



LESSON 1 (Jan 19/20, 2021)

E: Expectations

Discussion Questions

Read Mark 1:1–13: John the Baptist and Baptism of Jesus

1. How does the author Mark in the first verse immediately connect Jesus to the Old Testament story? How is this like the first line in Matthew's gospel?
2. In verse 3, John is called to "Prepare the way of the Lord." What is the value of preparation? What do you spend time preparing for and what in your life could use a bit more preparation?
3. Mark describes John the Baptist's clothing in verse 6, and he sure looks a lot like Elijah! How is John the Baptist in a sense like the last of the Old Testament prophets?
4. In verses 7-8, John preaches about the one who is to come after him. How would you define the humility John exercises as he preaches about the Messiah?
5. How does John's description of the one to come present a man of awesome power? Do you think that the crowds were expecting a man like Jesus when he showed up? How do misunderstandings about Jesus hurt us and others?
6. All three members of the Trinity are present at the baptism. Thinking back to your own baptism or that of loved children, how does baptism open your eyes to the grace of God?
7. Who drives Jesus out from the Jordan and into the wilderness? Note that the word 'driven' is a strong word, the same word used to describe driving out a demon or throwing someone off a cliff. How is this consistent with God's actions in the Abraham and Sacrifice of Isaac story we studied in Genesis 22? See Gen 22:1–2.



Read Luke 4: 1-13: Temptation in the Wilderness

8. What is the devil's strategy in his first words to Jesus in v. 3, and how is this like his deception of the woman back in Gen 3:1? How is this type of attack used against us?
9. Jesus responds to the devil's suggestion by quoting a portion of Deuteronomy 8:3, "man does not live by bread alone." Read Deuteronomy 8:2-5 to get a fuller sense of what Jesus is saying. How can you see the pattern connecting Israel's forty years in the wilderness and Jesus's forty days of temptation in the wilderness?
10. The devil now switches tactics in verse 6-7, offering him an alternative route to "glory" not requiring a trip to the cross, giving him dominion over all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would just bend his knee to him. How was the devil's offer a deceitful and empty promise?
11. Finally, the devil switches tactics again, and now mimics (or perhaps mocks) Jesus by quoting Scripture, in this case Psalm 91:11-12, taking the text out of context. How are we susceptible to the misuse of Scripture, and what should we do about it? Can you think of examples of such misuses of Scripture in culture today?
12. Where do we see evil in the world today attempting to hide knowledge of Christ from those who don't know him yet? How does such evil continually oppose those who do know Christ?
13. Throughout the temptation the devil is offering Jesus a shortcut to Jesus' divine mission as the Son of God. Where are you tempted to take a "shortcut" or a "detour" on a path of obedience with God?
14. Why is it important that Jesus passes the test and the devil flees from Him?
15. Scripture says that we are able to resist the devil and he will flee from us (James 4:7). Why is this so and how can we practice resisting the lies of the enemy?