



## A MESSY GOSPEL

DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup> & 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2010

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<sup>1</sup> In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” <sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’ ” <sup>4</sup> Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

**Matthew 3:1-4 (ESV)**

The preaching of John the Baptist was the preparation to the preaching of Jesus.

John was a messy guy.

“Preaching” is literally heralding (Gr. *kerysso*).

“In the New Testament the verb does not mean ‘to give an informative or hortatory or edifying discourse expressed in beautifully arranged words with a melodious voice; it means to proclaim an event’ . . .”<sup>1</sup>

The scene of John’s ministry was the wilderness of Judea. This loosely defined area lay mainly to the west and somewhat north of the Dead Sea. John evidently conducted his ministry there because of its rough conditions that were suitable to his appeal for repentance. In Israel’s history the wilderness forever reminded the Jews of their 40-year sojourn under extreme conditions and God’s giving them the Law of Moses. They associated it with a place of separation unto God and testing for refinement.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>7</sup> As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. <sup>9</sup> What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> This is he of whom it is written, “ ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ ” <sup>11</sup> Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. <sup>12</sup> From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup> For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, <sup>14</sup> and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup> He who has ears to hear, let him hear. <sup>16</sup> “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, <sup>17</sup> “ ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ ” <sup>18</sup> For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ <sup>19</sup> The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

**Matthew 11:7-19 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> And do not presume 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

**Matthew 3:5-12 (ESV)**

Little baby Jesus is cute. Harmless.

The Jesus of the cross is ugly. Offensive.

<sup>18</sup> “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. <sup>21</sup> But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. <sup>22</sup> If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. <sup>23</sup> Whoever hates me hates my Father also. <sup>24</sup> If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. <sup>25</sup> But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’

**John 15:18-25 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. <sup>19</sup> For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,” <sup>20</sup> and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.” <sup>21</sup> So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, <sup>22</sup> whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, <sup>23</sup> and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.

**1 Corinthians 3:18-23 (ESV)**



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<sup>4</sup> As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” <sup>7</sup> So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” <sup>8</sup> and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

**1 Peter 2:4-10 (ESV)**

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Constable. (2003; 2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Mt 3:1). Galaxie Software.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Constable. (2003; 2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Mt 3:1). Galaxie Software.

