

## **Session 6: Jesus of Nazareth**

***Faith, Hope, and Love: Rediscovering the Essentials of Christianity***

**Joshua Hawkins – [www.joshuahawkins.com](http://www.joshuahawkins.com)**

### Review

The descendants of Jacob would be the ones through whom a seed would come in which all the nations of the earth would be *blessed*. Through their grandfather Abraham, God expounded upon the Genesis 3:15 promise and pledged to make all things right through the vehicle of Abraham's *lineage* and *land*.

God would make a series of *covenants* with Israel, further clarifying their *mediatorial role* in the promise of restoration. Through the events of the exodus from Egypt, God showed His faithfulness to Abraham by delivering Israel, His *firstborn son*, and bringing them to Sinai so that they may *minister to Him* as a nation of priests. Moses, God's appointed leader, would bring *the Law* to Israel. The Law was the first "corporate terms of agreement" on how God and man could be reconciled. The tabernacle and sacrificial ordinances were God's terms of relationship that He might  *dwell* among humanity again. Through obedience to the Law and through Yahweh dwelling among them, Israel was meant to make the ways of God known to the world and to bring the nations into right relationship with God.

Israel continued to fail to uphold their end of the covenant, but God continued to be merciful through discipline. Though they had resettled in the land promised to Abraham, cycles of rebellion and return would persist throughout the period of the *judges*. Israel continued to profane God's name and fail to *image* Him to the nations as they were elected to do.

The expected monarchical age began when Samuel's mother, Hannah, prophesied that *messiahs* would come forth in Israel. Saul, the first *messiah*, would not hold to the standards of Israel's king per Deuteronomy 17, so God rejected him. David was raised up in his place. God would go on to make a covenant with him promising:

1. A great name for David
2. Israel's planting in the land promised to Abraham
3. A line of kings through David
4. A descendant of David would build God's dwelling place, and would be *the son of God* (inheriting the role of Adam, Seth, Noah, etc)
5. A descendant would sit on David's throne and rule over Israel *forever*

The *prophets* would continue to develop the themes of Jerusalem's restoration, God's dwelling place, the righteous king, and the promise of restoration.

## Israel's Dark History

1. The story of God's chosen people would continue to be dark and gloomy with only short periods of light and righteousness. After David, very few kings would walk righteously and the nation would continue to break the covenant. Though Solomon had built the Temple and some kings would lead the nation in returning to the LORD, Israel would be a wayward son, going after other gods and forgetting the covenant they had entered with Yahweh.
2. The family of Israel became divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah) in the early 900's BC. The Assyrian empire arose and took the northern 10 tribes captive, and the southern tribes would eventually be exiled to Babylon for 70 years. Before, during, and after their exile, the Prophets reminded the people that though they had been chastised and displaced, He would be true to His word, restore a faithful remnant to their own land, and fulfill the promises He had made to Abraham and David.
3. The prophets were God's mouthpiece, encouraging, rebuking, correcting, and reminding the people of the covenants, their obligations, the promises, and God's intended outcome through them. The promises given are reiterated and further developed in many ways, yet all retaining their roots in the story and promises made to David, Abraham, and Adam. There was a *seed* coming, and God would once again dwell with humanity as it was in the beginning.

**“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.”**

**(Isaiah 11:1–2 ESV)**

**“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’**

**“For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel,”**

**(Jeremiah 33:14–17 ESV)**

**“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men;”**  
(Micah 5:2, 4–5 ESV)

**“And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,”**  
(Daniel 2:44 ESV)

**““I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”**  
(Daniel 7:13–14 ESV)

- a. It is interesting that during the exile God began to add another sliver of the picture to His prophets through the revelation of the Son of Man. The promise of the Son of David continued to broaden to a ubiquitous reign and rule that would touch all of mankind. As Israel languished in the gloom of captivity, the light of Messianic hope was shed abroad to the Gentile nations.
- b. Though the fundamental concept persisted, progressive revelation through the covenants and promises had increasingly shifted the language of the current of redemption from *seed* to *king*.
- c. Thus, further significance of the Son of Man title being applied to the Messianic concept is the way in which it harkens back to the original promise of Genesis 3:15 by employing seed terminology.
- d. An ideal, archetypal man who would reclaim the dominion forfeited by Adam is foretold by Daniel. Yet His origins would be from above and He would have an everlasting dominion that would know no end.

4. Through the Prophets, God pled with His people to return to Him. Only one nation on the earth was privileged to almost constantly hear from the Maker of all things. However, Amos had said that there would come a famine of prophecy among the people of Israel. After Malachi prophesied in the 400s BC, Israel's prophetic voices go eerily silent.

**“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.”**  
**(Amos 8:11 ESV)**

5. Foreign powers would continue to oppress Israel during the “famine”. The Greeks and the Romans would join the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Persians among the ranks of Israel's most loathed enemies. Perhaps for many Jews it seemed as if God had abandoned His people and promises.

### The Announcement of Jesus' Birth

1. In 6BC, the Roman Empire was the dominating power in the region. Herod, a half-Jew and Rome's puppet king, was on the throne in Jerusalem. The Temple had been significantly adorned and built up by Herod, but every Jew knew that there was something dramatically wrong with the beautiful Temple: *God was not dwelling in the Holy of Holies*. Though they had returned and rebuilt hundreds of years ago, the people knew that their *exile* was not yet over.
2. On an ordinary day in history, the angel Gabriel appeared to an aged priest named Zechariah as he ministered in the Holy Place in the Temple. Just a short time later, he again appeared to a seemingly ordinary Jewish teenager in a despised town in the Middle East. As the wealthy and learned scrutinized the Law and jockeyed for power in Jerusalem, Gabriel was standing in a little house announcing the beginning of another epoch in redemptive history. The long awaited *seed* and true *messiah* was finally drawing nigh.

**“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her,**

**“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”**

**And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.”**

**(Luke 1:26–35 ESV)**

3. The language of Gabriel’s announcement to Mary is not random and must be seen in context to the story the scriptures have been telling thus far. From the very beginning of the story of the life of Mary’s son Jesus, He was foretold as the *son of God, the coming King* who would sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem, and the one whose *kingdom would never end*. Mary and any Jew would have recognized Gabriel’s words from the *Davidic Covenant* in 2 Samuel 7.

- a. “*you shall call his name Jesus*” – *Jesus* in Hebrew is *Yeshua* and simply means “the LORD saves”. It is synonymous with the Old Testament’s *Yeshua*. The two Joshuas in the Old Testament give insight into the identity, calling, and purpose of “Joshua of Nazareth” (Exodus 33:11; Numbers 32:12; Deuteronomy 31:23; Zechariah 6:12-13)
- b. “*He will be great*” – emphasizing *royalty* like the Abrahamic promise (“I will make your name great” – Genesis 12:2) and the Davidic promise (“I will make for you a great name” - 2 Samuel 7:9)
- c. “*He will be called the son of the Most High*” – this was promised to David’s son in 2 Samuel 7:14: “I will be to him a *father*, and he shall be to me a *son*”, which connected David’s son to the lineage of the *seed*. This also suggests strong connections with Psalm 2, where a unique *son* would be given dominion over the whole earth by the LORD.
- d. “*the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David*” – a direct connection to the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-13). Gabriel says that Jesus will reign from David’s throne in Jerusalem, and God will place Him “over the house of Jacob forever”.
- e. “*of his kingdom there will be no end*” – God promised that David’s son would have an everlasting kingdom (2 Samuel 7:13, 16).

- f. *“He will save His people from their sins”* – Matthew’s gospel adds this phrase to Gabriel’s words. God alone is Savior (Isaiah 43:3, 11). The deity of Jesus is established early on through Gabriel’s testimony.
4. Mary would go on to declare a “song” that highlights how deeply the story of the Old Testament was on her mind as she contemplated the birth of her son. Mary clearly understood that God had promised a *seed* to Abraham, in whom Israel would be made great and in whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The Apostle Paul also later identifies the seed as Jesus Himself (Galatians 3:16).

**And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”**

**(Luke 1:46–55 ESV)**

### John the Baptist

1. Israel had not had a prophet in the land for over 400 years. Like in the days of Samuel, there was “no widespread revelation”. Aside from a small whisper at the birth of Jesus that was probably not much more than a rumor to most people, out of the long hush comes a *voice crying out in the wilderness*:

**“In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.”**

**(Luke 3:1–2 ESV)**

2. Suddenly John bursts on the scene with authority on his words. Crying from the desolation of the Judean countryside, there was a man through whom the voice of God rang out. Seen in this light, we can better appreciate the impact of John's message upon the multitudes. It had been many generations since the people had heard words with the weight of inspiration. John said:

**And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."**

**(John 1:19–23 ESV)**

**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." ... As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."**

**(Luke 3:7–17 ESV)**

3. As we begin our survey of John the Baptist, we must first see that his message to Israel is significant in several ways that are largely unrecognized in common understanding:
  - a. John says that *the LORD, Yahweh, is coming* and that he is preparing the way for Him. John describes himself according to Isaiah 40:3-5. Seeing this is vital to understanding John's message and ministry.

**A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”**  
**(Isaiah 40:3–5 ESV)**

- b. John says that there are *significant implications for Israel* because of the One who is coming (Luke 3:7-17). In context to Isaiah 40, John is proclaiming that *Yahweh Himself* is visiting Israel.

**“Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!””**  
**(Isaiah 40:9 ESV)**

4. John’s ministry of baptism and the message he preached together formed one unified expression for the need of an urgent response on Israel’s part in view of the appearing of Yahweh. God had sent many prophets in the past, *but now He was coming to personally reckon with His people*. The gospel of John opens with dramatic statements about the Coming One, which echo Israel’s Old Testament Tabernacle/Temple imagery:

**“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”**  
**(John 1:6–14 ESV)**

5. As we look at the substance of John’s message, we must recall that throughout the Old Testament, God warned His people that if they were not faithful to the covenant, *they would not be spared from judgment* (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 32). Their descent from Abraham and the merits of the patriarchs would not isolate them from chastisement and punishment if they were unfaithful. Yet the popular sentiment of the day was that their *ethnic descent* assured them of immunity from judgment and guaranteed their inheritance of the promises made to Abraham and his seed.

***“Or else did they imagine that, according to the common notion of the time, the vials of wrath were to be poured out only on the Gentiles, while they, as Abraham’s children, were sure of escape – in the words of the Talmud, that ‘the night’ (Is 21:12) was ‘only to the nations of the world, but the morning to Israel’? For, no principle was more fully established in the popular conviction, than that all Israel had part in the world to come, and this, specifically, because of their connection with Abraham. This appears not only from the New Testament (John 8:33, 39, 53), from Philo, and Josephus, but from many Rabbinic passages. ‘The merits of the Fathers,’ is one of the commonest phrases in the mouth of the Rabbis. Abraham was represented as sitting at the gate of Gehenna, to deliver any Israelite who otherwise might have been consigned to its terrors. In fact, by their descent from Abraham, all the children of Israel were more nobles, infinitely higher than any proselytes.”<sup>1</sup>***

6. Because of this, John is rebuking the people of Israel for their nationalistic confidence devoid of any internal reality.

***“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.””***  
**(Luke 3:7–9 ESV)**

7. John is drawing on Isaiah 6, where the nation of Israel is pictured as a *tree*. In that chapter, Isaiah prophesies judgment upon Israel for its hardness through the picture of great trees being cut down and reduced to only a stump, or a remnant, called the *holy seed*:

***“Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” And he said: “Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled.” The holy seed is its stump.”***  
**(Isaiah 6:11–13 ESV)**

8. Even as John was speaking to them, the axe was being laid to the root of the tree – God was coming near to them for judgment. There was a window of

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life & Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p 187-88.

great mercy but they had to bear fruit indicative of true repentance. An hour of decision was coming upon Israel, and God was seeking the remnant of true Israel.

9. John begins *baptizing* and preaching to Jews near Jericho, a historically significant site for Israel as they entered the Promised Land. Joshua was the one who led the people through the Jordan River, yet it was only the *believing remnant* that entered through the waters.

**“So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.”**

**(Joshua 3:14–17 ESV)**

**“For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD; the LORD swore to them that he would not let them see the land that the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give to us, a land flowing with milk and honey.”**

**(Joshua 5:6 ESV)**

10. This is noteworthy because John is again standing in the waters of the Jordan near Jericho, baptizing and causing Israelites who repented to *pass through* the waters of the Jordan. The significance of John can now be more easily seen – he is prophesying that a *transition* and a *division* is coming, and on the other side of it *only a believing remnant will remain*, just like what happened with their forefathers.
11. The practice of baptism was a rite that was administered to converts to Judaism as a recognition of the removal of defilement and participation in the *blessings* of the covenant. By calling the Jewish people to be baptized, he was calling forth a remnant that would enter the “Promised Land” of the New Covenant and the age to come, both of which would be established by Yahweh Himself.

12. John is doing more than announcing the good news of the coming king (Matthew 3:2). He is also proclaiming a troubling message of *judgment* and *reckoning* for the ethnic descendants of Abraham. John's message would have been profoundly offensive to the Jewish people. The boundary lines of the *elect* people of God were being drawn solely in reference to the One to whom John was pointing. He would be like a sword, cutting through every city, village, and heart in Israel, causing a great division among the people. On the other side, only a remnant would remain and inherit the promises made to Abraham. *This is the purpose for which Jesus came to Israel.*

**John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."**

**(Luke 3:16–17 ESV)**

**"I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division."**

**(Luke 12:49–51 ESV)**

13. As the great Judge, Jesus held the winnowing fan in His hand and would separate the wheat from the chaff based on their heart response towards Him. *Ethnic identity would not provide any merit before God and did not guarantee participation in the blessings and promises to Abraham.* John is declaring that the consequences of their choice would result in eternal salvation or judgment. For a Jew, this was unthinkable.

**"For behold, the LORD will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the LORD shall be many. And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."**

**(Isaiah 66:15–16, 24 ESV)**

14. John uses the analogy of a *threshing floor*, a place where grain was gathered after being harvested. A farmer would *thresh* the grain by throwing it into the air. The wind would cause the lighter chaff to blow off, and the heavier wheat would fall back to the floor. This analogy implies that the

peoples' decision would not be evident until the time of the harvest (which is the chronological context of the portion of Isaiah 66 above). Those who responded in faith (the wheat) would experience the promised outpouring of the Spirit (a down payment of the *blessings* of the age to come), but those who hardened their hearts (the chaff) would be subject to the fiery baptism of judgment.

***“Thus, one may argue that John was practicing proselyte baptism on Jews, which suggests that he did not feel their heredity was an adequate safeguard from God’s coming eschatological wrath.”<sup>2</sup>***

### The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus

1. Though often misunderstood, Jesus’ baptism has immense significance and must be seen in context to the Old Testament and the ministry of John the Baptist. Jesus was not baptized because He had to repent, but rather to *authenticate* John’s ministry and show that it was indeed “from heaven” and ordained by God. Jesus is clarifying who the *elect* are and who He is as the *seed* of Abraham.

**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.”**  
**(Matthew 3:13–15 ESV)**

2. As Jesus comes up from the water, the heavens are opened and the Father not only declares His pleasure over Jesus but also confirms that He is indeed His *son*.

**“And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.””**  
**(Matthew 3:16–17 ESV)**

3. Following John’s testimony about Jesus being *the son of God* (John 1:34), the Father confirms this truth. While the divine identity of Jesus is surely in view here, we must not forget about the story being told. Jesus is *the* promised *son* of the Davidic Covenant, the one who would build a house for Yahweh and reign over the house of Israel on David’s throne forever (2

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<sup>2</sup> *Dictionary of Jesus & the Gospels*, IVP, p 386.

Samuel 7:12-14). The same truth about Jesus spoken by Gabriel is powerfully confirmed again here.

4. In addition to the Father's voice, both Matthew and Luke say that the Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove. This has significant meaning from the Old Testament:

**“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.”**

**(Isaiah 42:1 ESV)**

5. The Spirit's "anointing" of Jesus has been misunderstood and taken out of context in modernity. There is *no indication* that the "anointing" of Jesus was how He was "empowered" at His baptism, enabling Him to subsequently do miracles. With the Old Testament story in view, we can return to 1 Samuel 16 where Samuel poured the oil over the young shepherd David's head. There, *Samuel was designating David as the one whom God had chosen to be the king of Israel*. Just as David was *designated* to be the *messiah* by the pouring of oil, Jesus receives the anointing of the spirit as an outward, public *designation* of His identity as *messiah*.
6. Both the voice of the Father and the Spirit resting on Jesus are confirmations of His identity as *the king of Israel* from David's line and *the servant* of Isaiah 42 who will bring justice to the nations. Luke's gospel inserts Jesus' genealogy here, confirming His lineage from David and Abraham and ending with "*the son of Adam, the son of God*".

**“Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi ... the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, ... the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah ... the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.”**

**(Luke 3:23–38 ESV)**

7. Immediately after His baptism, Jesus was led into the wilderness where He was tested by the devil for 40 days. Satan came to Jesus with three specific temptations, all relating to His identity as *the son of God*.

**And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he**

answered, “It is written, “**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.**”

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “**If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you,’ and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”**” Jesus said to him, “**Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”** Again, **the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”** Then Jesus said to him, “**Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”**” Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.  
**(Matthew 4:3–11 ESV)**

8. It must be stressed here that Satan is not directly testing Jesus to prove His divinity, but to prove He is *the son of God*. This is why the points of testing have to do with the Law, the Temple, and the kingdoms of the earth. Jesus is walking out two levels of representation through his testing in the wilderness:
  - a. First, Jesus is representing *all of humanity*. He is the “last Adam” and the “second man” according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. Just as Adam was *the son of God*, Jesus is *the son of God*. He is the new humanity, succeeding where Adam, Seth, Noah, and the others had failed. Just as Adam was tested by the serpent in the garden and cast out into the wilderness when he failed, Jesus was tested in the wilderness by the serpent and was victorious. Because of who He is, Jesus makes a way for humanity to enter the promise of the restoration of all things. He stands as a representative of the new humanity, without a sin nature.
  - b. Second, Jesus is representative of the head of the nation of Israel. As God’s son (Exodus 4:22-23), Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years, and Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days. As Israel failed to obey the Law, Jesus, the king of Israel was tested on three accounts and responds from the Law (from Deuteronomy 6 and 8). By obeying the law, Jesus demonstrates His unique righteousness and thus the ability to rightly inherit the Abrahamic promise. Jesus is the *true seed of Abraham*, and those joined to Him by faith will inherit the promises made to Abraham.
9. The third test is particularly significant to the themes we have been following. Satan takes Jesus to a high mountain, shows Him all of the kingdoms of the

earth, and offers them to Jesus if he would fall down and worship him. As *the son of God*, Jesus knows that His Father will give Him the nations to rule, per Psalm 2:

**“You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.”**  
**(Psalms 2:7–8 ESV)**

10. Jesus is the Davidic king who would obey the prescriptions and prohibitions of Deuteronomy 17:

**“When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, ‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,’ you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you.... And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.” (Deuteronomy 17:14–20 ESV)**

## The Life of Jesus

Confirmations of Jesus’ identity as *son of God/Messiah/Christ*, and *LORD* are too numerous to list them all here, so a sampling is provided. Jesus performed *signs* which testified to His identity as both *Christ* and *LORD*.

### Son of God/Christ/Messiah

**“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’””**

**(Matthew 2:1–6 ESV)**

**“One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus ... Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” ... Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!””**

**(John 1:40–49 ESV)**

**“The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.””**

**(John 4:25–26 ESV)**

**“And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.”**

**(Luke 4:41 ESV)**

**“And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?””**

**(John 7:26, 41–42 ESV)**

**“Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.””**

**(Matthew 16:13–16 ESV)**

**“She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.””**

**(John 11:27 ESV)**

**“And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said so.””**

**(Matthew 26:62–64 ESV)**

**“The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.” When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?” Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”**

**From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.””**

**(John 19:7–12 ESV)**

**“But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And Jesus said, “I am,”**  
**(Mark 14:61–62 ESV)**

LORD

Jesus forgives sins, something God alone does:

**“And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” – he said to the paralytic – “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!””**

**(Mark 2:5–12 ESV)**

Jesus receives worship, something reserved for God alone:

**“And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.”**

**(Matthew 2:11 ESV)**

**“And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.”**  
**(Matthew 28:9 ESV)**

**“And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.”**  
**(Matthew 28:17 ESV)**

**“And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,”**  
**(Luke 24:52 ESV)**

**“He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.”**  
**(John 9:38 ESV)**

**“Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!””**  
**(John 20:28 ESV)**

Ascribing Old Testament references and allusions to Jesus:

**“Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.””**  
**(John 8:58 ESV)**

**“For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.””**  
**(Matthew 12:8 ESV)**

**“and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, “‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise’?””**  
**(Matthew 21:16 ESV)**

**“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.”**  
**(John 10:11–15 ESV)**

**“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.””**  
**(John 10:27–30 ESV)**