

The Journey

Series 04: Christ

Week 29: John the Baptizer

We are indebted to [Ethnos360](#) for providing the basis of these lessons

Review (Where We Have Been)

In God's BIG Story, we've emphasized two Scriptures that are foundational...

Genesis 3:15 (ESV) I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; **he** shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

- God told Satan that He would send **Someone** to crush (destroy) his head
- For 4,000 years, mankind awaited this Deliverer but He had not yet come
- The Deliverer was important because He would pay the penalty for sin and give man the opportunity to be forgiven and have a relationship with God once again

Genesis 12:1 (ESV) Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house **to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation... 3 ...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**"

Promises God made to Abram (Abraham)...

- **Promise of a Nation**

Exodus 19:6 (ESV) ...you shall be to me...a holy nation."

- **Promise of a Land**

Deuteronomy 31:23 (ESV) And the Lord commissioned Joshua, "...you shall bring the people of Israel into the land that I swore to give them.

- **Promise of a Deliverer**

Galatians 3:8 (ESV) ...foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."

BIG Idea

Only God could provide the Deliverer, and Malachi (the last OT prophet) foretold it.

Malachi 3:1 (ESV) "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming..."

- Before the Deliverer appeared, another prophet would be sent to prepare the way
- After Malachi, no other prophet spoke for 400 years (silent years); however, God was preparing the way for the coming Deliverer

Information (What We Need to Know)

Historically, where are we?

- The Greeks (approximately 300BC) had brought a common language to the world



- The Romans (approximately 60BC) had linked distant cities by roads
 - The Jews (under Roman rule) had built synagogues in foreign countries where the Old Testament Scriptures were taught, including the coming of a Deliverer
- Acts 15:21 (ESV)** For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.”
- In every area of life – politically, culturally, and economically – God was setting the stage for the greatest event that has ever taken place in history. – FF

The Story of Zechariah and Elizabeth...

- This couple were Jews who believed God and were awaiting the Deliverer
- Luke 1:5 (ESV)** In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah... And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. **6** And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. **7** But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.
- God’s angel promised that Zechariah and Elizabeth would have a son
- Luke 1:13 (ESV)** But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.”
- God’s angel told Zechariah that John would prepare the way for the Deliverer
- Luke 1:15 (ESV)** “...for he will be great before the Lord. **16** ...And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, **17** and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”
- Malachi 3:1 (ESV)** “I send my messenger...he will prepare the way before me.”
- “The angel told Zechariah that his son would prepare the people to recognize and believe in the Lord their God. The coming Deliverer was to be the Lord Himself.”
- John is born to Zechariah and Elizabeth
- Luke 1:57 (ESV)** ...the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.

The Prophecy of Zechariah Concerning the Deliverer and John...

- Redemption and salvation would come to Israel through the Deliverer
Luke 1:67 (ESV) And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, **68** “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people **69** and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, **70** as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets...”
- God’s promise to Abraham would be fulfilled (Deliverer)
Luke 1:72 (ESV) “...to remember his holy covenant, **73** the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us **74** that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, **75** in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.”
- The Deliverer would be the Lord
Luke 1:76 (ESV) “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways...”
“John was to help Israel recognize that it was the Lord Himself who was coming to deliver them. John would help them understand that each individual would have to put his trust in the Lord as his own personal Deliverer. No ordinary man could deliver sinners from Satan’s control or from the penalty for sin. The Lord, who is God, is the great Deliverer of all who trust in Him.” – Firm Foundations
- The Deliverer would show how people could be forgiven
Luke 1:76 (ESV) “...for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, **77** to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins...”
 - ✓ The payment for sin is death
 - ✓ The payment must be made if we are to be delivered
 - ✓ The Deliverer would make it clear how sin could be paid for, and how sinners could be forgiven and saved from being separated from God forever
- The Deliverer would lead people out of spiritual darkness
Luke 1:78 (ESV) “...because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high **79** to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”
“When Adam and Eve were separated from God because of their sin, they were plunged into spiritual darkness without any trace of light. If God had not reached out to them and shown them the way back to Him, they, and the rest of the human race, would have continued on in darkness forever.”

“Zechariah said that the Deliverer would come into this world to be the light to all people. As the sun rises after a dark night and floods the world with light, so the coming Deliverer would remove spiritual darkness from all who trust in Him.”

Application (What We Need to Do)

Everything was now prepared for the Deliverer to come.

Millions had died awaiting the promised Deliverer, but through faith some were saved by trusting God's promises and believing He would send a Deliverer.

Genesis 15:5 (ESV) And he [God] brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." **6** And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

He Believed

Abraham didn't have a son, but believed God would provide...and eventually one of his offspring would bring good news to the world.

He was made Righteous

Based on his belief, God declared *unrighteous* Abraham to be *righteous*.

Romans 4:21 (ESV) He [Abraham] was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. **22** And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. **23** And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded **24** for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25** He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

"When God the Father raised Christ from the dead, it was a demonstration that he accepted Christ's suffering and death as full payment for sin, and that the Father's favor, no longer his wrath against sin, was directed toward Christ, and through Christ toward those who believe." – *ESV Study Bible*

