

Matthew 3:1 - 4:11

Day 1

John the Baptist's Ministry. Read Matthew 3:1-6

1. Where was John's ministry and what was his message? 3:1,2 (See also John 3:28)

IT'S GREEK TO ME *REPENT* *metanoeo* NT:3340, lit., "to perceive afterwards" (*meta*, 'after', *noeo*, 'to perceive'; *nous*, 'the mind')...hence signifies 'to change one's mind or purpose,' always, in the NT, involving a change for the better, an amendment" - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"The basic idea is a reversal of thinking which changes one's life." - The Nelson Study Bible (1579)

2. What did John's message fulfill? 3:3 (How was the "kingdom of heaven at hand"?)

3. What else had Isaiah prophesied (400 years earlier) about the nature of John's ministry? Isaiah 40:3-5

- What would making "paths straight" and "rough roads smooth" do for a king who was coming? In effect, what did John want people to do with their hearts/lives?

4. What was unusual about John's birth? Luke 1:7,13

- What was John's father, Zacharias, told about John's life before he was born? Luke 1:15-17 (Cf. Malachi 4:5,6)

- What did Jesus say about John's life? Matthew 11:13,14

5. What would John's lifestyle have communicated to the people? 3:4

6. How were the people responding to John's message? 3:5,6

Digging Deeper

See Elijah's message:
1 Kings 18:21,36,37

Elijah's lifestyle:
2 Kings 1:8

FYI: "The exodus from Egypt and its association with the desert was so deeply ingrained in the national memory that subsequent renewal movements were associated with the desert." - Africa Bible Commentary (1113)

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7. What was John's baptism associated with? 3:6,11a (See Acts 13:24)

FYI: "Baptism was practiced in the Jewish community already in the form of ceremonial immersions, but typically it was only among Gentiles who wished to become Jews. For a Jew in John's day to submit to baptism was essentially to say, "I confess that I am as far away from God as a Gentile and I need to get right with Him." - David Guzik

Applying the Word: What or who helped prepare you for the message of Jesus Christ's love? What did you find most convicting?

Day 2

John the Baptist's Message. Read Matthew 3:7-12

8. What did John's greeting say about the character of the Pharisees and Sadducees? 3:7

- What do you think John asked "*who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*"

FYI: "The Pharisees and Sadducees were two prominent groups in Judaism during the time of Christ. Both groups claimed to be true followers of Judaism, but their beliefs were considerably different. The **Pharisees** were primarily associated with the laymen of Israel. In doctrine, they held not only to the Law of Moses and Scriptures, but also to a whole body of oral tradition. On the other hand, the **Sadducees** were associated with the priestly caste... Extremely conservative, they based their beliefs, essentially on the Pentateuch - the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy (see Acts 23:6-10.)" - The Nelson Study Bible (1579)

See the chart: "**Jewish Religious and Political Groups.**"

9. What did John's challenge imply about their lives? 3:8 (See also Matthew 23:28)

FYI: "True repentance is an inward reorientation affecting the whole of one's thought, but it expresses itself in outward acts. In repentance one turns away from idolatry, sin, evil, wrongdoing and any other way of life that is contrary to God's word." - Africa Bible Commentary (1113)

10. Underline what is associated with repentance in the following verses.

- Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" NIV
- Acts 20:21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. NIV
- Acts 26:20 I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. NIV
- 2 Timothy 2:25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, NIV

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11. What were the leaders mistakenly trusting in? 3:9

Digging Deeper

What did Jesus say about the claim to be Abraham's children? John 8:39-40,56

FYI: "John warns them to stop trusting in their Jewish heritage because they must truly repent...The Jewish leaders thought that the Messiah would come with judgment, but only against Israel's enemies. They were blind in their self-righteous confidence that only others needed to get right with God." - David Guzik

They were indeed the children of Abraham, the rock...of faith... (Isa. 51:1-2). But they could not take this for granted because God was able to raise up children for Abraham from any other source." - Africa Bible Commentary (1114)

How did Paul define a child of Abraham? See Galatians 3:6-9

12. What warning did John give? 3:10 (Why do you think John was being so confrontational with these leaders? What was he trying to do?)

13. How did John compare himself to Jesus? 3:11a

FYI: "Disciples would regularly serve as servants of their masters. However, the task of removing and carrying the master's sandals was regarded as too menial even for them.." - Africa Bible Commentary (1114)

14. In what other ways did John make a comparison between Himself and Jesus?

- John 1:15
- John 3:30

15. How did Christ's baptism differ from John's? 3:11b

Digging Deeper

See the Holy Spirit's amazing work in Ephesians 1:13,17-19; 3:16-20.)

FYI: "John identified people with his message of repentance by water baptism; the One coming after him was so much greater that He would unite people to Himself by means of the Holy Spirit. ...It would be the work of the Messiah to accomplish this, to baptize His people in the Spirit. But those who rejected Him the Messiah would baptize with fire, which is probably a figure for God's judgment." - The Nelson Study Bible (1580).

16. List the things the "One coming after" him would do. Matthew 3:11b,12 (See also Matthew 13:39,40.)

- How does that compare to the purpose of Jesus' first coming? John 3:17; 12:47,48

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17. Underline what Jesus came to do for us:

- Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." NIV
- John 5:24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.
- Romans 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! NIV
- Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. NAS
- Galatians 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." NIV

Applying the Word: What does repentance look like in your life? *i.e. How did the Lord convict you? How difficult have you found "turning around" to be? What helps you to not turn back? What have been the rewards even now of repentance?*

Day 3

Jesus' Baptism and Temptations. Read Matthew 3:13 - 4:7

18. How did John feel about baptizing Jesus? 3:14 (Note: Trace on your map where Jesus traveled. Where did this take place? John 1:28)
- How did Jesus explain His baptism? 3:15 (How old was Jesus when he began his ministry? Luke 3:23)
19. List the things that happened at Jesus' baptism. 3:16,17 What confirmation did this give?
- How do you picture "descending like a dove?" (See John's testimony about this later in John 1:32-34.)

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20. Concerning Jesus' temptations:

- When did this happen? 4:1 (See Mark 1:12)
- Where did this happen? 4:1
- Why did Jesus go to the wilderness? 4:1 (What word does Mark 1:12 use?)
- How long was He there? 4:2
- What did Jesus endure? 4:2,3a (What does Mark 1:13b add to this picture?)

Digging Deeper

What is the wilderness and the 40 days and nights be associated with? Ex. 34:28

What else would it remind them of? Numbers 32:13

21. What was the first temptation that Satan presented? 4:3 How might this suggestion have sounded to Jesus in His hungry state? (*Consider: Was Satan asking Jesus to do something morally wrong? Was he offering a solution for a legitimate need? Was this something Jesus was capable of doing? See John 6:10,11*)

- What tone do you hear in Satan's voice/words/demeanor? Harsh or friendly, cold or compassionate?

22. What reason did Jesus give for not eating? 4:4 (See John 4:34; 6:38) In your own words, what was Jesus saying about why it would have been wrong?

23. What is scripture called in Ephesians 6:17? What picture does that give you?

- How deep, how powerful is God's Word/His truth in fighting temptation? Hebrews 4:12 (See also 2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

24. Rather than a physical need, to what did the second temptation appeal? 4:5,6

- Why do you think Satan used scripture?

FYI: "The **pinnacle of the temple** arose some 200 feet from the floor of the Kidron Valley. A leap from there, and the appearance of the promised angelic protection, would a remarkable spectacle."

"We can trust that the devil has memorized the Bible himself, and is an expert at quoting it ***out of its context*** to confuse and defeat those he tempts...Jesus understood from His knowledge of the *whole counsel of God* (Acts 20:27) that Satan was 'twisting' this passage from Psalms 91:1-16. Jesus knew how to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15)."
- David Guzik

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25. Underline the ways we need to be careful about in handling scripture:

- Deuteronomy 4:2 "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. NAS
- Matthew 15:3 Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? NIV
- Mark 7:9,13 And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!... 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that." NIV
- 2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. NIV
- 2 Peter 3:16 [Paul's] letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. NIV
- Jude 4 For some godless people have slipped in unnoticed among us, persons who distort the message about the grace of our God in order to excuse their immoral ways, and who reject Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord...GNT

26. What did Jesus say this kind of supernatural display would be doing? 4:7

Applying the Word: Sin has been defined as trying to get "legitimate needs met in an illegitimate way" or "trying to solve a problem in a way that doesn't solve the problem" (but really makes things worse).
From the example of the first two temptations that Jesus endured, how can the appeal or even "logic" make temptations difficult and confusing?

Day 4

Jesus' Temptations. Read Matthew 4:8-11

27. What was the next temptation? 4:8,9

- What shortcut was Satan offering Jesus?

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28. Why do you think Jesus didn't refute Satan's offer? (See the claim Satan made in Luke 4:6.)

28. Underline the power or title that Satan has.

- 1 John 5:19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. NIV
- John 12:31 "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out." NIV
- Ephesians 2:1-2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. NIV

FYI: "Two Old Testament passages-Isa 14:12-15 and Ezek 28:11-19-furnish a picture of Satan's original condition and the reasons for his loss of that position. These passages were addressed originally to the kings of Babylon and Tyre. But in their long-range implications, many scholars believe, they refer to Satan himself. They tell of an exalted angelic being, one of God's creatures, who became proud and ambitious. He determined to take over the throne of God for himself. But God removed him from his position of great dignity and honor." - Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

29. What was wrong with the offer Satan made? 4:10 (See Deuteronomy 6:13,14)

- How did Satan respond? 4:11a (What does Luke 4:13 add to this?)

FYI: "By relying on the power and truth of God's Word, Jesus was willing to fight this battle as a man; He could have easily rebuked Satan into another galaxy, but resisted Him in a way that we can imitate and identify with...We effectively resist temptation in the same way by countering Satan's seductive lies by shining the light of God's truth upon them. If we are ignorant of God's truth, we are poorly armed in the fight against temptation." - David Guzik

30. What state was Jesus in at the end of these temptations? 4:11b (See also Luke 22:43.)

31. What does Hebrews 2:17,18; say about the reason Jesus endured temptations?

- What comfort does that give us? Hebrews 4:15,16

32. What assurance are we given about dealing with temptation? 1 Corinthians 10:13

33. In the following, underline Satan's title and description of his character or activity:

- John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. NIV
- John 17:15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. NIV
- 2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. NIV
- 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. NIV
- 1 Thessalonians 3:5 ...I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain. NAS
- Revelation 12:9-10 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray....For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. NIV

34. Underline what is said about dealing with temptation and our defense against Satan.

- James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. NIV
- 1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. NIV
- Ephesians 6:10-11,16 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil...16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. NAS
- II Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. NAS
- 1 John 5:18 ...the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. NIV

Applying the Word: *When we are tempted, we are never alone (Hebrews 13:5,6) but have the promise of God's presence, strength, guidance and comfort at all times. Can you name a time when scripture has given you a powerful defense in fighting temptation.*

*"Jesus answered, **It is written:** 'People do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*
Matthew 4:4 NIV