

(Through the Bible) Luke 3-4

by Chuck Smith

This sermon explores the significance of John the Baptist's ministry, Jesus' baptism, and the importance of Jesus' genealogy in understanding His divine authority and power.

Duration: 1:22:10

Topics: "Social Justice", "Kingdom Preparation"

Description

In this sermon, John the Baptist preaches a social gospel, urging the people to share their abundance with the needy. He advises those with extra coats and meat to give to those who have none. He also emphasizes the importance of preparing for the coming of the king by making their paths straight. John's preaching is supported by his demonstration of the works of the Messiah, such as giving sight to the blind and preaching the gospel to the poor. Overall, the sermon encourages the listeners to live in the spirit of Christ and to be prepared for the coming of the king.

Transcript

Shall we turn to Luke's Gospel, chapter 3. As Luke begins the third chapter, he is giving you the date of the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist. And he uses no less than six historic reference points to tell you when John began his ministry. It was in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea, and Herod was a Tetrarch, and the word Tetrarch means a ruler of a fourth part.

And when Herod the Great died, he left the ruling of that area. They divided it into four, and three of his sons ruled over a part of the area, so a Tetrarch was a ruler of a fourth part. And Philip, the Tetrarch of Iteria, Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip, the Tetrarch of Iteria, in the region of Trachonitis and Licinius, the Tetrarch of Abilene.

Annas and Caiaphas were the high priest, and so these were the historic dating reference points. Now, we know that Tiberius Caesar began his reign in the years 13 to 14, so that in the 15th year would make it about the year 29 A.D. that John the Baptist began his ministry. It is interesting that he lists for us here two high priests, Annas and Caiaphas.

The Jews only had one high priest at a time. However, Annas was the high priest for a period of time, around 13 to 14, but he was replaced by the Roman government, and there followed him three different high priests before the Roman government appointed Caiaphas as the high priest. So that Caiaphas was

an appointment of Rome, whereas Annas was recognized by the people as the high priest, and he was the religious leader, where Caiaphas was, as was the high priest in those days, a political leader under the appointment of Rome.

So there was this period when, oddly enough, there were two high priests, one recognized by the Jews as the legitimate, the other recognized by the Roman government as the political appointee, Caiaphas. Now when they arrested Jesus, they brought him to Annas first because he was still the power. He was the recognized power, and Caiaphas was more or less a figurehead, but the recognized power was in Annas the older, the high priest.

Caiaphas was actually one of his sons. Herod being the Tetrarch of Galilee, this was Herod Antipas, and we'll come across him in just a few moments again. And so in this time, the word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Now, we were introduced to John last Sunday night and to his miraculous kind of birth as his mother and father were both of them well-stricken in years, and up to this point, Elizabeth, his mother, had been barren, and the announcement of the angel concerning the birth of the child who was to be the forerunner of the Messiah. So now, in the year 29, the word of the Lord came unto John, and he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Now, in those days when the king was to visit a certain area, there would always be couriers that would go out in advance of the king, and the couriers would tell the people the king is going to be visiting on such-and-such a day, clean up your yards, get the trash and all taken care of, repair the roads and all for the king's coming, so that when the king comes, he will see everything in a nice condition, the yards all clean, the trash all out, and all of the roads repaired, no chuck holes or whatever, so that the king sees that everything is going well.

And so John is as a courier, telling the people, Make your paths straight, the king is coming, every valley shall be filled, every mountain and hill shall be brought low, the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, preparing the way for the king, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. This was the promise that John was giving to the people. As they were to prepare themselves, they would see God's salvation.

And of course, that was fulfilled through Jesus Christ. Then he said to the multitude that came forth to be baptized, Oh, generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Imagine telling that to your congregation, people are coming to be converted. They say, Oh, you generation of vipers, sounds like Romaine almost, doesn't it? You sinners, you know.

Romaine's our John. Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits that are worthy of repentance or that demonstrate repentance. Let us see your true repentance, not in the fact that you're just being baptized.

Let's see it in your actions. Let's see it in your changed lives. There are many people who, upon the excitement of an emotional moment, will renounce their life of sin, will renounce their past, and will make their vows of, I'm going to be different, I'm going to do better, I promise, I swear before God, you know, I'm going to be a different man.

Words are cheap. John said, let's see the fruit of it. Let's see the changes in your life.

And calling for more than just a verbal type of a commitment, but let's see the fruit of it in the changed lives. And don't say within yourselves, he said, that we have Abraham as our father. For I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Now, this is the claim of the Jew. We have Abraham as our father. God gave the covenant to Abraham and to his seed forever.

So we are the beneficiaries of God's grace and covenant to Abraham. We have Abraham. We're the covenant people.

And they rested on that relationship to Abraham. And that was an extremely important thing, in fact, to Jesus. When Jesus was challenging their lifestyles, they said, we have Abraham as our father.

It was a common saying among the Jews. As they were resting upon the covenant that God made with Abraham and to his seed forever and thus recognizing that covenant, they would say, well, we have Abraham as our father. And that was sort of to excuse any kind of a lifestyle I want to live.

Well, I have Abraham as my father. I'm under the covenant. You know, I can live however I please.

And he said, hey, don't try and pass off that we have Abraham as our father bit because God is able to raise up from stones children for Abraham. And so he's calling for a true repentance, a changed life, changed actions. And now also the axe will be laid unto the root of the trees and every tree which does not bring forth good fruit will be cut down.

So he's calling for fruit that show repentance. Let's see the fruit of it, because every tree that doesn't bring forth good fruit will be cut down and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, what shall we do then? And as we find his responses to the questions, we find that John was preaching a social gospel.

He answered and said unto them, if you have two coats, give one of those to someone who doesn't have any. And if you have extra meat, do the same thing, share your abundance with the needy. And then the tax collectors came to be baptized and they said unto him, master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, exact no more than that which is appointed you.

Now, the tax collectors were appointees of the Roman government. And their pay was actually the excess taxes that they could collect. The Roman government had the certain standard that they had to collect.

I mean, that was just the tax due to Rome. But the tax collector would collect his own salary by adding to that tax. And that is why they were extremely hated by the people.

Of course, they haven't found much more favor even today. Taxes are always a galling thing. But John is telling them, look, don't collect the extra dividends.

Just that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded, saying, and what shall we do? And he said, desert and flee to Canada. And he said unto them, do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely and be content with your wages.

And as all the people were in expectation and all men mused in their hearts of John whether he was the Messiah or not. John answered them, saying unto them, I indeed baptize you with water, but one who is mightier than I is coming, the latchet of whose shoes I'm not worthy to untie. And he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, whose fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his floor and will gather

the wheat into his garner.

But the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. So as they are wondering, can this be the Messiah? John declares unto them that he is really not the Messiah. There is one who is coming after him who is mightier than he is.

John is unworthy to untie his shoe. And though John is baptizing with water, he will baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire. That baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire has been misunderstood and as a result we see a lot of fanaticism that has classified the baptism of fire.

If a person, if a preacher in his preaching is very demonstrative, if he is shouting out his message at the top of his lungs, speaking rapidly and sucking for air, man, I tell you brother, you know, and going on with a lot of movement and a lot of hand waving and you know, a lot of pointing of the finger and everything else, people say, man, he's really got the fire. That isn't the fire of the Holy Spirit. It can be the fire of human energy, but not the fire of the Holy Spirit.

So many times we see untoward type of demonstrations, usually in a violent kind of an emotional way and people say, oh boy, they really got the fire. Not of the Holy Spirit. The fire of the Holy Spirit is always a purging fire, a cleansing fire.

You may want to scream, but not in excitement, but in pain as the fire of the Holy Spirit begins to burn in your heart because the purpose of that fire is the purging of the dross. It always has as its net result, the purifying. And in the context here, as he speaks of him baptizing with fire, he declares whose fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his floor.

Now this is the threshing floor. The fan was the large, wide, wooden shovel that they would take and take the wheat with this shovel and they would throw the wheat in the air and the wind would carry off the chaff and the wheat would fall back down on the floor. And this was their way of threshing the wheat.

Just wait for a windy day and you go down to your threshing floor and you take what they called the fan, the big, wide, wooden shovel and you just take the wheat in the wind, throw it up in the air and the chaff would blow off and the wheat would fall down. And you continue this process until you had separated that little rough bran from the kernel of wheat itself. And then he declared he will thoroughly cleanse or purge his floor and will gather the wheat into his silos, into his garner, but he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.

He no doubt is alluding to the first chapter of Psalms where David talks about the blessed man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly nor stands in the way of sinners nor sits in the seat of the scornful, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law that he meditate day and night, who will be like a tree planted by the river of waters, bringing forth fruit in his season, his leaf also not withering. And whatsoever he does shall prosper, the wicked though he said are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. So, it is again a figure of purging, of cleansing, separating the chaff from the wheat, separating the dross, the fire, from the pure gold.

So, it is only proper that in context it is explained what is meant by the baptism of the Holy Spirit with fire. And many other things in his exhortation he preached unto the people. But Herod the Tetrarch, Herod Antipas, being reproved by him for Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all of the evils which Herod had done, added yet this above everything else in that he imprisoned John.

Herod Antipas, one of the sons of Herod the Great, his brother Philip ruled in the northern part of the province. He had another brother who lived in Rome. Now, Herod the Great had many wives, many children.

And one of his sons had a daughter named Herodias. Now, the Herod who lived in Rome married his half-niece Herodias. But when Herod Antipas, the character that we're dealing with in our text, went to Rome, he seduced her into marrying him, leaving his brother and marrying him, and returning with him to reign in Galilee, which she did.

So Herodias left her husband, who was also her step-uncle, and she was actually a step-sister in law to Herod Antipas, and also his step-niece, but she became his wife. So it was quite an entangled situation. So your wife is also your niece and your sister-in-law.

So John the Baptist dared to speak up against him. Now, you just didn't speak up against the rulers, but John, being the type that he was, spoke out against this relationship, said, You have no right having Herodias as your wife. That's wrong.

What you did was wrong. And so, as the result, Herod imprisoned John. Now when all of the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also, being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened.

Now Luke's gospel shows to us, more than any of the other gospels, the human side of Jesus. John shows us, more than any of the other gospels, the divine side of Jesus. But Luke points out his humanity, and because Luke is careful to point out the humanity of Jesus, he is also very careful to point out the references where Jesus was praying.

And in so many cases, we find Luke making mention of the fact that Jesus was praying when certain things transpired, or before certain decisions were made. And Luke gives us a keener insight into the prayer life of Jesus than any of the other gospels, and rightly so, because of his emphasis upon the human side of the nature of Jesus. And so, it is only Luke's gospel that points out the fact that Jesus was praying when He was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit.

That as He was baptized, He was praying, and the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him. And a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased. And so, again, we find the triunity of God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Jesus, the Son of God being baptized, the Holy Spirit descending upon Him, and the voice of the Father declaring, Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased. Now, there are those people who are known as Jesus only. You don't run across many of them here in California.

They're often called the United Pentecostals. There's an awful lot of them back in the southern states, and quite a group of them in Arizona. The United Pentecostal Church, or they take some even longer titles, the United Pentecostal Church in Jesus' name, and different titles.

But their chief doctrinal difference is their belief that Jesus is the Father. He is the Holy Spirit. He is the Son.

There's only one, and that is Jesus. It's Jesus only. It's interesting to bring up this particular verse to them to hear double talk.

When Jesus was baptized and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, where did the voice come from? When the Father said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Was Jesus practicing ventriloquism? And they really can dig a hole for themselves on this particular verse. And it's fun.

I do it to tease them every once in a while, just to watch them dig their hole. Now Jesus, at this point, was about 30 years old. How long John was baptizing before Jesus came, we are not informed.

But Jesus, at this point, being about 30 years of age, being as was supposed the son of Joseph, which was the, and this should read, son-in-law of Heli. For here we obviously have the genealogy of Mary and not of Joseph. In Matthew's Gospel we have the genealogy of Joseph.

And in Matthew's Gospel, the genealogy begins not with Adam, but with Abraham, coming down through David and from David through Solomon, coming to Jesus Christ. Now here we start with Jesus and we go back to Adam, not to Abraham. But we go all the way back to Adam.

Now you'll find that the genealogy between Abraham and David is the same. However, in the genealogy here in Luke, rather than coming through Solomon, it comes through Nathan, Solomon's older brother. And we come to Mary, the mother of Jesus, Joseph, the son-in-law of Heli.

Now why would we have two genealogies for Jesus differing? And if Joseph isn't the father of Jesus, then what is the value of putting Joseph's genealogy in the record? If he was born of the Virgin Mary, I can understand Mary's genealogy. Let it be said that the person's genealogy was an important document in that person's life among the Jews. God had a special purpose for the Jewish nation.

That special purpose was that they were to bring the Messiah into the world. And thus, as God established His covenant with them and His law, He incorporated within that law and within that covenant a very close guarding of the race itself. And there were prohibitions against interracial marriages because God was seeking to keep a line from Abraham and David to the Messiah.

For anyone to declare themselves to be the Messiah, they must prove that they are descendants of Abraham and descendants of David because God promised to both Abraham and to David that from their seed the nations of the world would be blessed. God said to David, I will build thee a house and there will always be one sitting upon the throne. And He was referring to the Messiah.

So that the Messiah has to be able to prove. Now during the time of the return from the captivity in Babylon, Ezra and Nehemiah, there were certain men who said, well, we're of the house of Levi. We want to, you know, exercise the office of the priesthood.

And so they said, all right, show us your genealogy. And these fellows were unable to produce their genealogies. They had been lost in Babylon.

And because they could not produce their genealogies, proving that they were of the tribe of Levi, they were not allowed into the priesthood. Only those that could bring out their genealogy and prove that they were from the tribe of Levi. And so it was an extremely important thing to those people to maintain the records, the family records of their genealogies in order that they might prove what family, what line they came from.

It was especially important for the Messiah. Now it would immediately put a disclaimer upon anyone today claiming to be the Messiah because no one today has their records that can take them back to Abraham

and David. So anyone who would come along today saying I'm the Messiah would have no ability to prove that claim in as much as there are no more records that would trace them back through Abraham and David.

Now why Joseph's genealogy? If you'll notice, Joseph's genealogy comes through Solomon and the kingly line so that it brings you down to Jesus from the line of Solomon and the kingly line showing that Jesus as the adopted son, the eldest adopted son of Joseph had right to the title of the king of Israel as the oldest adopted son of Joseph. But as the son of Mary coming through Nathan who was the older brother of Solomon, Nathan was the legal heir of David. And so through Mary he received his legal heirship of through David.

But through the adopted sonship of Joseph, he received the kingly right. Now during the latter part of the time of the kings in Judah, in the book of Jeremiah chapter 22, because of the wickedness of the King Jokaniah, God placed him in the position of a curse upon him. And this curse that God placed upon Jokaniah precluded any of his descendants taking the throne in Israel.

The last verse of Jeremiah 22, thus saith the Lord, write ye concerning Jokaniah, this man childless, a man that shall be called that shall not prosper in his days for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting on the throne of David and ruling anymore in Judah. From Jokaniah was cut off and none of his sons sat upon the throne. And from this word of the Lord, none of his descendants could sit upon the throne.

Now, if you will read the genealogy of Joseph in Matthew, you will find out he was a descendant of Jokaniah. So he could not sit upon the throne. If he were from the bloodline of Jokaniah, the actual son of Joseph, but being the adopted son of Joseph and yet the son of Mary through Nathan and David, he had the legal claim to the house of David.

Plus he could take and sit upon the throne as the eldest son of Joseph yet not be of the seed of Jokaniah. So it's fascinating that God would put both records in so he can sit as the king because he is the adopted eldest son of Joseph. But he also has the legal right because he is the son of Mary, virgin born.

So Luke gives us that genealogy through Mary and gives the names of all of these people and we're not going to go through them. But it is interesting that he goes all the way back to Adam so that where Matthew relates him only to the Jewish race, Luke relates him to the world because we're all descendants of Adam. So all of us are related to Jesus as Luke makes the relationship of Jesus to the world.

And thus we can each one identify being Jew or Gentile because he comes basically from Adam. We all relate to him and can relate to him. And Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit returned from Jordan.

Now he was at Jordan where he was baptized by John and he returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Now the Judean wilderness stretches from an area just, oh, 15 miles north of Jericho and continues on down to the Dead Sea and it extends back into what are known as the Jerusalem Hills. And it is a very barren, desolate area known as the Judean wilderness.

There's about an average of one inch of rain a year. It was in this area that Bishop Pike died as he was searching for the historic Jesus. It is a very wild, desolate area.

It oftentimes gets up to 120, 25 degrees there in that Judean wilderness. And Jesus went into the wilderness 40 days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did not eat anything.

So 40 days fasting and when they were ended he afterward hungered. Now those who have fasted for prolonged periods of time will tell you that after five days that strong appetite leaves and you really don't get that hungry. Now I can tell you after three days you're famished.

You start having visions of hot fudge sundaes and strawberry shortcake. But they tell me if you can get to the fifth day that the hunger begins to leave and that you will not get hungry again until you begin to starve to death. And they do say that a person by taking water can exist as much as 40 days or so without eating.

But once you get hungry after a prolonged period it is important that you eat. And of course you have to eat breaking your fast very slowly. In other words if you sit down to a big dinner after fasting for 40 days it will kill you.

Your body wouldn't be able to handle it. So if you've been fasting for say 14 days you should take at least 14 days in breaking the fast. Beginning with just half glass of juice and half water mixed together.

And break it slowly introducing foods and nutrients to your body again. Because to introduce too much too fast can actually just destroy. It can kill you.

Your body just can't handle it. And a lot of people have died because they were foolish in breaking a fast. Just go out and eat a big dinner.

So Jesus had been fasting going without food for 40 days. And now he was hungry which means that he was beginning to starve to death. And so the devil said to him.

If thou be the son of God. And in the Greek the if is in the subjunctive rather than in the indicative case. And the if in the subjunctive is not a question but is a declaration.

Since thou art the son of God. He isn't really questioning the fact if Jesus is the son of God or not. But he's in reality saying since thou art the son of God.

Command this stone that it be made bread. Use your divine gifts to satisfy the needs of your own flesh. A common temptation for men who have been gifted by God or placed in positions of authority or power by God.

Use God's gift to you for your own benefit. For the benefit of your own flesh. To enrich yourself.

And there are always those who unfortunately succumb to that temptation of the prostituting of the gifts that God has given to them as they use them for their own benefit. Rather than for the blessing of the entire body of Christ. Satan was suggesting to Jesus that he do this.

That the material is superior and the most important. But Jesus denied that suggestion. With the word of God declaring it is written that man shall not live by bread alone.

The material life is not the most important. But by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Now all the way through Jesus emphasized and declared that the spiritual was superior to the material.

This is the declaration of the New Testament. That the spiritual life is more important than and superior to the material life. And this is the challenge that the world is giving us today in humanism declaring that the material life is supreme.

And that is why the church and humanism lock horns. Because the true church of Jesus Christ must affirm the same message that Jesus declared. And that is the spiritual is supreme.

Humanism says the material is supreme. So the battle rages. But this is the declaration that Jesus made.

The superiority of the spiritual over the physical realm. Satan here was declaring the superiority of the physical over the spiritual. You know take the spiritual and make something physical out of it.

Take the spiritual power and take that bread or take that stone and make it bread. So you can feed yourself. You're hungry.

Jesus said look man doesn't live by bread alone. But by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. The superiority of the spiritual over the material.

So the devil took him up to a high mountain. And showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. So before his eyes flashed the kingdoms of the world.

He saw Caesar sitting on the throne in Rome. He saw all of the power that world rulership brought. All of the honor.

All of the glory. He saw the servants as they bowed and as they brought the delicacies. Saw the people as they had the audience before him.

Saw the power that he wielded from the throne. And Satan said unto Jesus. All this power will I give to you.

And the glory of them. For it is been delivered unto me. When was it delivered unto him? It was delivered unto him in the garden of Eden.

When Adam and Eve sinned against the commandment of the Lord. They forfeited the earth to Satan. The Bible says know you not that whomsoever you yield yourself servants to obey his servants you become.

Whether of obedience unto righteousness or of disobedience unto sin. Yield therefore your members as instruments unto God and to righteousness. But in yielding to Satan's suggestions.

In obeying the suggestion of Satan they were disobeying the command of God and they yielded and forfeited the earth which God had given to them over to Satan and Satan took control of the earth. As man yielded to his power. To his control.

To his suggestion. You see in the beginning the world was God's. He made it.

But when God created man and placed man on the earth. God gave the earth to man. God said to Adam.

Have dominion over the earth. Over the fish of the sea. The fowls of the air.

Every moving and creeping thing. For I have given it unto thee. So God gave to man this beautiful gift of the earth.

And at that time it was beautiful. And even today where you can find nature unspoiled it's still beautiful. But man in his folly and in his yielding to Satan forfeited over unto Satan the world.

And man in turn became a slave. A slave of Satan. And so Paul the apostle said in times past you all walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air that even now is directing the children of disobedience.

Satan is in control of the world. We sing this is my father's world and to my listening ear all nature sings around me rings the music of the spheres. But in reality this is Satan's world.

He's telling that to Jesus. In fact if you will study carefully we will realize that the purpose of the coming of Jesus Christ was to redeem the world back to God. To bring it back into God's fear.

Because man had forfeited to Satan. Now God is seeking to bring it back into his fear. And for this purpose he sent his son to redeem the world.

Now as we look at the world today we do not yet see the redemption. We still see a world that is in rebellion against God. And we see the effects of that rebellion in our society.

And it is totally wrong for man to blame God for the calamities of our world. Which calamities have resulted entirely from man's rebellion against God ruling over the world. Yes the world is in a mess.

Yes horrible things happen. Yes there are things that we can't explain or understand. Especially in the light of God's love.

But we can understand them in the light of the world under the control of Satan being governed and directed by Satan. Now Jesus did not dispute Satan's claim when Satan said look it's mine. It's been given to me.

It's been delivered to me and I can give it to whomever I will. Jesus didn't dispute that. He recognized that fact.

In fact he knew that was true and that's what he had come for is to wrest it from Satan. By redeeming the world by going to the cross and dying. To pay the price of redemption.

The price of redemption was that of shedding of blood. And he was going to go to the cross to redeem the world and that was God's plan of the redemption of the world and man. Is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Now what Satan is actually suggesting here is that Jesus can escape the cross. You don't have to take God's plan. You don't have to take the path that God has prescribed to redeem.

I'll make a deal with you. I'll give it to you right now without the cross. Only one little hitch.

Bow down and worship me. Of course Jesus had he bowed down to worship him would then have been subservient also to Satan and it would still be in his power. He would still be the one in control because he had bowed down to him.

Submit to my authority. I'll give it all to you. You can sit on the throne.

You can rule. But you'll be under my authority having bowed down to me. And Jesus answered it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve now that the world is still under the control of Satan is evident by the fact that in the book of Revelation in chapter 13 when the man of sin the

beast comes on the scene Satan will give to him his power and his throne.

And we read that the Antichrist will rule over the world. Satan still has the power of dispensing the world ruling powers to those whom he pleases. I can give it to whomever I will.

God allows him of course. But yet Satan has still tremendous power and will turn the world over to the Antichrist. But then Jesus will come with the title deed to the earth and will declare the kingdoms of this world have now become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Messiah.

And he shall reign forever and ever as King of Kings and Lord of Lords forever and ever. Hallelujah, hallelujah, amen. That has not yet happened.

I am personally convinced that it is not far off. I believe that man has sunk about as low as God will allow him to sink. I really believe that the time has come in the history of mankind that God must once again intervene.

God has intervened in history before. He intervened at the Tower of Babel when the technology of man has had increased to the extent that God said anything he wants to do he is capable of doing. And we are again arriving at that type of technology.

God intervened at the time of Noah when there was a tremendous advancement in the powers given unto men through occult forces. We are coming to that again. Time for intervention.

So, Satan is laying before Jesus an extremely powerful temptation. Something extremely desirable. Something that he was willing to die for.

But Satan is saying you don't have to die for it. I'll give it to you. Just bow down and worship me.

The third temptation was at the pinnacle of the temple where Satan suggested that he jump. And now Satan takes to quoting the scripture. It is written, he will give his angels charge over thee.

He leaves out an important part. To keep thee in all thy ways. He omits that.

So, he's quoting only half of a scripture, which he is a master at doing. Leaving out some of the salient parts. It is written, he will give his angels charge over thee to bear thee up, lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone.

Now, if you're the son of God, go ahead and jump. And the idea being, by jumping off of this high pinnacle of the temple and landing in that crowd of people down below completely unharmed, soft landing, the people, by this spectacular demonstration of power, will surely know that you're the Messiah. And they will stand in awe and wonder of you.

Jesus said, it is said thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Now, a couple of weeks ago when we were closing out Mark's gospel, we find that it was written there that these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name, he said, they will cast out devils.

They will speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents. If they drink in the deadly thing, it shall not harm them.

Again, this other written word of God applies. Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. You're not to put yourself deliberately into jeopardy to prove anything.

God, Jesus doesn't need to prove that he's the son of God by putting his life deliberately in jeopardy, by jumping off the pinnacle of the temple to create a spectacular scene among the crowd below, by the angels bearing him up, lest he dash his foot against a stone. So, it is not right to just take scriptures and say, well, you know, it says they drink any deadly thing. So, you know, let's drink cyanide and show that we're real believers.

No, that's tempting the Lord our God. I know of missionaries who have been bitten by poisonous snakes without any harm at all. I know missionaries who have drunk poisonous swamp water because of their intense suffering of malaria and just so thirsty they had to drink something and put a straw down into that poisonous swamp water and drink it without any harm.

But for you to just go out and deliberately jeopardize yourself is manifestly wrong. Tempting the Lord our God. So, when the devil had ended all of the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

He came back, but for a while he left him. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit. Now, he began in chapter four, full of the Holy Spirit and being led by the Spirit.

And now returning in the power of the Spirit. And so, that work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus, leading him, filling him, empowering him. And we as believers have that same privilege of being filled with the Holy Spirit, being led by the Holy Spirit and being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Paul said, be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be ye being filled with the Spirit. Paul said in Romans 8, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. In Acts 1.8, Jesus said, and you will receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

So, we as the believers have that same relationship to the Spirit that Jesus had in that we can be filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit of God. And as he was, there went out a fame of him through all of the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

He was going around teaching in the synagogues in the area of the Galilee. Now, at this particular time, according to Josephus, Josephus at this time was the governor in the area of Galilee and Josephus in his writings declares that he had 204 cities in his jurisdiction that had populations exceeding 10,000 people. So, at the time that Jesus was ministering in the Galilee, it was a very populated area, perhaps as many as 3 million people.

Of course, that's the number that Josephus claimed. 3 million people living in the area of Galilee during the ministry of Jesus. Today, there's just about 4 million people in all of the land of Israel.

Most of them are in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. There's probably less than a half a million people in the Galilee region today. But in the time of Christ, over 3 million people inhabiting that area, which of course is an extremely beautiful area.

If there were an area of the world which I would enjoy living, it would be along the Sea of Galilee. It is so beautiful. I love it there.

You've got great, well, I guess you've got hot summers, but you've got the lake right there to ski in and swim in and all, but it's just a beautiful place and very great. In fact, they used to say that in the Galilee, it was easier to raise 10 tons of fruit than one child. It produced so abundantly in that area.

Now, he now returned to Nazareth, where he was born and where he grew up. He spent 30 years in Nazareth, where he was known as the carpenter's son, and he was well known by the people. And so, he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as was his custom, he was in the habit of doing it, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and he stood up to read the scriptures.

Now, this was something that, a custom that he had developed. He would go into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and would teach in the synagogue. So, he stood up to read the scriptures, and they delivered unto him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

And of course, all the scriptures were on scrolls, and they would keep these in a depository in the synagogue, and they would carry it out, and they would unroll it. And so, they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, and each day, they had a particular passage that they read out of the scrolls. And in the synagogue worship, even to the present day, on every day of the year, on this particular day, they read these particular scriptures.

And so, they handed him the prophet Isaiah, and when he had opened the scroll, he found the place where it was written, "...the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of the sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and gave it again to the man who was in charge. He reads minister, but really, he was the servant.

He isn't a minister in the sense that we think of a minister today, but he was just the fellow that carried the scrolls around. And he sat down, and all of the eyes of all of the people that were in the synagogue were fast on him. When he sat down, that was indicative of the fact that he was now going to begin to teach.

The rabbis always sat when they taught. And so, he stood to read the scriptures, but having read them, then, in sitting down, it was signifying to the people, he is now going to teach us the scriptures. He looked up this particular passage in Isaiah, which is Isaiah 61.

And he read out of Isaiah 61, the prophecy concerning the Messiah. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, the recovering of the sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

This was to be the ministry of the Messiah. Now, if you will go back to Isaiah 61, you'll find that he stopped right in the middle of the text of Isaiah 61. He didn't complete the reading of the ministry of the Messiah.

The reason being, there are two comings of the Messiah. The rest of Isaiah 61 pertains to those things that will transpire when he comes again, as it speaks of the judgment and all that will transpire. That will await his second coming.

Those things that he read are the things that pertain to his first coming. These would be his works. These would be his activities.

And thus, it was extremely significant that, as he said to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, he closed the book. Now, it's interesting to compare the ministry of Jesus with John the Baptist. With John the Baptist, there was really no gospel.

Just repent, you generation of vipers. Bring forth something that shows you've repented, you know. Who warned you to flee from the wrath of come? Make this path straight.

I mean, just laying it on them, really no gospel. But with Jesus, we find the gospel. I've come to mend up, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, the recovering of the sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bruised, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

And so, the glorious gospel that was brought to us by Jesus Christ. Now, later on, when John the Baptist began to have questions concerning Jesus, after he'd been in prison for a while and Jesus had not kicked Herod out from the throne and taken over, John sent his disciples to Jesus with the question, are you the Messiah or shall we look for another? In other words, what's the big delay? I'm tired of this prison. And in that same hour, many came to Jesus who were blind and lame, the poor, and He healed them.

He restored the sight and He said to those disciples of John, go back and tell John what you have seen, how the blind received their sight, the lame are walking, and to the meek the gospel is being preached. And Jesus, rather than answering directly, go back and tell John, yes, I'm the one you're looking for, rather than His own testimony. In essence, He was saying, my works testify of who I am.

These were to be the works of the Messiah. Now, later on, Jesus said, believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works sake. Don't believe it because I say it unto you, but I have demonstrated the works of the Messiah.

I have done those things that the scripture said the Messiah would do in giving sight to the blind, the lame are walking, the gospel is being preached to the poor. And these works are a witness and they attest to the fact that Jesus is indeed the Messiah. And so, He closed the book, gave it to the minister, He sat down, everybody was looking at Him, and He began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

That must have been an electric, dynamic moment. As He closed the book, having read these prophecies of the Messiah, which they all knew and recognized to be prophecies of the Messiah, and He said, today, this scripture has been fulfilled. When He was talking to the woman at the well, the Samaritan woman, she said to Him, we know that when the Messiah is come, He's going to tell us everything.

And I've got news for you. The one who is speaking to you is He. Imagine the dynamic of that moment, you know, to realize, hey, this is it.

He's the one. He is declaring this to the people here at the beginning of His ministry. And all bore witness and they wondered at His gracious words, which proceeded out of His mouth.

And they said, is not this Joseph's son? They were stumbled because, you know, they knew Him. And He said unto them, you surely will say this proverb unto me, physician, heal thyself. For whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do it also here in this country.

Now, we've heard that you've done some exciting things down in Capernaum. Do something here. And He said, I tell you the truth.

No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth. Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah when the heaven was shut for three years and six months.

And there was a great famine throughout all the land. But unto none of them was Elijah sent. But to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

Now, Jesus is saying some things that are going to really upset them. Because one thing a Jew was, and that was he was a complete national. In fact, in their writings of this time, the Jews taught that the Gentiles were only created for fuel for hell.

And they did not believe that a Gentile could be saved. We are the sons of Abraham. And they're this strong nationalistic feeling, feeling that salvation was only for the Jews.

Everyone else was excluded. So that when Jesus begins to point out a few things in their history, it upsets them. Now, at the time of Elijah, when there was this famine as a result of the drought for three and a half years, there was a widow who was sustained during the famine by Elijah.

The Lord sent Elijah to her, but she wasn't a Jewish. She was in the city of Sarepta. And there were many lepers in Israel, though there were many widows in Israel.

None of the widows were visited by Elijah. Just this one outside. And there were many lepers in Israel at the time of Elisha, the prophet, but none of them were cleansed except Naaman, the Syrian.

Oh man, that's enough to make any Jews blood boil. We are the people. God only cares for us and no one else.

And all of those that were in the synagogue, when they heard these things were filled with anger, with wrath, and they rose up and threw him out of the city. And they led him to the brow of the hill where on their city was built, that they might cast him head first over it. They're going to take him up and toss him over the cliff.

But he passing through the midst of them went his way. So he just disappeared actually from their sight and went on down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he taught them on the Sabbath days.

And they were astonished at his doctrine for his word was with authority. Now, no one spoke with authority in those days. When anyone would preach, they'd say, now Rabbi Halil declares.

They were like government employees. No one wanted to, you know, take any word of authority. They always pass you off to someone else.

No one wants to take responsibility for anything. And that's why it's so hard to get a permit anywhere. You know, no one wants to accept any responsibility.

You know, if it comes back that I'm, you know, it's my neck and it's awfully hard to deal with government agencies. Well, in those days, when everyone spoke, they would always speak with the quoting of someone else. You know, he said this or he declared that, but Jesus wasn't quoting the rabbis.

He just said, I say unto you. Now you've heard that it has been said. You heard that this is what was said, but I say unto you.

And he spoke with authority and they weren't used to that. And they were amazed at the fact that he spoke with such authority, astonished at his doctrine for his word was with authority. And in the synagogue, there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil.

And he cried out with a loud voice saying, let us alone. What have we to do with the Jesus of Nazareth? Are thou come to destroy us? I know who you are. The Holy one of God, the demons recognized him.

And here in the synagogue in Capernaum, this demon possessed man cries out and Jesus rebuked him saying, hold thy peace and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him and did not hurt him. And they were all amazed and spake among themselves saying, what kind of word is this? For with authority and power, he commands the unclean spirit and they come out.

Now, in those days they had rights of exorcism, but I mean, they would go through a ceremony that you wouldn't believe days over that person with the unclean spirit. And they would use sometimes a gold ring and go through this whole long routine and rigmarole to exercise the unclean spirits. And it was really a heavy duty thing.

And here, Jesus is just speaking to them and commanding them and they're coming out and saying, Hey, wait a minute. You know, what's going on here? What kind of word and authority is this that he can just speak to them and they're obedient to him. And his fame went out into every place of the country around that area.

And he arose out of the synagogue and he entered into Simon's house and Simon's wife's mother was taken with great fever and they besought him for her. Now Simon was married his wife's mother. It is interesting that nothing at all is mentioned concerning the wives of the apostles.

Now, because nothing is mentioned from them, we should not infer anything concerning them. The scripture is silent. We should be silent.

There is no inferences at all that we can draw from the silence of the scripture concerning the wives of the apostles. No inferences can be made. Inferences that they were second rate citizens or anything of this nature are absolutely wrong because the scripture is silent concerning them.

It's amazing when the scriptures are silent. How many times men love to speak and the books that are written about the silence of the scriptures, you know, the inferences and the conclusions that a person draws because the scripture is silent in a certain area. And that is all speculative and there is to be no inferences drawn from it whatsoever.

Now, we would not even know that Peter was married for sure except that his wife's mother was sick and was taken with a great fever. Now this is in the Greek medical terms. Luke was a doctor and thus he diagnosis her condition with medical terms in the Greek language here.

And they came to Jesus that he might help her. And he stood over her and rebuked the fever and it left her. And immediately she arose and fixed dinner for them, ministered unto them, which means, you know, fix something to eat and prepared something for them as mothers are so prone to do.

You know, just that typical neat mom that goes out and fix something for them. And when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with diverse kind of diseases brought them unto him and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. And devils also came out of many crying out and saying,

thou art the Messiah, the son of God.

And he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak for they knew that he was the Messiah. And when it was day, he departed and went into a deserted area and the people were looking for him and they came unto him and they begged him that he would not depart from them. But he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore, am I sent.

And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee. Now, if there were 204 cities with populations of 10,000 plus, it would take a good while to get around to all of these fairly good sized little communities, 204 of them to preach in the synagogues throughout the area of Galilee. So next week we will enter in to chapter five and chapter six.

May the Lord be with you and may the Lord bless you and give you a beautiful week and fill your life with praises and thanksgiving unto God for all of his goodness. And we're entering into that difficult time of the year known as Christmas when there are so many extra pressures, so much pushing and shoving and crowded parking lots and people go insane. May the Lord keep you cool and may the true spirit of Christmas just fill your heart and life.

God protect and keep you from being caught up with the spirit of the age. May you rather be controlled with the spirit of Christ, walking with him, walking in his love as a light shining in a dark place in Jesus name.

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