

JESUS

THE LIFE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD | WEEK ONE

JESUS' BAPTISM, TEMPTATION, & CALLING OF THE DISCIPLES



THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Today, we kick off an eight-week journey through **Jesus' public ministry**. Jesus was around thirty years old when He began teaching crowds, healing the sick, and showing everyone who He truly was.

How do you boil down the life that changed the world into eight topics? You don't. So, we'll just get started. And we'll begin where all four gospel writers began: with the ministry of John the Baptist.

At that time, John the Baptist was already shaking things up in a big way. Huge crowds came to hear him preach! But John made one thing very clear: he wasn't the main event. He said he was just getting people ready—like an appetizer before the real meal—for someone much greater.

Everything John had been preaching about came together at one incredible moment: Jesus' baptism. This was such a big deal that John didn't even feel worthy to baptize Jesus! Let's read what happened in **Matthew 3:11-17** and see this amazing moment for ourselves.

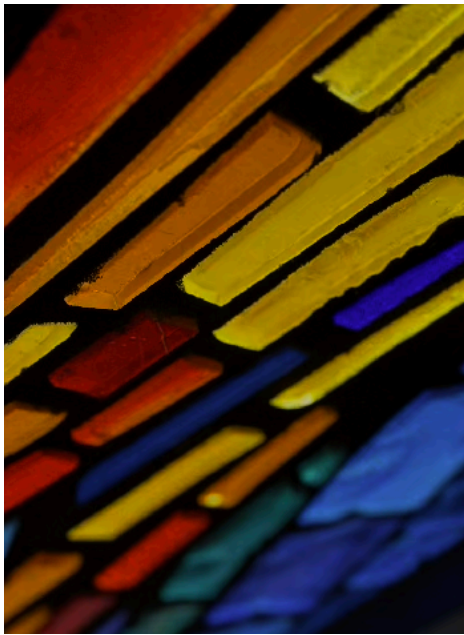
Wow, there was a lot going on there: judgment, fire, baptizing, a dove... what did it all mean? Let's break it down into two main ideas.

It's important to be baptized - washed clean

John the Baptist was... different. 😊 He lived out in the desert, wore clothes made of camel hair, and ate locusts (full of protein, yum!!! 😋). John lived this way on purpose. He wanted people to wake up and realize something important: they needed to **repent**.

How would you rank the top moments in the ministry of Jesus? He did so many amazing things and taught so many profound truths that it's impossible to rank them in order by importance. This eight-week study will work through some of the highlights of Jesus' ministry, culminating in His death and resurrection.





To repent doesn't just mean saying "sorry." It means turning around—like doing a U-turn. It means having a whole new approach to life because your eyes have been opened.

Now, why did people need to repent? Because God was about to come through on His big promise—the long-awaited Savior-Messiah was about to arrive!

That's why John wore clothes of camel hair—to be like the Old Testament prophet, **Elijah**. And what was the big deal with Elijah? Well, God promised to send another Elijah to prepare the hearts of the people before God *Himself* arrived. So, John was saying: this is happening. Now. God is about to show up Himself. And guess what? It was true. Everything was about to change.

Now, if we're being honest, we all need to repent. We all mess up, and our sin separates us from God. That's why John was baptizing people. The word baptize comes from a Greek word "baptidzo" which simply means "**to wash.**" Think about washing your hands when they're dirty—or cleaning dishes after dinner.

John was baptizing people as part of a warning that when God arrived, He was going to enact justice and bring judgment on evil people. So, everyone needed to be baptized to repent—to change and get a fresh start in living God's way. But this brings up a big question...

Did Jesus *need* to be baptized? I mean, He never sinned. He never broke God's commands. He didn't need a fresh start. He certainly didn't need to be washed clean. So why did Jesus get baptized? Let's find out as we move to our next point.

Jesus did everything the Israelites were supposed to do, but perfectly!

This is a big idea, so let's take it step by step. God's people, the Israelites, were given an important job: trust God and live the way He asked. But over and over again... they messed up. (Just like we do!) So, Jesus came to do what *no one else* could. He followed **all** of God's laws perfectly. He lived out the whole story of Israel—but without any mistakes.

How did He live out the story of an entire nation? Think about it:

- Israel came out of **Egypt** → Jesus also went to and came back from Egypt

- Israel wandered and failed in the **desert** → Jesus was tempted in the desert and stayed faithful
- God gave His law to Moses on a **mountain** → Jesus taught the true meaning of God's law on a mountain
- Israel crossed the **Jordan River** to begin their life in the Promised Land → Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River to begin His life of ministry.

So, even at His baptism, Jesus was stepping into Israel's story in order to complete and fulfill it. In verse 15 of our reading, Jesus literally said He had to "**fulfill all righteousness,**" which means He did *everything* the right way—perfectly. That's why there was a dove – the Holy Spirit – because a dove is a sign of purity, and here was God Himself coming down to be perfect, to do what we humans were supposed to do, but never could.

And here's the best part: because Jesus did it all for us, we don't have to be good-enough to be loved by God. Jesus already did what we couldn't—and He did it for **you and me**. ❤️ Do you find yourself feeling pressured to do enough for God? Of course, we should try to honor God in every aspect of our life – but, we'll never do it perfectly, and because Jesus *did*, the pressure is off! Hallelujah!

THE AUTHORS OF THE GOSPELS WERE DEVOUTLY JEWISH. EVEN THOUGH WE'RE NOT, WE'RE STILL A PART OF THEIR STORY. QUIETLY RECALL SOME OF YOUR PERSONAL FAILURES. NOW IMAGINE JESUS WALKING THROUGH THE SAME SITUATIONS, BUT DOING WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE. AND THEN IMAGINE YOU GET THE CREDIT FOR IT! THAT'S THE JOY AND RELIEF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS FELT, AND IT'S HOW WE SHOULD FEEL, TOO!

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

So, Jesus came to do what the Israelites were *supposed* to do—but couldn't. That means something huge and brand-new was starting. We see this right away in what happened next in Jesus' life: **His forty days in the desert**. Let's read **Luke 4:1-13**.

Jesus faced the same daily struggles we do.

This Some people imagine Jesus as always walking around glowing softly, with a halo over His head, and that look of perfect serenity in His eyes. Like He never felt anything but tranquility. But that's not true at all.

Jesus got hungry. Jesus got tired. Jesus had sore and dirty feet at the end of a long walk. He was fully human. He didn't use His God-power like a cheat code or a lazy Jedi. He had to eat, drink, survive, make friends, and get things done—just like us.

And yes, Jesus was **tempted**. That means when life was hard, He felt the pull to take shortcuts or do the wrong thing. So, yeah, Jesus knows the struggle is real.

Jesus handled temptation better than the Israelites.

Do you remember what happened with Moses and Pharaoh? The Israelites were slaves in Egypt, but God rescued them with powerful miracles. They crossed the Red Sea and escaped Pharaoh's army. Freedom at last!

But then they ran out of water. And then they ran out of food. And then they complained. And then they wanted to go back and started worshipping an Egyptian idol! Yikes! Because of all that, they had to wander in the desert for **forty** years! Not good!

Now, compare that to Jesus. He was in the desert for **forty** days—without home-cooked meals and with Satan himself tempting Him! And Jesus didn't fail. He trusted God and did everything right. Where the Israelites failed, Jesus succeeded. He lived out their story perfectly.

Again, all of this is really **great news** for us. It means Jesus did everything we couldn't do. He lived perfectly, trusted God completely, and stayed faithful—even when tempted.

And because Jesus went to the cross, there's this huge swap: He took the punishment we deserved, and because of that, we get what *He* deserves. So even when we mess up, God looks at us and says: "This is my beloved child. I am pleased with you." Think about that. That's really, really good news.

Let's watch this 5-minute video about Jesus' baptism, His temptation in the desert, and His ultimate purpose: to go to the cross for us. <https://bibleproject.com/videos/gospel-luke-2/>



THE CALLING OF JESUS' DISCIPLES

When Jesus started His public ministry, He was bringing something **brand new** into the world. He was going to finally get everything right for us. But He didn't just come to do His job and leave. He came to start a movement. Let's look at **Mark 1:16-20**.

These short verses tell us a lot. When Jesus said, "I'll show you how to fish for people," He meant helping rescue others from darkness, lies, sin, and hopelessness—and bringing them into God's light, love, and forgiveness. He was training His followers to change the world—one catch at a time.

And here's the thing: don't think you have to be super smart, super holy, or a super Bible expert to be on Jesus' team. The disciples weren't famous or impressive. They were fishermen. One was a hated tax collector. They were basically regular guys. Like the video said: definitely *not* a dream team. But Jesus used them in amazing ways—and He wants to use **you**, too.

When you follow Jesus, life isn't boring—it's not just going through the motions—you're on a **mission**: to show people how incredible Jesus is and what He's done for us. And when someone gets caught in the net of Jesus' love, it's a beautiful thing. Everything changes—for them and for you. Bottom line: *you are a part of Jesus' plan to bring people into His new nation—His family of love, grace, and mercy.*

THE ULTIMATE HOPE JESUS GIVES

THE GIFT OF BAPTISM

At the start of this lesson, we saw how the Holy Spirit appeared like a **dove** when Jesus was baptized. It was a very dramatic, holy, and important moment.

But here's something surprising: as amazing as Jesus' baptism was, **your baptism was even more amazing**. Why? Let's explore a moment from the early church that brought this difference into clear focus—**Acts 19:1-7**.

So, these new followers of Jesus had only been baptized the way John the Baptist baptized people. As we said, John's baptism was about preparation—saying, "I'm sorry for my sins," and getting ready for the Savior who was coming.

So when Paul met these new believers, he explained, "John's baptism was about repentance. But John himself told people to believe in the One who would **come later**—Jesus". That's deep. John's baptism was only *anticipating* the great work of God that was *accomplished* through Jesus.

So, when someone is baptized today in the name of the **Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit**, they aren't getting *ready* for Jesus to show up—Jesus already lived perfectly, died on the cross, and rose again for us. Instead, they're *receiving* the benefits of all Jesus did, *gaining* the status He earned, and being *washed clean* in His mercy. What an incredible gift!

Obviously, we no longer baptize people in John's name. We baptize them into Jesus' finished work—into His forgiveness, love, and grace. That's what Jesus meant when He said to baptize people in the *name* of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

So let me ask you: have you been baptized? Have you received this amazing gift of redemption and new life? Have you been caught in the nets of Jesus' love?

If not, we'd love to help you receive this gift. And if you *have* been baptized, then know this: you are connected to Jesus in a powerful way. He's done everything perfectly for you. In your baptism, you received everything Jesus accomplished. Welcome to the team. And you know what's the best part? It's a team of grace.



TODAY'S MAIN TAKEAWAY: JESUS LIVED EXACTLY THE WAY WE'RE SUPPOSED TO LIVE. NOW WE GET WHAT HE EARNED. THROUGH BAPTISM WE ARE MADE NEW BY HIS POWERFUL GRACE.