

A Voice Crying

Mark 1:2-8

The Credentials of Messiah

- 1) The OT Prophecy of the Forerunner (2-3)
- 2) The 1st Century Fulfillment of the Forerunner (4-8)

The Old Testament Prophecy of the Forerunner (2-3)

The Prophecy

- Mark 1:2-3 are a collage of two OT texts:
 - Verse 2 = Mal. 3:1
 - Verse 3 = Is. 40:3
- Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6
- Is. 40:1-5

The 1st Century Fulfillment of the Forerunner (4-8)

A Glimpse of the Man (4a)

- "John the Baptist appeared"
- Who was this man?
 - His parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth, were devout OT believers (Luke 1:5-6).
 - His father was a Levite, actively serving during his rotation at the Temple (Luke 1:8-9).
 - The angel Gabriel appeared to him and told him that he and Elizabeth would have a son in their old age.
- When did he appear?
 - John was 6 months older than Christ (Luke 1:26).
 - Jesus began his ministry about the age of thirty.
 - That means so did John.
 - It was probably in the spring of 26 AD that John appeared.
- Where did he appear?
 - "In the wilderness"
 - Matt. tells that it was the wilderness of Judea (Matt. 3:1).



A Summary of His Ministry (4b)

- His Method: “preaching”
- The Inward Requirement: “repentance”
- The Outward Sign: “a baptism of repentance”
- The Spiritual Result: “for the forgiveness of sins”

The Impact of His Ministry (5)

- “And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem”
 - Matthew adds, “all the district around the Jordan” (Matt. 3:5).
- “And they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.”
 - *Confessing* means
 - “confessing out,” that is, publicly acknowledging
 - “saying the same thing” God does
- “Being baptized”
 - Greek word is used in secular settings to mean “to plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm.”
 - The word itself means “to dip or to plunge or to immerse.”
- “Being baptized by Him”
 - Ordinarily, proselyte baptism was self-administered



The Message of His Life (6)

- “John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and his diet was locusts and wild honey.”
- His clothes
 - “Camel's hair” – a long, loose robe woven of the rough, hairy camel's coat; usually worn by the poor or the ascetic.
 - “A leather belt around his waist”

The Message of His Life (6)

- His diet
 - “Locusts”
 - Lev. 11:20-23 – 4 kinds
 - Boiled or roasted
 - “Wild honey”
 - Cf. Deut. 32:13
 - Cf. Ps. 81:16

The Message of His Life (6)

- a) A Nazirite
 - Luke 1:15 - "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb."
 - Cf. Numbers 6:1-21; nothing is said about not cutting John's hair, but it is probable that too was forbidden.
 - Normally temporary vow.
 - But both Samson (Jud. 16:17) and Samuel (1 Sam. 1:11) were Nazirites from birth.
 - Spoke of being set apart for the service of God.

The Message of His Life (6)

- b) A Rebuke to the People
 - He was a walking rebuke to the sinful and indulgent lives of the people, but especially of the supposed spiritual leaders of the nation.
 - Luke 16:14ff
 - Hughes: "John the Baptist embodied his message. In this sense, he was the message!"

The Message of His Life (6)

- c) A Prophet like Elijah
 - Zech. 13:4 - "Also it will come about in that day that the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies, and they will not put on a hairy robe in order to deceive."
 - 2 Kings 1:8 - They answered him, "He was a hairy man [ESV translates: he wore a garment of hair] with a leather girdle bound about his loins." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."
 - Cf. Mal. 4:5-6 - "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. 6 "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."
 - John 1:21 - They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."
 - Luke 1:17 - "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

The Heart of His Preaching (7-8)

- John understood Himself to be the fulfillment of the OT prophecy of Isaiah 40.
 - Cf. John 1:19-28
- The heart of the forerunner's message was a message about a Person.
 - A person whom at this point John does not know the identity of.
 - Cf. John 1:33 - "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'

The Heart of His Preaching (7-8)

- Not primarily about repentance.
- Not primarily about baptism.
- His ministry was about announcing and pointing to the One who was to come.

He will be superior in Might.

- "After me One is coming who is mightier than I."
- Many had concluded John might be the Messiah.
 - Luke 3:15 - the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ.
 - Cf. also John 1:19, 20; 3:25-36

He will be superior in Worth.

- “I am not fit to stoop down and untie the strap of His sandals.”
 - Most menial task of the lowest slave
 - Only a gentile slave
 - The Talmud said that a disciple was obligated to fulfill every menial service for his Teacher that a slave would do, except untie his sandals.

He will be superior in Ministry.

- “I [emphatic] baptized you with water.”
 - John’s baptism was all external; he couldn’t reach the heart.
- “He [emphatic] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
 - Jesus’ would immerse people in the Holy Spirit.
 - He would bring about genuine transformation the level of the heart.
- One of the prophecies of the age of Messiah (Is. 44:3; Joel 2:28-29)
 - Fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:17, 33) and beyond (Acts 10:44; 11:15)

Two Applications

- 1) The Doctrinal Application
 - Cf. John 1:29-34; 3:25-36
 - James Edwards: “the Christ-event is not a random and arbitrary occurrence. On the contrary, the dawn of the age of salvation in Jesus is the consummation of a purposeful history of revelation of God extending back to Israel’s inception at the Exodus. From Sinai onward, and particularly in the prophets, God has been preparing for a new beginning in Jesus Christ.”

Two Applications

- 2) The Personal Application
 - If you want to recognize and receive the Messiah that God has already sent, there’s only one way to get prepared.
 - Repent!
 - A change of mind and heart so radical that it leads to a change in the life
 - E.g., Acts 2:36-38