

Notes for 1.4–1.8

Observations:

- Parallel passages: Mt. 3.1–12, Lk. 3.1–20, Jn. 1.19–28
- John stayed in the wilderness, near the Jordan River, and had a wild, unkempt appearance reminiscent of Elijah.
- John introduced someone coming after him, “mightier” and more “worthy” than he.
- Many people traveled a long distance on foot to see John; they responded to his message with confession (admitting their guilt) and being baptized—something of a public stand that they sincerely desired to change.

Definitions:

- baptism, baptize, baptizer: 907 baptizo bap-tid'-zo from a derivative of 911; to immerse, submerge; to make whelmed (i.e. fully wet); used only (in the New Testament) of ceremonial ablution, especially (technically) of the ordinance of Christian baptism:—Baptist, baptize, wash.[3] The action which the Greek words express may be performed by plunging, drenching, staining, dipping, sprinkling. The verb baptizo occurs in the LXX in 2Ki 5:14, Isa 21:4.[1] OT example: (2Ki 5.14) So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.
- repent, repentance: 3341 metanoia met-an'-oy-ah; (subjectively) compunction (for guilt, including **reformation**); by implication, **reversal** (of decision) 3340 metanoeo met-an-o-eh'-o; to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction)[3]
The act of repenting, or the state of being penitent; sorrow for what one has done or omitted to do; especially, contrition for sin. Repentance is the relinquishment of any practice from the conviction that it has offended God. Sorrow, fear, and anxiety are properly not parts, but adjuncts, of repentance; yet they are too closely connected with it to be easily separated.[2]
compunction: A picking of heart; poignant grief proceeding from a sense of guilt or consciousness of causing pain; the sting of conscience. Syn. — Compunction, Remorse, Contrition. Remorse is anguish of soul under a sense of guilt or consciousness of having offended God or brought evil upon one's self or others. Compunction is the pain occasioned by a wounded and awakened conscience. Neither of them implies true contrition, which denotes self-condemnation, humiliation, and repentance. We speak of the gnawings of remorse; of compunction for a specific act of transgression; of deep contrition in view of our past lives.[2]
- forgive: 859 aphasis af'-es-is from 863; freedom; (figuratively) pardon:—deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission.
863 aphiemi af-ee'-ay-mee from 575 and hiemi (to send; an intensive form of eimi, to go); to send forth, in various applications (as follow):—cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up[3]
1a: to give up resentment of or claim to requital for (forgive an insult) b: to grant relief from payment of (forgive a debt), 2: to cease to feel resentment against (an offender): pardon (forgive one's enemies)[4]
- sin: 264 hamartano ham-ar-tan'-o to miss the mark (and so not share in the prize), i.e. (figuratively) to err, especially (morally) to sin:—for your faults, offend, sin, trespass.[3]
n. Transgression of the law of God; disobedience of the divine command; any violation of God's will, either in purpose or conduct; moral deficiency in the character; iniquity; as, sins of omission and sins of commission. v. To depart voluntarily from the path of duty prescribed by God to man; to violate the divine law in any particular, by actual transgression or by the neglect or nonobservance of its injunctions; to violate any known rule of duty; – often followed by against.[2]

References:

- The description of John the Baptist is similar to that of Elijah in 2Ki 1.7-8: “He said to them, ‘What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?’ They answered him, ‘He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist.’ And he said, ‘It is Elijah the Tishbite.’”
- In the OT law, washing had a ceremonial function, both before coming before God (Ex. 29.4), and being part of the camp of Israel (Dt. 21.6). There was a distinction between what is clean and holy, with what is unclean. The following passages indicate that the external washing was symbolic of an inner washing:
 - Jer 2.22: Though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me, declares the Lord GOD.
 - Is 1.16–20: Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause. “Come now, let us reason together”, says the LORD: “though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”
 - Is. 4.4: 4 when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.
 - Jer 4.13–14: Behold, he comes up like clouds; his chariots like the whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles—woe to us, for we are ruined! O Jerusalem, wash your heart from evil, that you may be saved. How long shall your wicked thoughts lodge within you?
 - Notice that John was not new in calling the people to repent and turn from their sins. Nor was John challenging the temple and the sacrificial system; rather, John was most critical of insincerity and of presumption of some sort of entitlement. The parallel passage, Lk. 3.7–14, illustrates this point very clearly:

He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”
- In the OT prophets, God promised he would pour out his Spirit on his people:
 - Is. 44.3: “ ‘But now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen! Thus says the LORD who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you: Fear not, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams. . . . ’ ”
 - Joel 2.28–29: “ ‘And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. ’ ”

Questions:

- Why did John baptize with water? Besides as a way for people to make a public stance of their repentance, this was also the manner that the Messiah would be identified to John. John 1.31–34:

“I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

- Why would John say that he is “not worthy”? Where does this idea of worthiness come from? The OT clearly communicates that sinful man cannot approach God and live, even the high priest could only enter the “holy of holies” once a year (Lev. 16). In fact, no man could see God’s face and live. (Ex. 33.18–23)
- What does it mean to be baptized with the Holy Spirit? When John talked about someone coming after him who would “baptize with the Holy Spirit”, people recognized John was referring to the fulfillment of the Isaiah and Joel prophecies (as well as others). Who is the Holy Spirit in the OT?

Applications:

- Consider the admonition in Lk. 3.7–14, how does this apply to us personally?

Notes for 1.9–1.13

Observations:

- Parallel passages: Mt. 3.13–4.11, Lk. 3.21–4.13, Jn. 1.29–34
- Contrast the baptism of the multitudes (for the forgiveness of sin) with the baptism of Jesus, which seemed like more of an anointing. The voice from heaven declaring Jesus as “my beloved son” justifies Mark’s first line.
- Contrast in the way the Holy Spirit works: descending as a dove, then driving into the wilderness (almost violent).
- This text makes it sound as though he was tempted throughout the forty-day period.

Definitions:

- Satan: 4567 Satanas sat-an-as’ of Chaldee origin corresponding to 4566 (with the definite affix); the accuser, i.e. the devil:–Satan. 7854 satan saw-tawn’ from 7853; an opponent; especially (with the article prefixed) Satan, the arch-enemy of good:–adversary, Satan, withstand. 7853 satan saw-tan’ a primitive root; to attack, (figuratively) accuse:–(be an) adversary, resist.[3]

OT references:

- Is. 42.1–3: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.”
- Dt. 4.11–12: “ 11 And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom. 12 Then the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice.”
- Ps. 2.7: “I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”

- Zech. 3 “ 1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire? 3 Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. 4 And the angel said to those who were standing before him, Remove the filthy garments from him. And to him he said, Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments. 5 And I said, Let them put a clean turban on his head. So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by. ”
- 1Chr 21.1 “Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.” (which David was told not to do)

Questions:

- Why is Jesus baptized? As mentioned above, this was the way Jesus was revealed to John as the Messiah. Also, Mt.3.13–15:

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented.

- Who heard the voice? None of the Gospels record who heard the voice, only that it was addressed to Jesus; however, others (at least John) did see the dove descend on Jesus, that was how John could identify Jesus as the Son of God.
- Did Jesus know he was the Son of God before his baptism? The passage in Luke of Jesus’ visit to the temple as a young child answers this question. When asked by his father why he had stayed behind in the temple conversing with the teachers, Jesus responded:

“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”

Jews did not refer to God as their father, to do so was considered one was claiming to be divine (John 10.36) so Jesus clearly knew before being baptized he was the Son of God.

- Why did Jesus go into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan? Question to be addressed later.

References

- [1] *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, James Orr, General Editor, 1844-1913 ed.
- [2] *Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, C. & G. Merriam Co. 1913
- [3] *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, James Strong, 1890
- [4] *Merriam-Webster Online*, <http://www.webster.com/>, 2007