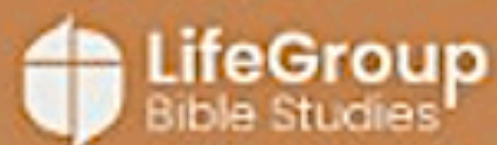




THE STORY  
OF JESUS  
IN THE  
GOSPEL  
OF MARK



FALL 2025  
SPRING 2026



# John the Baptist prepared the way

- Mark 1:1–8; Isaiah 40:1–9; Malachi 3:1–7
- Mark opened his Gospel with the preaching of John the Baptist.
- He did connect the message of John the Baptist with two messianic prophecies in Isaiah and Malachi, emphasizing that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.



# John the Baptist prepared the way

- Isaiah preached before the Exile, covering a very long period (739–681 BC).
- He preached to both kingdoms: Israel (North) before, during, and after they were taken into exile by Assyria (722 BC) and Judah (South) during some of their most significant kings – Ahab, whose wife was Jezebel and who did more evil than any king before him and Hezekiah, who reformed Judah.



# John the Baptist prepared the way

- Many of these prophecies have both a near-future fulfilment in Israel's history and a far-future fulfillment in the Messiah.
- In this quote, the near-future fulfillment was God bringing Judah back from exile.
- The “good news” was that their sins had been paid for (Isaiah 40: 2) and God was with them (Isaiah 40:9).



# John the Baptist prepared the way

- Mark showed us the long-term fulfillment in Jesus; our sins have been paid for (this is the Gospel or “good news”), Jesus is “God with us,” and following Jesus makes our paths straight (Proverbs 3:5–6).
- Mark explained that John the Baptist was the “voice” crying out in the wilderness to prepare the way for Jesus to come (Mark 1:3).



# John the Baptist prepared the way

- Malachi (“my messenger”) was the last prophet of the Old Testament, after the people had come back from Exile.
- His book ends by saying God would send “the prophet Elijah” before the day of the Lord comes (Malachi 4:5).
- Scholars agree this referred to John the Baptist, not literally Elijah reincarnated but a prophet in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17; cf. Matthew 11:7–14).



# John the Baptist prepared the way

- In the verse Mark quoted, God said He would send “my messenger” to prepare the way before His arrival.
- When He came, He would refine His people (Malachi 3:3) and judge the wicked (Malachi 3:5), but to those who returned to Him, He would restore their relationship (Malachi 3:6–7).
- This is the message John the Baptist preached.



# John the Baptist prepared the way

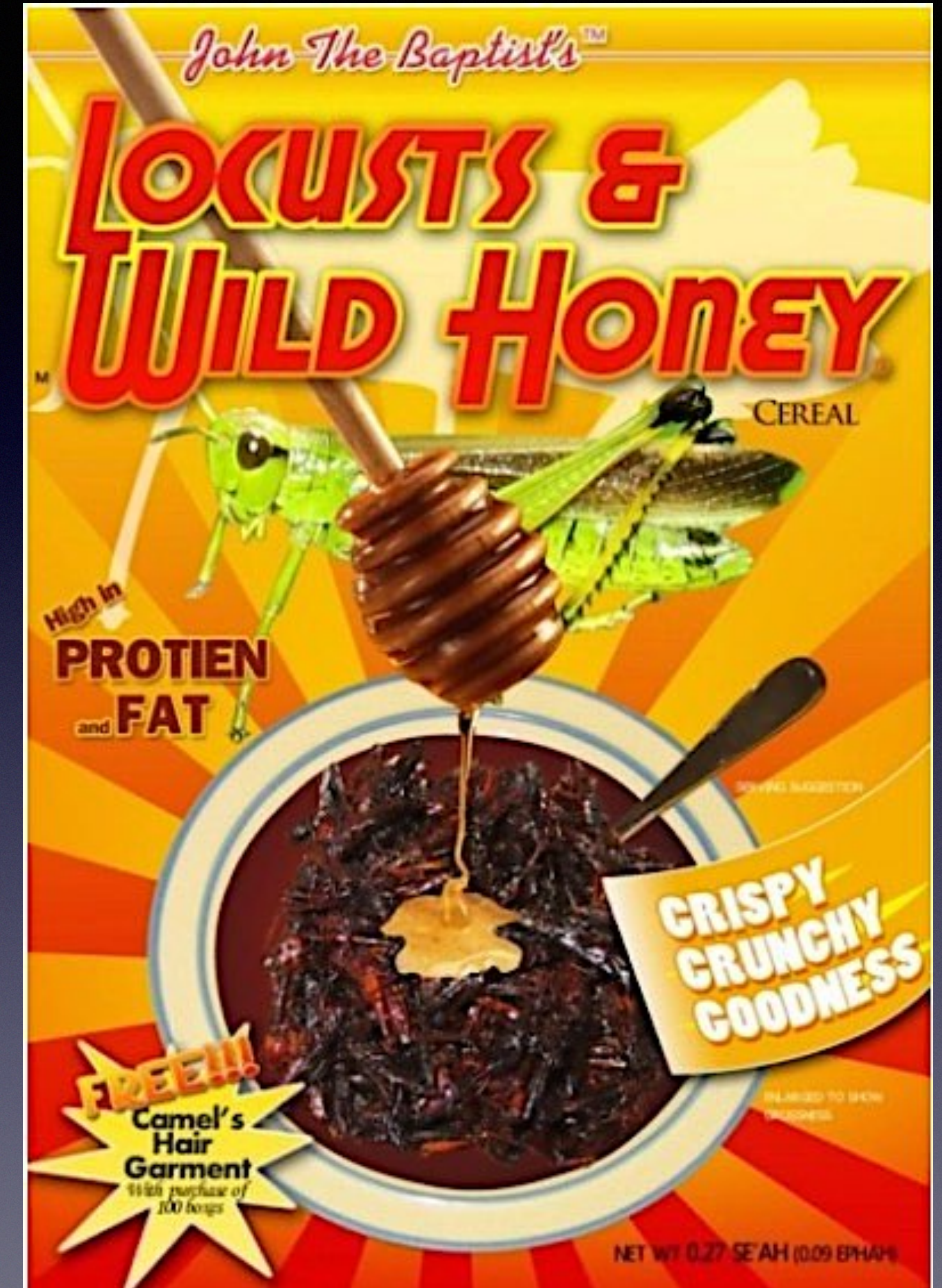
- John the Baptist wore the same clothing as Elijah, a garment of hair and a leather belt (2 King 1:8).
- He came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17) and ate locusts and wild honey, which could be found rather than grown, raised, or bought, reflecting the way Elijah relied on God to provide his food in the wilderness (1 Kings 17:4).



# John the Baptist prepared the way

- Eating these two particular things symbolized God's redemption. Both the law and prophets said if the people disobeyed, locusts would eat their crops (Exodus 10:14–15; Deuteronomy 28:38; Joel 1–2), but John flipped that and ate the locusts instead.
- Also, in the Old Testament, the Promised Land is described as flowing with milk and honey, which represent the blessing of God's kingdom.







# John the Baptist prepared the way

- In the ancient world, when a king planned to visit a city, the custom was to build or prepare a road for him and his entourage, to make the path as straight and level as possible so it was easier for them to travel.
- John's message prepared the way for Jesus. Water baptism wasn't new; it was one of the three requirements of conversion to Judaism.



# John the Baptist prepared the way

- Baptism symbolized being washed from sin and a new birth into the family of God.
- But John the Baptist wasn't baptizing proselytes (Gentiles who had converted to Judaism).
- He was baptizing Jews (Mark 1:4).



# John the Baptist prepared the way

- To prepare the way for the Gospel, John helped the Jews understand that they weren't saved based on their heritage.
- They also needed to repent, be forgiven, and be born again to a new life in Christ.
- Understanding their need for forgiveness was foundational to understanding the Gospel.



# John the Baptist prepared the way

- The messages and ministries of John and Jesus weren't exactly the same; John made that clear.
- He baptized with water, but Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit, which was also prophesied in the prophets (Isaiah 44:3; Joel 2:28–29).
- John's baptism was a symbolic washing of sin, but Jesus would bring them new life by His Spirit.



# John the Baptist prepared the way

- It is in Christ that we can be born again from above (John 3:1–8) and made a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- John the Baptist set up the awareness of the need for Jesus to atone for sin, but Jesus actually accomplished the atonement.



# Baptism of Jesus

- Mark 1:9–11; Psalm 2:6–7; Isaiah 42:1–4
- Mark's telling of Jesus' baptism is much shorter than Matthew or Luke's version, but his is the Gospel of fast-paced action.
- Though it's short, there is significant theological thinking packed into these verses.



# Baptism of Jesus

- John said he wasn't fit to untie the thong of His sandals.
- Yet he was fit to baptize Him?
- The text doesn't tell us, but imagine how John felt when Jesus came to be baptized.
- Matthew says he initially protested, saying it should be the other way around.



# Baptism of Jesus

- Not only was John not worthy of baptizing Jesus, but Jesus also didn't need to be washed from sin.
- Jesus is the only sinless man who has ever lived.
- Jesus did it to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15).



# Baptism of Jesus

- We see all three persons of the Trinity converging in one place and time.
- The visual of the heavens being torn open, the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus, and the audible voice of God the Father all show us that this truly was the Messiah.
- It was a heavenly coronation – God the Father officially crowning Jesus as Messiah-king of His kingdom.



# Baptism of Jesus

- In ancient Israel, kings and priests were anointed with oil, which symbolized the anointing of the Holy Spirit on them as they took office.
- In Jesus' baptism, He was actually anointed with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit descending "like a dove" points both to the sacrifice Jesus would become and the peace He would bring, as doves are sacrificial animals and symbols of peace.



# Baptism of Jesus

- The second time He was “crowned” would be with a crown of thorns at His Crucifixion, as the atoning sacrifice for sin.
- The Roman symbol of strength and courage was an eagle.
- The dove tells us a different type of kingdom is coming, which is upside down from the world. One of purity, gentleness and peace, not war and domination.



# Baptism of Jesus

- God's statement blends two Old Testament passages, Psalm 2:7 about God's installing His King in Zion and Isaiah 42:1 about the servant of the Lord who would have God's Spirit upon Him and bring justice to the nations.
- The connection of these two titles reminds us that in God's kingdom, the role of king was the role of a servant (Deuteronomy 17:20; Mark 10:42–45).



# Baptism of Jesus

- God the Father's proclamation at His baptism was more than just identifying Jesus as His Son. It was Jesus being anointed for His role as Messiah-king, beginning His ministry of ushering in the kingdom of God.
- In Mark, this happened right away, because Mark wanted to get straight to the action of Jesus' ministry as the mighty Son of God and servant-king who came to bring a new kingdom that is totally different from the world.



# Baptism of Jesus





# Temptation of Jesus

- Mark 1:12–13 and 2 Corinthians 10:1–13
- Mark's telling of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness is very short compared to the other Gospels.
- This is the second use of the word *immediately*, which is a consistent adverb in Mark, used 42 times in this short book and 11 times in this first chapter alone.



# Temptation of Jesus

- When Jesus spoke, things happened instantly. It also conveys a sense of urgency, that time is of the essence.
- When Jesus called His disciples, they left immediately and followed. The message is that we should not postpone following Jesus in discipleship.
- The kingdom of God is near (1:15). The call is present and significant and demands immediate response.



# Temptation of Jesus

- When Jesus was baptized, the heavens immediately tore open, and the Spirit descended on Him.
- When it was over, the Spirit immediately drove Him into the wilderness.
- Not only is the word immediately repeated to show urgency and fast-paced action, but the Spirit was the driving force in both stories.



# Temptation of Jesus

- Jesus was anointed by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit, and led by the Spirit in everything He did.
- In Acts, we see the disciples being led by the Spirit, as well.
- When the Spirit said to go, they went; when the Spirit said to stop, they stopped.



# Temptation of Jesus

- Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years before they entered God's Old Testament physical kingdom.
- Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days before preaching that the kingdom of God had come.
- But unlike Israel, Jesus passed His test of temptation.



# Temptation of Jesus





# Temptation of Jesus

- Israel failed from the very first moment; they worshipped the golden calf while Moses was still on Mount Sinai receiving the Law (Exodus 32).
- When they spied out the land, they didn't trust God, so He condemned them to wander for 40 years.
- They failed to trust God and grumbled and complained throughout those 40 years.



# Temptation of Jesus

- Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark wasn't specific about the temptations Jesus endured, but he did specify that it was Satan who tempted Him.
- Between recounting the supernatural coronation and the supernatural battle with Satan, Mark established from the beginning that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom.



# Temptation of Jesus

- The enemy wasn't Rome; it was Satan and evil itself. He established from the beginning that Jesus would be victorious.
- Jesus defeated Satan's temptations before He even began His ministry. From the very beginning, he established that Satan was no match for Jesus.



# Temptation of Jesus

- He would endure suffering, but He would be victorious in the end. This should also encourage us, that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is living inside us and can help us endure any temptation.
- God will never allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear with His help. He will always provide a way out for us. We just have to follow it.



# Resources

