

The Forerunner of Christ The Life of Christ, Part 1

Thank you for joining me for "It's a Good Life." Now, today, I'd like to start a series of lessons on the life of Christ. We can never go wrong by teaching about our Lord and Savior.

In the ancient world when a king went to a city or a country, he would usually send certain men to go before him to announce his soon coming and to prepare for his arrival. Such men were known as forerunners or heralds. Likewise, when the King of Israel came into the world, God sent a man before him to announce the coming of the Messiah and to spiritually prepare the nation for His arrival.

Now, in this study, the first lesson we're going to look at on the life of Christ; it's not going back as we think of Christmas of Him being born and placed in that manger, but rather, we're going to go ahead. We know the story how that Jesus was conceived of a virgin, how the Holy Spirit overshadowed her and she bore a Son. The only begotten Son of God came into this world with flesh at that time. No man had a part in it. It was the Holy Spirit and a virgin by the name of Mary.

But today we want to look at, first of all, the forerunner of Christ. Now, the name of Christ's forerunner was John. In John 1:6, it says, *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.* Now, "John" means "the Lord is gracious." Another name or description of the forerunner is "the prophet of the Highest," according to Luke 1:76. It says there, *And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.*

And we see something else about this forerunner. The forerunner was given his name by an angel of the Lord. The parents

didn't choose his name. God chose this man's name, which was John.

In Luke chapter 1, verses 11-13, it says, *¹¹And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.) ¹³But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.*

Now, we know that by comparing Scripture with Scripture that John was the cousin of our Lord. We're going to see something else about John as we study these verses in this section of Scripture and this lesson.

The coming of the Messiah and His forerunner were predicted, according to the book of Isaiah. In Isaiah chapter 40, verses 3-5, it says, *³The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: ⁵And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*

In Malachi chapter 3 and verse 1, it says, *I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*

There are many other prophecies in the Old Testament pointing to John as the forerunner

of Christ, the coming of our Lord and Savior. But we see in the New Testament that the prophecy of the forerunner was fulfilled. In Matthew chapter 3, verses 1-3, it says, *¹In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, ²And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. ³For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias.... or Isaiah... saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

And of course, we just read those verses in the Old Testament in Isaiah, but many other verses point to this fact and talk about the forerunner and the prophecy being fulfilled, Matthew chapter 11, verses 7-11.

Well, we see that something happened as John came saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." There came a time when we read and study about the baptism of Christ. Why did John baptize Christ? What was the purpose? The baptism of Jesus marked the beginning of our Lord's public ministry.

In Matthew chapter 3 and verse 13, it says, Jesus was baptized, and then we read in John 2:11, *This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.* After the baptism of Christ is actually when His earthly ministry began.

Alfred Edersheim aptly points this out. He says, "Had it primarily and always been a 'baptism of repentance,' He [Yeshua, that's Jesus] could not have submitted to it." Certainly, we would all agree. Yeshua had nothing to be repentant of, no sins to confess. However, He was about 30 years of age, the biblically required age of a man to be ordained a priest, and John was a Levite, qualified to witness such immersions. Yet, Yeshua says, we must fulfill all things

righteously, according to Matthew 3:15. He is not referring to a baptism of repentance, but rather, stepping into the waters of ordination. Yeshua, that's Jesus, was about to take on His mantle as Messianic Priest. That's the reason he was baptized. And after his baptism, Jesus' fame grew, according to Matthew 4:24. It says, *And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.*

Matthew 9:26, *And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.*

Mark 1:28: *And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.*

Luke 4:37: *And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.*

The baptism of Jesus marked God's official sanction upon the silent years from the time of 12 years old until approximately 30 years of age of our Lord and Savior.

Now, I want you to notice with me in the book of Luke chapter 2, verses 42-49: *And when he ...that's Jesus... was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. ⁴³And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. ⁴⁴But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. ⁴⁵And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. ⁴⁶ And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them*

questions. ⁴⁷And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. ⁴⁸And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. ⁴⁹And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

Now I want you to notice something before we talk about the Scripture in these verses. When they saw him, they were amazed and Mary said, "Behold," she said, "thy father and I have sought Thee." She was talking about someone who had been adopted. Jesus didn't have an earthly father, but when Mary and Joseph got married, it was the same as Joseph taking Jesus into the home as an adopted son. But I want you to notice as you're reading the Scriptures along with me, and if you're not, I encourage you to do that. Luke chapter 2, verses 42-49. You'll notice there in verse 48, the word "father" is not capitalized. But then you go down in verse 49 and you see, "I must be about my Father's..." capitalized "F" in that word, capitalized "Father"... "my Father's business," speaking of God the Father.

God the Father sent Jesus into the world to save those who were lost, John 3:16. He is the Heavenly Father. Jesus had no earthly father because he was born of a virgin. The Holy Spirit overshadowed her and she gave birth to Jesus Christ.

Well, the baptism of Jesus marked and identified Him as God's chosen Messiah. In Mark chapter 1, verse 11, it says, *And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

John 1:33-34 says, ³³And I knew him not ... and this is John the Baptist speaking... *but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same*

said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. ³⁴And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

And then we see the baptism of Jesus marked His anointing by the Spirit for service. Mark chapter 1, verses 9-11, says, ⁹And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. ¹⁰And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: ¹¹And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Jesus Christ, at His baptism, was given the mark of God, the seal of God, to this world. It was an indication to mankind that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior Who would save all of those individuals who would come to Him, faith believing, that He is able to save. Later on, Jesus, we know, would go to the cross, and we'll see that in our studies.

But Jesus is no longer on that cross. He's waiting for you to receive Him as Savior if you've never done that. Why not ask Him to come into your heart today? Be willing to turn from your sin. Repent. Turn and go to Jesus. Ask Him, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive You as my Lord and Savior." If you'll pray something like that, Jesus says He'll save you.

If you are saved and you're not living for Him, you need to be doing so. "Lord, forgive me. Cleanse me, not to be saved again but because I am saved. Cleanse me and use me for Your honor and Your glory."

Jesus Christ, the life. As we continue on, we'll look the next time as we continue to study the life of Christ.

Do you know Him? Ask Him into your heart today.

Well, it's been good being with you and let me remind you to look at our Website, www.LRWM.org. On that Website, you can download a transcript of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life." You can also write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731, and I'll be glad to send you a transcript of this program.

It's been good being with you, and when you hear me say again, "It's a good life," then join with me with the Scriptures as we study in this section the life of Jesus Christ.

Until the next time, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.