sanctification, affirming that beyond the initial experience of grace and justification by faith, there is a second work of baptism with the Spirit for sanctification.
3. R.A. Torrey interpretation – a special enduement for power to witness which is to be sought and experienced in the life of the believer.
4. Charismatic interpretation – gifts or manifestations associating these gifts with the expression of the baptism itself.
5. Relational interpretation – the occasion in which Christ gives the Holy Spirit to dwell in the life of one who takes Him as Lord.

This is Jesus’ baptism of identification: “(1) the Sign, the act of baptism; (2) the Spirit, the presence of God; and (3) the Sonship, attested by the voice from heaven

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<sup>2</sup> Augsburg, p. 44-45.

(3:13-17). He is identified with the Kingdom, with the Spirit and with the Father.”  
“The person of the King is now introduced as the Son of God!”<sup>3</sup>

## ***II. Temptation in the Wilderness***

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted (or tested) by the devil.”

He fasted for 40 days and nights, and afterwards he was hungry. (!?!?)

3 tests (Matthew 4:13-10):

1. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

2. <sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. <sup>6</sup> “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you,  
and they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

<sup>7</sup> Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

3. <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. <sup>9</sup> “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

“In His humanity the possibility of sinning existed, yet He resisted temptation and perfectly fulfilled the law and will of God.”<sup>4</sup>

## ***III. Jesus’ First Day of Ministry***

Where did Jesus start His ministry? – read **Matthew 4:12-16**

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<sup>3</sup> Augsburg, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Harper’s p. 1536, note on Luke 4:2

This refers to Isaiah 9:1-2 and 42:7.

What was Jesus' message?

<sup>17</sup> *From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."* – Matthew 4:17

#### **IV. Jesus calls His first Disciples**

Who were the first Disciples called? – read **Matthew 4:18-22**

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3) 4)

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Was Jesus well received?

<sup>23</sup> *Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.* <sup>24</sup> *News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them.* <sup>25</sup> *Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.* – Matthew 4:23-35

#### **Summary:**

- John the Baptist was not high on tact – he was an “in your face” kind of preacher.
- Do you think John understood his place in relation to Jesus?
- Jesus did not wait for pupils to apply to Him for a discipleship; He called the ones He wanted. Later they were gifted by the Holy Spirit to accomplish the tasks that Jesus gave them (“go into all the world...”)
- In His own time, Jesus' fame and message spread beyond the Jewish community (reaching even Syria).

#### **References:**

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