

Gospel of John (lesson 4)

John 1:19-23

19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No."

22 Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

23 John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

John quoted Isaiah 40:3. We find this reference for John the Baptist in Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2-3 ; Luke 3:4-5. This must be important because we find almost the exact details in all four gospels. Why is this fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy significant?

John 1:24 - 27

24 Now the Pharisees who had been sent 25 questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

26 "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know.

27 He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

The accounts in the other gospels are more graphic and confrontational. John the Baptist calls out the religious leaders in Matthew 3:7-10; Luke 3:7-9 as a brood of vipers, and questioned who warned them about the coming wrath of God.

Matthew 3:11-12

11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

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John references Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire. John knew his assignment and also of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to come.

Luke 3:2

... the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

Luke 3:8-9

8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 9 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

John did not hold back in his warning for the people. Having Abraham for a father is not good enough. Everyone is called to repentance.

John 1:28

28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

John's ministry was conducted away from the temple and the cities. He is the voice in the wilderness (literally). He did not confront the religious leaders directly in the Synagogue so they had to send a delegation to him to find out what the disturbance was about. You can see that John's message created speculation of him being a prophet or even the Messiah. It got everybody's attention as rumors do.