

A Different King

The Messiah Matthew 3:1—4:17

“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:17b

1. Read Matthew 3:1–4:17. What is John the Baptist’s message? (verse 2)
2. John the Baptist’s job was to prepare the way for the Lord. How did he accomplish that?
3. Use the text to help you define “repentance.” (See also Ezekiel 18:23 and Acts 3:19.) According to John, what was the Pharisees’ and Sadducees’ problem?
4. How is the warning in John’s fiery message actually evidence of God’s grace? (Ezekiel 33:11) Can you think of a time that God warned you and you changed direction?
5. The list of events recorded in all of the Gospels is short—not even Jesus’ birth is included in all four. Yet Jesus’ baptism is mentioned in every one. Why do you think this event is so important? (1 Samuel 16:1, 12, 13; John 1:29–34)
6. At what other time in the gospel of Matthew did God the Father’s voice come out of heaven to commend Jesus (Matthew 17)? What are the similarities and differences between the two events? (See Deuteronomy 18:15 for further background.)
7. Who prompts Jesus to go out into the desert? (4:1) For what purpose?

8. Can you think of other instances when God led people into the wilderness? (For help skim Numbers; Deuteronomy 8:1-8; 1 Kings 19:1-18; 1 Samuel 23:13-18.) What were God's purposes? How is Jesus' experience similar? Unique?

9. Describe a wilderness experience of your own. What particular temptation did you experience?

10. How would you describe the nature of each temptation? Can you relate to any of these temptations?

11. How does Jesus respond to each temptation? What are your typical strategies for handling temptation? How do you benefit from knowing Christ faced these temptations successfully?

12. What temptations are you facing? What resources has God given you? (1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 2: 17, 18; 1 John 2:1) How can you apply these verses to these situations right now?