

Prepare the Way

[Mar 1:1-8 ESV] 1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, 3 the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" 4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

I. Intro

- A. A Study through Mark begins with John the Baptist and the message of what was to come.
- B. John had been assigned this task, and fulfilled this task, we have a similar task to prepare the way for the soon return of Christ.

II. Text

- A. Verse 1: The Gospel
- B. Verse 2-3: Isaiah's prophecy:
 - 1. 800 years before the birth of Jesus
 - 2. The promise fulfilled in John
 - 3. Wilderness:
 - a) word used for solitary places outside of settled areas,
 - b) Translated wilderness, desert, and desolate
- C. Verse 4: John preached a baptism of repentance, with the promise that messiah was going to bring fullness
- D. Verse 5: A ceremony that drew crowds of people
- E. Verse 6: John was looked like a wild man, a bit unkept in comparison to the majority of people, but he wasn't a crazy man out of his mind, his appearance matched his calling.
 - 1. Clothed with camels hair, Wore a leather belt
 - a) Connection to Elijah
 - b) [2Ki 1:7-8 ESV] 7 He said to them, "What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?" 8 They answered him, "He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."
 - c) a coarse, durable, and inexpensive fabric woven from the woolly hair of camels. It served as an outer garment or cloak, providing essential protection against cold weather for travelers and desert dwellers, and was frequently used as a, symbol of an ascetic, prophetic, and humble lifestyle
 - d) The symbol of the humble and even odd messenger of God is a clear connection to the fulfillment of this prophecy
 - 2. Ate locust and Wild honey
 - a) We understand the honey part, but its an amazing thing:
 - (1) Flying, singing insects prepare honey from nectar and pollen
 - (2) The will protect their produce with their life...I am aware
 - (3) Honey is medicinal, nutritious, and sweet
 - (4) In a time where there was very little sweet treats, honey was the best.
 - b) Locust:
 - (1) The insect is seen in the old testament as a plague, in this story it provides life giving nutrition
 - (2) The bean from the locust tree would also provide nutrition from the thorny tree so prevalent in the middle east, and in our area as well.
 - (3) Either way, its an odd and simple diet

(4) By the way, the locust tree produces some of the best tasting honey, and the people in Israel assume he was eating from the locust tree rather than the insect.

F. Verse 7-8:

1. He preached the coming of messiah
2. He preached the preeminence of Christ
3. He preached the salvation of the world was coming to humanity
4. Baptism: to immerse or submerge
 - a) Water immersion was a sign of what was to come
 - b) Spirit Immersion is what we step into by faith
 - c)

III. Points

A. Water Baptism

1. Jewish roots of water baptism: Water baptism originated from Jewish ritual purification practices, specifically the immersion in a mikveh to remove ritual impurity (tumah) and restore a person to a state of purity (taharah), as commanded in Leviticus. It served as a symbolic cleansing, repentance, and initiation ritual, deeply rooted in the Second Temple period and used by converts to Judaism.
2. The ceremonial washing of hands: [Exo 30:17-21 ESV] 17 The LORD said to Moses, 18 "You shall also make a basin of bronze, with its stand of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, 19 with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. 20 When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering to the LORD, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die. 21 They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations."
3. Leviticus 15 and 22 are both further instruction about ceremonial washings to be restored from uncleanness according to the law.
4. David wrote about this in his repentance psalm: [Psa 51:1-2 ESV] 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!
5. The washing of water to be ceremonial clean is all through the law, but it never actually purified them, it was about obedience to the law, BY FAITH.
 - a) There is a practical aspect to scrubbing germs off your hands before handling food, or spreading germs.
 - b) This was about the ritual of becoming clean rather than the practical aspect.
 - c) Every aspect of the Jewish law was pointing to the savior, and this is no different.
 - d) Ritual washing does not make you clean, but faith in God and following in obedience marks you.
 - e) Water baptism is not what makes you clean, it is a ceremonial act of obedience.
6. Water Baptism is:
 - a) Obedience
 - b) Ordered
 - c) Connecting with Christ: connected to all believers, Romans 6
 - d) A ceremony that is an outward sign of an inward life change
7. Water Baptism is a sign of the New Covenant
8. Water Baptism is a testimony of life change
9. Water Baptism is sacred, and special.
10. If you are wrestling with this, stop wrestling and submit.

B. Spirit Baptism

1. Just as when you are baptized in water and fully submerged, Spirit Baptism is being fully submerged, or covered, by the presence of God.
2. The Baptism of the Spirit happens by grace through faith, and produces the works of the spirit filled life.
3. When you encounter Christ, you are fully enveloped in Him.
4. There is no part of you that is not touched.
5. This is what the ceremonial washing was pointing to in the fulfillment that is only in Christ.
6. [Col 2:6-23 ESV] 6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. 16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. 20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations-- 21 "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)--according to human precepts and teachings? 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

C. Prepare the Way

1. John was given the task of preparing the way for the coming messiah
2. This is a beautiful and important role that was told 800 years before it took place.
3. John took on the humble role of a prophet, and delivered the message God created him to deliver.
4. Summary of John's message: I'm not the one, but the One is on His way!
5. This relates directly to the ministry of the church today.
 - a) We are doing the same thing
 - b) We are serving the same cause
 - c) We are not HIM, But we KNOW HIM, AND HE IS COMING BACK!
6. We are serving to go into all the world and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the father, son, and holy spirit.
7. The way was prepared for messiah, and our mission is to go and tell to world about what He did, and that He is coming back.
8. We tell the world, compelled by the LOVE of GOD

IV. Close

- A. Continue to prepare the way
- B. Continue to follow the call to baptism
- C. Continue to live immersed in the Spirit Filled life

Jewish ceremonial handwashing, known as netilat yadayim, involves pouring water from a cup over each hand two or three times to remove ritual impurity (often upon waking) or to prepare for meals with bread. The water is poured from a vessel—often a two-handled cup—alternating hands, covering the hand up to the wrist, followed by a specific blessing while drying