

## 9. John the Baptist as a type of Elijah

- 3 elements of John's ministry all relate to the OT prophecies from Exodus, Malachi, and Isaiah.
  - John was a man of the wilderness
  - He performed his ministry in the wilderness
  - He announced one greater than himself who was to come after him.
- John's audience would have recognized the call to repentance. But John added a novel requirement, baptism.
  - Baptism is so striking in John the prophet that he becomes known as "the Baptizer".
  - The biblical call to repentance is deeply rooted in the wilderness.
  - The call to "turn" is a call to return to my original relationship with the Lord.
  - And this means a return to the wilderness where God originally met and called his people.
- Israel's call to sonship occurred in the wilderness. The pattern –
  - Call to the wilderness
  - Baptism / Repentance
  - Covenant relationship of sonship
- Sonship in the prophets –
  - Material prosperity and spiritual bankruptcy characterized the times.
  - Hosea calls for repentance in light of God's steadfast love (2:14-20, 11:1-11, 13:4-6, 14:1-4)
  - Isaiah over-and-over declares the Lord is Israel's Maker (Is 1:1-3, 43:1, 15, 44:1-5, 21-24) and over-and-over calls them to the covenant (42:6, 54:10, 59:21, 61:8)
  - Amos calls for repentance via a return to the Lord of the covenant (2:10-11, 3:1-2, 9:11-15). Where was the covenant? On Mt. Sinai. Where was Mt. Sinai? In the wilderness.
- The urgency for repentance is that the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit is close at hand.
  - John's call to return to the wilderness is far more than contrition and confession.
  - It is to return to the place of judgment.
  - It is to return to the place where Israel becomes God's son by exchanging pride for humility.
- John's clothing and diet emphasize he is a man of the wilderness.
  - Leather belt – 2 Kings 1:8
  - Elijah fed in the desert – 1 Kings 17
- John foretells "the Coming One" (Mal 3:1, 4:5)
  - And he is not worthy to perform even the most menial task from which even the Hebrew slave was released.
  - Who will bestow the Spirit
    - First exodus the Spirit leads into the wilderness (Is 63:11, 14)
    - Second exodus will bring a fresh outpouring of the Spirit (Is 32:15-18, 44:3)
- With this note of anticipation is what Mark emphasizes –
  - John is the forerunner of the Messiah
  - And the Messiah's baptism is preparation for the baptism by the Messiah

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*In order to understand this reckoning of typological time, we should begin with John's account of Jesus' interview with Nicodemus. How did Jesus instruct Nicodemus to tell the times? Jesus taught the Pharisee from Jerusalem that just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that men might have life (John 3:14). Nicodemus would have recalled the account of the brazen serpent from Numbers 21. It was the time when Israel was in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt. God graciously gave the people bread out of heaven, but they grumbled against God and despised the gift of the manna (Numb 21:5). The Lord judged the people with venomous serpents so that many of them were dying. Moses, however, was told to lift up a serpent on a pole so that whoever would look at the serpent would not perish but would have life (Numb 21:6-9).*

*Now as John further develops his Gospel after the interview with Nicodemus, we learn that God has given Jesus to the people as a heavenly Manna (John 6:31-40), but that the Jews have grumbled among themselves (John 6:41-43), not finding God's Manna to be savory (John 6:41).<sup>10</sup> The typological time is thus fulfilled when it will be necessary for God to cause another standard to be lifted up in order that all men might be drawn to Him for life (John 12:32-34). By this teaching, however, Nicodemus is instructed that God has delegitimized Jerusalem's temple and that Israel is regarded by Jesus not as settled in the land of promise under God's blessing, but wandering in the "wilderness" of His judgment. It is therefore "wilderness time" in Jerusalem.*

*But there are other patterns that show us how the evangelists and apostles regarded the days of Jerusalem in the time of Jesus. John tells us that the city that crucified Jesus 9 The time from Abel to Zechariah (Gen 4:8 to 2 Chron 24:20-21) spans the entire period of the OT canon, according to Jewish reckoning. It is an alternative Lukan expression of the claim that the sufferings of Messiah were anticipated by Moses and all the prophets (Luke 24:27). <sup>10</sup> It is ironic that the fiery serpents of the wilderness (Numb 21:6) find their antitype in the religious leaders of Jerusalem (Luke 3:7), the leaders whose very teaching is called "leaven" for its uncleanness (Luke 12:1). <sup>46</sup> was "spiritually" called Egypt (Rev 11:8). In an elaborate development of the representation of Israel as the new land of bondage, Matthew reports that when Jesus was born, King Herod and Jerusalem tried to destroy the Deliverer by slaughtering the male infants of Bethlehem (Matt 2:3, 16-18), an act of cruelty that recalled the enmity of the pharaoh of Egypt and the Egyptians against the male infants of Israel in the days of the birth of Moses (Exod 1:15-22). Ironically, Egypt, the ancient land of bondage, became the new Midian, the place that gave refuge to God's prophet (Matt 2:15; cf. Matt 2:13). Moreover, it was while the holy family was sojourning in Egypt that God's angel announced that it was safe to return to Israel "since those who sought the young Child's life are dead" (Matt 2:20), just as God had assured Moses in Midian that he could return to Egypt, "for all the men who were seeking your life are dead" (Exod 4:19). A careful comparison of the Matthean texts with the original Exodus account demonstrates that the Hosea passage cited by the evangelist, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Matt 1:15, cf. Hos 11:1), is regarded as fulfilled not when the holy family returns from Egypt to Israel, but rather when they flee from Israel for refuge in Egypt. It is out of Israel, the "spiritual Egypt," that God called forth His Son.*

*Moreover, just as Moses returned to Egypt to accomplish the deliverance of the people through the climactic sacrifice of the Passover lamb, even so Jesus returned to Israel, the “spiritual Egypt,” where He was to deliver His people by submitting to be sacrificed as the Passover Lamb. Indeed the Apostle Paul teaches us that the true event that delivered from bondage was the death of the Passover Lamb which occurred in Jerusalem (1 Cor 5:7). In other words, to the evangelists and apostles, the time of Jesus’ death reconfigured the Holy City into a typological “Egypt,” where the people of God were held captive by another bitter bondage from which Christ was to free them (cf. Gal 4:25). In fact Luke’s comment about the transfiguration states that Jesus spoke with Moses and Elijah about the “exodus” which He was to “fulfill” (plēroō) in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). By such teaching the New Testament writers regard Jerusalem to be the new Egypt, and the time of Jesus to correspond to the typological time of the Egyptian captivity wherein Israel awaited deliverance from bondage and death. Consequently, the time of Jesus was a renewed “Egyptian captivity time” as well as a “wilderness time.”*

## 10. Jesus, the True Elijah

The following chart displays those correspondences that appear to be deliberately juxtaposed by the evangelist.

MARK	THE LXX
(1:6) "John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his loins"	(4 Kgs. 1:8) "He (Elijah) is a hairy man with a leather belt about his loins"
(1:12-14) "Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness...and He was there forty days...and angels ministered to Him"	(3 Kgs. 19:4-8) "And he (Elijah) went...into the wilderness...and the angel of the Lord said, 'Arise and eat'...and he went forty days...to Horeb"
(3:22) "the scribes said, 'He...has Baalzebul (Baalzebub)'"	(4 Kgs. 1:2) "He (Ahaziah) said... 'Go, inquire of the Lord of the flies, the God of Ekron...' (MT 2 Kgs. 1:2 reads "Baalzebub")
(4:41) Jesus calms the storm at sea. "And they (the disciples) became afraid, and said, 'What manner of Man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?'"	(3 Kgs. 18:43,45) Elijah brings the storm from the sea. "He (Elijah) said to his servant, 'Go and look toward the sea'...and the heavens grew black with cloud and wind..."
(6:41-42,44) Jesus multiplies food for the hungry crowd. "And He took the five loaves and the two fish...and divided (them) up...and they all ate...and there were five thousand men who ate the loaves"	(3 Kgs. 17:14) Elijah multiplies food for the hungry. "'The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty'...and she (the widow of Zarephath)...and her household ate for many days" (Cf. also 4 Kgs. 2:7)
(7:24-25M) "He...went to the borders of Tyre and Sidon...and a certain woman..." Jesus heals the Sidonian woman's daughter.	(3 Kgs. 17:9-10) The Lord commanded Elijah, "Arise and go to Zarephath of Sidon...I have commanded a woman who is a widow...." Elijah heals the Sidonian woman's son.
(12:1-7M) "A certain man planted a vineyard...at him (the lord's servant) they cast stones... 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours'"	(3 Kgs. 20:1-10) "And Naboth...had a vineyard...Naboth said to Ahab, 'God forbid that I should give my inheritance'...(Jezebel wrote) 'let them...stone him that he might die'"
(14:12-14) "The Teacher says, 'Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready."	(3 Kgs. 17:19) Elijah lives as a guest in an "upper room;" cf. (4 Kgs. 4:10) Elisha is provided with "a little upper room (furnished with) a bed...a table, a chair and a lampstand; and it shall be that when he comes to us that he can turn in there"
(15:25,31-39) "and it was the third hour when they crucified Him...the chief priests...were mocking Him...and when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour...' Let us see whether Elijah will come...' Jesus cried out with a loud voice...when he (the centurion) saw...he said, 'Truly this Man was the Son of God!'"	(3 Kgs. 18:26-39) "and they (the priests of Baal) called upon the name of Baal from morning till noon...and it came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them (the "priests") and said, 'Call out with a loud voice...' and they raved until the time of the evening sacrifice...and when all the people saw it...they said, 'Truly the Lord is God!'"
(16:19) "after He spoke to them (His disciples) He was received up into heaven"	(4 Kgs. 2:11) "and they (Elijah and Elisha) were talking...and Elijah was received up...into heaven"

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*The Elijah account is composed of six stories, each of which is alluded to in the Gospel account of Jesus. First Kings relates the record of 1) Elijah's prediction of drought and flight to Sidon, 2) the contest at Carmel with the priests of Baal, 3) the flight to Horeb from 111 Jezebel, and 4) the story of Naboth's vineyard. Second Kings opens with the last two Elijah stories, 5) the illness of Ahaziah and the oracle of Beelzebub, and 6) the translation of Elijah into heaven. The account in Second Kings continues with the story of Elisha, who himself worked mighty deeds in the fashion of his master. It appears that Mark has included a number of allusions to the Elisha material as well, including 1) the healing of a leper, 2) the prophecy of a terrible siege, and 3) the treachery of a trusted servant. We will begin our discussion of the Elijah allusions in the order that Mark presents them, concluding with a brief discussion of the Elisha references suggested by the evangelist.*

*The Gospel opens with the presentation of Jesus' forerunner, John the Baptist, who appears suddenly, just as Elijah does in the beginning of Second Kings. Mark notes that John wore camel's hair, probably a cloak or mantle, and strapped it with a leather belt. This unusual dress was clearly intended to proclaim the forerunner's role as the "messenger" who would go before the Messiah to prepare His way "in the spirit and power of Elijah," according to the prophecy of Malachi (Mal 3:1; 4:5).<sup>3</sup> The opening of the Gospel corresponds closely to the opening of Second Kings, where Elijah is similarly presented as a "hairy man" wearing a "leather belt" (2 Kgs. 1:8). The description of his clothing alone is sufficient for King Ahaziah to recognize Elijah, the prophet of God. Clearly Mark would have his reader make a similar identification with respect to John the Baptist, and the quotation of the prophet Malachi, who likewise speaks of Elijah, reinforces this assumption.*

*Further, the story of the illness of Ahaziah, in which the description of Elijah's leather belt occurs, includes the references to Beelzebub, which likewise constitute a specific allusion to the Elijah material by the evangelist. (Mark 3:22; cf. 2 Kgs. 1:2, 4, 6) Ahaziah's apostasy was evidenced in his seeking an oracle of Beelzebub, the god of Ekron. That the religious leaders would so early in Jesus' ministry accuse Him of exercising power over demons in the name of Beelzebub<sup>4</sup> demonstrates that they clearly understood the significance of John the Baptist's hairy coat and leather belt. That is, they recognized that Jesus' gospel was nothing less than a claim to be the successor to the prophetic office of Elijah (cf. Mark 8:28). Their rejection of that claim, as they certainly further understood, aligned them with the Baalite priesthood's rejection of Elijah, if Jesus was in fact a new "Elijah." Indeed, the religious leaders had claimed the mantle of Elijah for themselves by the "Beelzebub" accusation, and they will recall this claim as they (imitating Elijah) mock the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary, waiting "to see whether Elijah would come to take Him down from the cross" (Mark 15:36).*

*The second allusion to the Elijah cycle occurs in the account of the wilderness testing of Jesus. Mark's abbreviated account of the temptation of the Lord is reduced to the mention of a "forty days" journey into the "wilderness," where "angels" ministered to Jesus. It appears that Elijah's fearful flight from Jezebel into the wilderness of Horeb is the background to Mark's account of the temptation of Jesus. Elijah's journey took him into the "wilderness" for "forty days." During his flight from Jezebel to Horeb, Elijah was ministered to by an "angel." It was at Horeb that God confirmed Elijah's office, much as Jesus' ministry was qualified by the successful resistance to Satan that the "wilderness" testing for "forty days" brought about. The ministry of the*

*"angels" was confirmation that Jesus had passed the probation of the temptation, just as Elijah's new commission at Horeb represented his overcoming the fear of Jezebel.*

*Further, it was upon Mount Horeb that God directed Elijah to anoint Elisha, who was to be his disciple and successor. A comparison of Elijah's call, extended to his disciple Elisha, with Mark's account of Jesus calling His disciples is instructive. In the account in First Kings, Elijah returned from the mountain to call Elisha, who was driving twelve pair of oxen.<sup>5</sup> While Elisha was busily occupied, Elijah, passing by, called Elisha to leave his former occupation and to follow him (1 Kgs. 19:15-21). The corresponding account in Mark likewise includes the elements of 1) the call from the mountain (Mark 3:13), 2) the call of twelve (Mark 3:14), 3) the mention that Jesus was "passing by" (Mark 1:16 and 2:14), 4) the finding of the disciples busily occupied (Mark 1:16 and 2:14), and 5) the concluding statement that the disciples left their former occupation to follow Him (Mark 1:18 and 2:14).*

*The third Gospel allusion to the Elijah cycle is the crisis on the sea of Galilee whereby Jesus stilled the storm. The account in First Kings states that Elijah proclaimed that there would be no dew or rain except "according to my word" (1 Kgs. 17:1). After the years of drought, Elijah's "word" did in fact summon wind and storm from the sea (1 Kgs. 18:41-45). Similarly, Jesus' word is sufficient to tame the storm and the wind upon the sea (Mark 4:35-41). This remarkable event raises the question among the disciples, "What manner of Man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" The answer to the disciples' question appears to be that Jesus is a prophet like Elijah. If this is Mark's teaching, then this answer justifies the response of the disciples to the question later posed by Jesus Himself, "Whom do men say that I am?" (Mark 8:37). The answer of the disciples was, "some say...Elijah." (Mark 8:28)*

*The fourth allusion to the Elijah/Elisha cycle occurs as Jesus multiplies the loaves and fish for the hungry multitudes, recorded in Mark 6:35-44 and 8:1-9. In both of these Gospel accounts the elements are meager compared to the need. Nonetheless, they are miraculously multiplied to the full satisfaction of the requirements of the crowds. Similarly, in the First Kings account, Elijah multiplies the meal and the oil of a widow of Zarephath, and in Second Kings, Elisha likewise multiplies the oil of a widow (1 Kgs. 17:14 and 2 Kgs. 4:1-7).*

*One of the most striking of the Gospel allusions to the Elijah account is the similarity of the stories regarding mercy extended to women of Sidon. In First Kings 17:9-10 Elijah is directed by God to be sustained by the Gentile table of a Sidonian woman, and in gratitude the prophet heals her son who was taken ill, laying him on his bed (1 Kgs. 17:17-24). Similarly, in the Gospel Jesus journeys to the region of Sidon, where a woman approaches who has a demonically oppressed daughter. The woman begs for healing mercy, that is, to be sustained by the crumbs that fall from the table of Jesus, and so the Lord comforts the woman with a word of healing. The young girl is restored to her mother, who finds her lying upon her bed (Mark 7:24-30).*

*A fifth correspondence between the Gospel and the Elijah cycle concerns the parable of the vineyard and the matter of Naboth's inheritance. The Lord's parable was spoken to the religious leaders of Jerusalem. We are told that these leaders understood that Jesus had spoken against them (Mark 12:12). The substance of the parable was that the lord of the vineyard had sent his "beloved son" to the vine growers, but that they killed him in order to take his inheritance for themselves. The "beloved son" could only refer to Jesus Himself (cf.*

*Mark 1:9 and Mark 9:7), and the vine growers who would kill the son and steal his inheritance are the religious leaders (Mark 12:12-13). By framing the parable in the fashion of the encounter of Elijah with Ahab over Naboth, Jesus aligns His own impending death with the murder of Naboth, and the plots against Him by the religious leaders with the schemes of Ahab and Jezebel. In fact, the enmity of Jezebel for Naboth corresponds in a remarkable fashion to the passion story of the Gospel, and may account for a number of Mark's narrative details. For example, Jezebel designed her plot to occur during a sacred fast (1 Kgs. 21:10; cf. Mark 15:42); it involved the suborning of false testimony for a sham legal proceeding (1 Kgs. 21:10; cf. Mark 14:10-11); it raised the issue of blasphemy, a capital crime (1 Kgs. 21:10; cf. Mark 14:55); and it resulted in the condemned being taken out of the city to the place of execution (1 Kgs. 21:13; cf. Mark 15:22).*

*A further correspondence between the Elijah/Elisha account and the Gospel of Mark is the occurrence of the prophets' "upper room." Both Elijah (1 Kgs. 17:19) and Elisha (2 Kgs. 4:10) were furnished with an "upper room" made ready for their accommodation. The upper chamber made available to Elisha was a token of his being recognized as a "holy man of God" (2 Kgs. 4:9). It was furnished for his comfort, and available for his use whenever he should pass by and require it (2 Kgs. 4:10). The Gospel similarly depicts Jesus as a Prophet who foretold that a man carrying a pitcher of water would direct two of His disciples to a house whose owner had made available a large "upper room, furnished and made ready" for Him at His request (Mark 14:12-16).*

*We have now considered Markan allusions to four of the six Elijah stories. We have discussed the role of John the Baptist as a new Elijah, girded with a leather belt, and the significance of the religious leaders' accusation that Jesus exercised the powers of Beelzebub, both of which derive from the account of Elijah and Ahaziah in Second Kings. We have compared the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness to Elijah's flight to Horeb. We have examined the correspondences between Jesus, who stilled the storm, and Elijah, who summoned the storm after the contest at Carmel. We have traced the Sidonian excursion in the life of Jesus and the mercy extended to a Gentile woman's daughter that appears to be a reflex upon Elijah's healing of a Sidonian woman's son. Finally, we have considered Christ's parable of the vineyard in light of the account of Elijah's confrontation of Ahab regarding the issue of Naboth's murder.*

*Clearly, however, the great crisis of the Elijah cycle is the contest upon Carmel between God's prophet and the Baalite priesthood. The alignment of the Markan Gospel leaves little doubt that the culmination of the Gospel, the crucifixion, is to be understood within the context of the dispute at Carmel. The narrative detail that appears to form the basis of this comparison involves the time frame of the test, the mockery of the participants, and the concluding affirmation of faith.*

*The Carmelite test between Elijah and the priests apparently transpires from midmorning until mid-afternoon (1 Kgs. 18:26-29), a time frame that generally corresponds with the crucifixion, which Mark carefully notes transpired from the third to the ninth hours, that is, from mid-morning until mid-afternoon (Mark 15:25, 33). The mockery of Jesus' death by the priests, specifically mentioned by the evangelist (Mark 15:31), also corresponds to Elijah's mockery of the futile cries of the Baalite priesthood (1 Kgs. 18:27). We have already seen that Mark has aligned the parties in his Gospel so as to suggest a rivalry between Jesus and the Jerusalemite priesthood with respect to the claim to be the legitimate successor to the prophetic office of Elijah. The accusation that Jesus was Beelzebub's legate reflected this rivalry (Mark 3:22), and Jesus' parable of*

*the vineyard constituted a counter accusation that juxtaposed the religious and political leaders of Jerusalem with the house of Ahab, implying a Jezebelene character to their murderous plots against Him.*

*The issue decided upon Golgotha assumes dramatic proportion when viewed through the lens of Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal. Viewed externally, the Jerusalemite priesthood does in fact resemble Elijah as they mock Jesus, whose lacerated and bloody body writhing in the agony of crucifixion, and whose apparently futile cries, uttered in a loud voice, for His God not to abandon Him, all combine to recall the mockery of Elijah as the priests of Baal called out in loud voices for Baal to answer them, all while cutting themselves with swords and lances until they were covered in blood, and while writhing about the altar of sacrifice they had made themselves (1 Kgs. 18:26-29). It is in such a context that the priests from Jerusalem believe they hear the name "Elijah" in the dying cries of Jesus, and so they utter the mockery, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down!" (Mark 15:34-36).*

*Each of these crises, Carmel and the cross, culminate with a dramatic acknowledgment of the true identity of the Lord God. The chronicler records that when the people saw that God had accepted Elijah's sacrifice, they "fell on their faces; and they said, 'Truly, the LORD, He is God!'" (1 Kgs. 18:39) Similarly, the evangelist writes that when the centurion heard how Jesus breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39).*

*The sixth and final Elijah account to which the evangelist alludes is the translation of the prophet into heaven. Second Kings records the events surrounding Elijah's last departure. The prophet was speaking with Elisha, who was to be his successor to continue his ministry. Elisha was to inherit his master's mantle, which represented the spirit of Elijah. As Elijah was speaking with him, suddenly a chariot and horses of fire appeared and took Elijah up in a whirlwind (2 Kgs. 2:11). Elijah's last departure corresponds precisely to the account of Jesus' ascension in Mark's Gospel. Jesus is described as speaking with His disciples, who were to be His successors and who were to continue His ministry. The evangelist notes that the word of the disciples was confirmed by the signs that accompanied them, suggesting a correspondence between the works of Elisha and the disciples of the Lord (Mark 16:20). He writes that after Jesus had spoken to the disciples, He was received up into heaven, just as Elijah had been (Mark 16:19).*



## 11. The Lord in the wilderness

- *By placing vs 8 and 9 next to each other, Mark portrays the enormous contrast between the baptism Christ receives and the one he gives*
  - *In vs 8 the Giver of life is actively creating the people of God*
  - *In vs 9 the humble Servant is submitting to the role of lowly penitent, passively receiving the sign of repentance on behalf of the people of God.*
- *In submitting to John's baptism*
  - *Jesus acknowledges the judgment of God upon Israel*
  - *And that his mission will be to endure the judgment of God.*
  - *Jesus comes to John as the true Israelite whose repentance is perfect.*
  - *He is the beloved Son. But comes to the wilderness because sonship must be reaffirmed in the wilderness.*
- *By placing vs 8 and 9 next to each other, the role of Christ becomes clearer –*
  - *Both sentences are built in exactly the same way, but they highlight deep contrasts.*
  - *In vs. 5*
    - *Judea and Jerusalem are in view, the central province and the holy city*
    - *All of the people come out to be baptized by John*
  - *In vs 9*
    - *Nazareth of Galilee is in view, an unpromising region known for disinterest in the law*
    - *Only One single representative comes out, the only Galilean to heed John's call to the wilderness*
  - *This contrast shows that all those who came out before Christ were yet insensitive to the purpose of God.*
  - *Only the One from Galilee proves to be the unique Son who genuinely heeds the call. Jesus is identifying with the rebellious people who need his salvation.*
  - *From the start, Mark is concerned to tell us that Jesus shares the heritage and predicament of the people. Like Moses in the first exodus (Ex 32:23) he does not set himself apart from their sins.*
- *Many had come to the Jordan to be baptized. But only in the instance of Jesus was the “coming up” from the water answered by a “coming down” from above.*
  - *God rends the heavens to make his message (Is 64:1).*
  - *Jesus was consecrating the people so God could come down (Ex 19:10).*
  - *In this instance God “came down” and there was striking attestation that sonship has been re-established in the wilderness through the one true Israelite whose repentance was perfect.*
  - *Many went out to see John. But only Jesus understood that a return to the wilderness involved the determination to live under the judgment of God.*
- *God's declaration of Jesus as “my Son” is not a title. But a relationship that transcends messiahship. It signifies unique relationship which Jesus sustains with the Father.*
  - *Because Jesus is God's unique Son, God chose him for this mission.*

- *This is the same formula on the Mount of Transfiguration in 9:7*
- *A. Schlatter “He associates himself with sinners and ranges himself in the ranks of the guilty, not to find salvation for himself, not on account of his own guilt in his flight from the approaching wrath, but because he is at one with the Church and the bearer of divine mercy.”*
- *Jesus tempted in the wilderness*
  - *Even after his confirmation as the unique Son, Jesus’ humiliation in the wilderness is not yet done. And Jesus must remain submissive.*
  - *Jesus stays 40 days – like Moses on Sinai, like Elijah wandering through the wilderness to Mt. Horeb.*
  - *Against Satan’s attempt to frustrate the work of God in salvation, Jesus remains determined to repent, to remain in the wilderness.*
  - *John’s call and Jesus’ response are on the plane of human decision. But they reflect the cosmic struggle between God and Satan.*
  - *Mark’s reference to the wild beasts underscores the wilderness reality. In the chaos to cosmos redemptive story, the wild beasts are cast out, replaced with a cultivated and inhabited land. (Wild beasts are part of the curse of God.)*
  - *Angels minister to Christ like they did to Elijah (1 Kings 19:5-7)*