

2. Jesus Called His First Disciples

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Jesus. John said that his baptism was a baptism of repentance; however, the One that He came to introduce would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

We see that John was a witness of the fact that Jesus was sent by God, the Father. Mark 1:9-11 says, “It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” In these verses we see that Jesus had spent most of His life living in the town of Nazareth. Luke 3:23a says, “Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age...” As a result, Jesus had been a carpenter for a number of years in the town of Nazareth before He began His ministry.

Jesus came to be baptized by John so that the Father could publicly identify Jesus as His Son. Matthew 3:13-15 says, “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’ But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him.” Jesus chose to identify Himself with mankind because He came to die in our place for our sins. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ became identified with us so that He could put His righteousness to our account when we believe.

At the same time, we see that Jesus was also identified by the Father as His Son when the Father said, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Isaiah had prophesied in Isaiah 11:2, “The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.” This verse shows that the Father publicly placed the sevenfold fullness of the Holy Spirit on Jesus as He began His public ministry. Jesus then quoted another prophecy by Isaiah, from Isaiah 61:1-2a, when He returned to Nazareth several months after He was baptized. Luke 4:18-21 says, “‘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 proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.’ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’” At His baptism, the Father publicly identified Jesus as His Son who would fulfill all of the Old Testament prophecies regarding Him.

Mark went on to write about two key events that happened during the first year of the ministry of Jesus. Mark 1:12-15 says, “Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him. Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent, and believe in the gospel.” The first of these two events was the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness by Satan which came immediately after His baptism.

Jesus came to completely defeat Satan. Satan had defeated Adam and Eve when he tempted them and they sinned. As a result, 1 John 3:8 says, “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” Jesus began His ministry to destroy the works of the devil with His first victory over Satan before He even began His public ministry. Satan can only tempt mankind in three ways. 1 John 2:16 says, “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” Eve was tempted in all three areas when she “...saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree that was desirable to make one wise...” (Genesis 3:6) Satan tried to tempt Jesus in the same three ways but each time Jesus defeated Satan by answering Him with Scripture.

The second event that happened in these verses happened several months later. The events recorded in at least the first four chapters of John happened before this second event. John 4:1-3 says, “Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.” Mark 1:14 says, “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.” John was still baptizing in the events mentioned in John 4 so he had not yet been cast into prison. We see that when Jesus came into Galilee that He was preaching that the kingdom of God was at hand. As a result, the message of Jesus was, “Repent, and believe in the gospel.” Just like John, Jesus focused on the importance of repentance.

Mark 1:16-20 goes on to say, “And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him. When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.”

This event happened almost a year after Jesus had been baptized by John. John the Baptist had originally introduced part of these men to Jesus after Jesus had been tested in the wilderness by Satan. John 1:32-34 says, “And John bore witness, saying, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” John the Baptist told his followers about Jesus by calling Him the Lamb of God.

Then John 1:35-40 says, “Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which is to say, when translated, “Teacher”), ‘where are

You staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour). One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.” Six men (Andrew, Peter, James, John, Philip and Nathanael) all met Jesus in the next two days and were invited to “Come and See.” These men then went with Jesus to the wedding in Cana, spent time with Him in Capernaum, traveled with Him to the Passover in Jerusalem and later spent time with Jesus in Judea before returning to Galilee through Samaria.

That is why the events recorded in Mark 1:16-20 occurred nearly a year after Jesus met these men and said “Come and See.” Matthew 4:12-13 says, “Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali.” We see that Jesus came to Capernaum after He had been rejected by the people of His hometown of Nazareth. Luke 4:28-31 says, “So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way. Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths.” This meant Jesus then moved to the area where these men lived.

During this time, these men had the opportunity to get better acquainted with Jesus and even travel with Him to a variety of places. As a result, this invitation by Jesus is an invitation to come and grow and includes a promise that these men would learn how to serve God. Jesus said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:19) These men had been fishers of fish. They understood what it meant to catch fish. Now Jesus promised them that their lives would be transformed and they would become fishers of men. Acts 4:13 describes how their lives were changed as they learned to become fishers of men and learned the importance of yielding to the Holy Spirit so that the power of the Holy Spirit could flow through their lives. That verse says, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” The Lord will transform our lives as we learn these same things.

We see that when Jesus called these two sets of brothers to become His disciples that all four of these men immediately left their nets and followed Jesus. The word translated “left or forsook” means “*to leave, to forgive or to let go.*” These men were willing to let go of their fishing and accept the invitation to learn how to serve Jesus. In the same way, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to make the choice to let go of the things of this world and make it their first priority to use their lives to serve Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children what this means by your example.