

John the Baptist prepares the way

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah,^a the Son of God,^b ²as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

*'I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way'^c –
³ 'a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
"Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him."^d*

⁴And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the River Jordan. ⁶John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And this was his message: 'After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸I baptise you with^e water, but he will baptise you with^e the Holy Spirit.'

The baptism and testing of Jesus

⁹At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'

¹²At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³and

a 1 Or *Jesus Christ. Messiah* (Hebrew) and *Christ* (Greek) both mean *Anointed One*.

b 1 Some manuscripts do not have *the Son of God*.

c 2 Mal. 3:1

d 3 Isaiah 40:3

e 8 Or *in*

he was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted^f by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Jesus announces the good news

¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’

Jesus calls his first disciples

¹⁶As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people.’ ¹⁸At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Jesus drives out an impure spirit

²¹They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²²The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. ²³Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ²⁴‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!’

²⁵‘Be quiet!’ said Jesus sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ ²⁶The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

²⁷The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What is this? A new teaching – and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.’ ²⁸News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

^f 13 The Greek for *tempted* can also mean *tested*.

Jesus heals many

²⁹As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

³²That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all who were ill and demon-possessed. ³³The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Jesus prays in a solitary place

³⁵Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷and when they found him, they exclaimed: 'Everyone is looking for you!'

³⁸Jesus replied, 'Let us go somewhere else – to the nearby villages – so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come.' ³⁹So he travelled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Jesus heals a man with leprosy

⁴⁰A man with leprosy^g came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.'

⁴¹Jesus was indignant.^h He reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' ⁴²Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

⁴³Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴'See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.' ⁴⁵Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside

^g 40 The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

^h 41 Many manuscripts *Jesus was filled with compassion*

in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

Jesus forgives and heals a paralysed man

2 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ²They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³Some men came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. ⁴Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralysed man, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’

⁶Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷‘Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’

⁸Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, ‘Why are you thinking these things? ⁹Which is easier: to say to this paralysed man, “Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, “Get up, take your mat and walk”? ¹⁰But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’ So he said to the man, ¹¹‘I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.’ ¹²He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this!’

Jesus calls Levi and eats with sinners

¹³Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. ¹⁴As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s booth. ‘Follow me,’ Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples,

for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: ‘Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?’

¹⁷On hearing this, Jesus said to them, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’

Jesus questioned about fasting

¹⁸Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, ‘How is it that John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?’

¹⁹Jesus answered, ‘How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. ²⁰But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

²¹‘No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. ²²And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.’

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

²³One Sabbath Jesus was going through the cornfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some ears of corn. ²⁴The Pharisees said to him, ‘Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?’

²⁵He answered, ‘Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? ²⁶In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.’

²⁷Then he said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man,

not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.'

Jesus heals on the Sabbath

3 Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shrivelled hand was there. ²Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³Jesus said to the man with the shrivelled hand, 'Stand up in front of everyone.'

⁴Then Jesus asked them, 'Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?' But they remained silent.

⁵He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. ⁶Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

Crowds follow Jesus

⁷Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. ⁸When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. ⁹Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. ¹⁰For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. ¹¹Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, 'You are the Son of God.' ¹²But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

Jesus appoints the Twelve

¹³Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴He appointed twelve^a that they might be with him and that he might send them out to

^a 14 Some manuscripts *twelve – designating them apostles –*

preach ¹⁵and to have authority to drive out demons. ¹⁶These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); ¹⁷James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means ‘sons of thunder’), ¹⁸Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Jesus accused by his family and by teachers of the law

²⁰Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹When his family^b heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, ‘He is out of his mind.’

²²And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, ‘He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.’

²³So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: ‘How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. ²⁷In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man’s house. ²⁸Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, ²⁹but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.’

³⁰He said this because they were saying, ‘He has an impure spirit.’

³¹Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³²A crowd was sitting round him, and they told him, ‘Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.’

³³‘Who are my mother and my brothers?’ he asked.

³⁴Then he looked at those seated in a circle round him and

said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.'

The parable of the sower

4 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered round him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. ²He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: ³'Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.'

⁹Then Jesus said, 'Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.'

¹⁰When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. ¹¹He told them, 'The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables ¹²so that,

*"they may be ever seeing but never perceiving,
and ever hearing but never understanding;
otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"^a*

¹³Then Jesus said to them, 'Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? ¹⁴The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. ¹⁶Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷But since they have no root, they last only

a 12 Isaiah 6:9,10

a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ¹⁸Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²⁰Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop – some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.'

A lamp on a stand

²¹He said to them, 'Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? ²²For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. ²³If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.'

²⁴'Consider carefully what you hear,' he continued. 'With the measure you use, it will be measured to you – and even more. ²⁵Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.'

The parable of the growing seed

²⁶He also said, 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸All by itself the soil produces corn – first the stalk, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹As soon as the corn is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.'

The parable of the mustard seed

³⁰Again he said, 'What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. ³²Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.'

³³With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. ³⁴He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

Jesus calms the storm

³⁵That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.'³⁶Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?'

³⁹He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'

⁴¹They were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'

Jesus restores a demon-possessed man

5 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.^a ²When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

⁶When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷He shouted at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!' ⁸For Jesus had said to him, 'Come out of this man, you impure spirit!'

a 1 Some manuscripts *Gadarenes*; other manuscripts *Gergesenes*

⁹Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?'

'My name is Legion,' he replied, 'for we are many.'¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

¹¹A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹²The demons begged Jesus, 'Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.'¹³ He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

¹⁴Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. ¹⁵When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ¹⁶Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man – and told about the pigs as well. ¹⁷Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

¹⁸As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹Jesus did not let him, but said, 'Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.'²⁰ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis^b how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Jesus raises a dead girl and heals a sick woman

²¹When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered round him while he was by the lake. ²²Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³He pleaded earnestly with him, 'My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.'²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed round him. ²⁵And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve

^b 20 That is, the Ten Cities

years. ²⁶She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸because she thought, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.' ²⁹Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰At once Jesus realised that power had gone out from him. He turned round in the crowd and asked, 'Who touched my clothes?'

³¹'You see the people crowding against you,' his disciples answered, 'and yet you can ask, "Who touched me?"'

³²But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.'

³⁵While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. 'Your daughter is dead,' they said. 'Why bother the teacher anymore?'

³⁶Overhearing^c what they said, Jesus told him, 'Don't be afraid; just believe.'

³⁷He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹He went in and said to them, 'Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.' ⁴⁰But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, '*Talitha kum!*' (which means 'Little girl, I say to you, get up!'). ⁴²Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

^c 36 Or Ignoring