

Week Two reading: Matthew chapters 3 - 4 | Mark chapter 1 | Luke chapters 3 - 4 | John 1:19 – 4

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (mentions of John in the chart refer to John the Baptist unless noted)

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN (book)
Writer identifies John with Isaiah 40:3 (3:1-6)	Writer identifies John with Isaiah 40:3 (1:2-6)	Writer identifies John with Isaiah 40:3-5 (3:3-6)	Writer quotes John identifying himself with Isaiah 40:3 (1:23)
John's confrontation with the Pharisees and Sadducees; his challenge of the legitimacy of their spiritual heritage (3:7-10)		John's confrontation with the Pharisees and Sadducees (3:7-14); answers the question "what must I do?" from the crowd, tax collectors and soldiers	
John's description of Jesus (3:11-12)	John's description of Jesus (1:7-8)	John's description of Jesus (3:15-18)	John's description of Jesus (1:26-27)
John's baptism of Jesus (3:13-17)	John's baptism of Jesus (1:9-11)	John's baptism of Jesus (3:21-23)	John testifies the revelation of the Son of God

John the Baptist's reference to Isaiah 40 has more significance than just a description of his role in the prophecy. List the promises and plans related to the coming of Emmanuel from Isaiah 40:1-11.

40:2: *Jerusalem's time of forced labor is over; iniquity has been pardoned*

40:5: *the glory of the Lord will appear; all humanity will see it*

40:8: *the word of God remains forever*

40:9: *say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God"*

40:10: *the Lord God comes with strength; His power establishes His rule*

40:11: *He protects like a shepherd; he gathers the lambs; He carries them; He gently leads them*

List some of the characteristics of God from Isaiah 40:27-31 that the Israelites struggled with during their waiting.

40:28: *Yahweh is the everlasting God; creator of the whole earth; never grows faint or weary; no limit to His understanding*

40:29: *He gives strength to the weary; strengthens the powerless*

40:31: *He will renew the strength of those who trust*

The Old Testament gives us several examples of how the meaning of a person's name reveals God's purpose for them or His plan through them. The meaning of the name John is "Jehovah is a gracious giver". What might God want to communicate to the Israelites (and to us) through this prophet who was to be called John, according to Luke 1:13? *God is gracious and has given the nation of Israel their Messiah*

TEMPTATION BY SATAN

Although one of the gospel writers – John - does not include the temptation of Christ in his gospel, he uses the event to describe the three areas through which Satan can assault an individual in one of his other books, First John.

Read 1 John 2:16 and list the three areas of temptation	Read Matthew 4:1-11 and match the corresponding areas in which Jesus was tempted
<i>Lust of the flesh</i>	<i>Turning stones into bread</i>
<i>Lust of the eyes</i>	<i>Choosing the world and its splendor</i>
<i>Pride of life</i>	<i>Testing God's protection and will over His life</i>

Why is it helpful to know that Jesus was tempted in all areas as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15)? *Because He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses and experienced temptation without sinning*

THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY

Jesus and His ministry are now the primary focus of each gospel. The first recorded disciples to follow Jesus in John 1:40 turned to Jesus based on the testimony of John the Baptist. According to Matthew Henry's commentary on John, "*Who the other {disciple} was we are not told; some think that it was Thomas, comparing ch. 21:2; others that it was John himself, the penman of this gospel, whose manner it is industriously to conceal his name, ch. 13:23, and 20:3.*"

Regardless of the 2nd disciple's identity, it is a tribute to both of them to have been anticipating the One whom John the Baptist preached and to have wholeheartedly followed Jesus when introduced.

List the first disciples in order of their appearance from John 1:35-51	List any details given in John's account about the disciple:
<i>Andrew</i>	<i>Was a disciple of John the Baptist; brother of Simon Peter</i>
<i>Unnamed disciple of John the Baptist</i>	
<i>Simon Peter</i>	<i>Brought to Jesus by Andrew; a son of John; renamed Cephas</i>
<i>Philip</i>	<i>From Bethsaida; found by Jesus</i>
<i>Nathanael</i>	<i>Brought to Jesus by Nathanael; questioned Philip's claim that Jesus was the One; Jesus confronted him with knowledge about himself</i>

THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MIRACLES

Not only did the miracles of Jesus authenticate His person and message, they revealed the spheres in which He exercised authority. There were miracles in the realms of nature, demons, sickness and disease – the physical and the emotional, and death.

So, in studying the miracles, we must consider what they reveal about the person and authority of Jesus. Fill in the chart of the first 5 miracles of Jesus:

MIRACLE	GOSPEL REFERENCE(S)	WHAT DOES THIS REVEAL ABOUT THE PERSON AND/OR AUTHORITY OF JESUS	PRIMARY RECIPIENT OR WITNESS OF THE MIRACLE
Water into wine (semeion)	John 2:1-12	<i>Power over the natural</i>	<i>The wedding party</i>
Official's son healed (semeion and teras)	John 4:46-54	<i>Power over sickness</i>	<i>A royal official and his household</i>
Healing of the demoniac	Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:38-39	<i>Power over spiritual forces</i>	<i>The demon-possessed man and the people in the synagogue</i>
Peter's mother-in-law	Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39	<i>Power over sickness</i>	<i>Peter's mother-in-law and her household; the disciples</i>
Healing of many sick demon-possessed	Mark 1:32-34; Luke 4:40-41	<i>Power over sickness and spiritual forces</i>	<i>The crowds</i>

GREEK WORDS USED CONCERNING MIRACLES (excerpt from "The Words and Works of Jesus Christ" by J. Dwight Pentecost)

1. *Teras* – use of the word implies a startling, imposing, amazement-waking event. This word never occurs alone – being paired with the word for "signs".
2. *Semeion* – use of this word is an indication of some power or meaning behind it to which the miracle is secondary in importance. The NIV translates this word "miraculous sign"; it is used 17 times in the book of John.
3. *Dynamis* – this word emphasizes the power revealed in the performance of the miracle and the spiritual energy that produced it.
4. *Endoxos* – this word emphasizes miracles as being works in which the glory of God and of the Son of God shines manifestly forth.
5. *Paradoxos* – this word is used only in Luke 5:26 as "remarkable things". It refers to that which is contrary to the order of the natural world and to that which is strange to the usual current of thought.
6. *Thaumasios* – this word is used of something that provokes wonder. It occurs only in Matthew 21:15 where it is rendered "wonderful things".

The word *semeion* is the most prevalently used. It does not indicate that the miracles were produced to startle or create excitement. Instead, the term is used to signify that God was working through the person of His Son to reveal His own glory and the glory of the Son. The term showed that these miracles were not natural but supernatural. They were contrary to nature and thus men are to study the miracle to see its profound significance.

These first miracles were an introduction to the ministry of a man who was more than just man. Jesus never performed a miracle for the attention it would bring Him – each miracle served the purpose of revealing Himself as the One sent from the Father to bring glory to the Father. The witnesses and beneficiaries of His miracles were given the opportunity to take a step of faith because of the reality of what they had hoped for.

APPLICATION FROM WEEK ONE

Isaiah 40 begins with, “Comfort, comfort my people.” And verses 12 – 26 rhetorically describe the greatness of God. Which of those declarations inspire in you a reason to worship Him? _____

Hebrews 11 encourages us to build our faith through examples of lived-out faith. What signs (semeion) and wonders (teras) has God demonstrated in your life that pushes you to strive for a lived-out faith? _____

What a comfort it is that the greatness of God is not meant to be intimidating, but is meant to be understood through the person and work of Jesus Christ. This week’s prayer is that we comprehend more of who God is and that our faith is lived out because of it.

Memory verse: Do you not know? Have you not heard? Yahweh is the everlasting God, the Creator of the whole earth. He never grows faint or weary; there is no limit to His understanding. Isaiah 40:28 (HCSB)

Week Three reading: Matthew 5 – 11 | Mark 2 – 3 | Luke 5 – 7 | John 5