

Jesus: His Life and Work 2

The ministry of John the Baptist was important for the ministry of Jesus – why do you think that was?

John the Baptist was the forerunner who prepared the way for Jesus. Sometime around AD 28 or 29, a strangely dressed man appeared near the southern end of the Jordan River. We know that he was ascetic in his diet and lifestyle (Matthew 11:18; Mark 1:6) and that his appearance caused great excitement amongst the Jewish people. This was partly due to his dress:

“John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.” (Mark 1:6)

which was very similar to that of the prophet Elijah:

"[Elijah] was a man with a garment of hair and with a leather belt round his waist." (2 Kings 1:8).

This similarity of John’s dress prompted the people to ask whether John could actually be the prophet Elijah, since it had been prophesied that Elijah would return (Malachi 4:5) before the day of judgement. The excitement was also due to John’s preaching, since he spoke a powerful message of repentance and judgement reminiscent of the OT prophets:

“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.” (Matthew 3:7-8)

This was a strong statement, for a Jew nothing was more unclean and repulsive than a viper. Although when asked if he was Elijah, John naturally had to deny it (John 1:21). John accompanied his preaching with a ceremonial baptism of repentance in the River Jordan (Matthew 3:5-6). The power of the impression he made was further enhanced by the fact that the prophetic voice had been silent in Israel for almost 400 years and that the people were alone with God and his law (2 Baruch 85:1-3). It was also believed that the work of the Holy Spirit had ceased (1 Maccabees 4:46; 9:27; 14:41). With the coming of John, the voice of prophecy was once again heard in Israel.

John was known as “the Baptist” because of his ministry of baptism. The Jews did previously have a rite of baptism (as opposed to ceremonial washing which was a common Jewish practice) in the rite of proselyte baptism – a part of the ceremony of conversion of Gentiles to Judaism. However, John’s baptism differed in that his baptism was primarily, if not exclusively, for Jews:

“And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.” (Luke 3:8)

John clearly rejected the idea that one could enter the coming messianic kingdom simply on the basis of ancestry. Race was not sufficient, only the repentant of Israel would enter the kingdom.

It is interesting to note that John was baptising less than ten miles from the Qumran community (of Dead Sea Scrolls fame), because his preaching had striking similarities to their teaching. They both stressed the need for repentance, were ascetic in their lifestyle and lived in the wilderness. Even more strikingly, they both based their ministry on the words of Isaiah 40:3:

“A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.” (Isa 40:3 NIV)

Thus, it may well be that John was originally a member of the Qumran community, but we cannot know for certain.

However, his message was not simply one of judgement. Along with his pronouncement of judgement came an announcement of the arrival of the messianic kingdom:

"After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:7-8)

John saw himself as the forerunner of the Messiah and sought to prepare the people for him: "'I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.''" (John 1:23).

For the Jews the desert (or 'wilderness' in some translations) is not just a harsh and lonely place, but is associated with revelation and God's care and providence. Consequently, the blessings of the coming messianic age were frequently seen as a returning to the wilderness – see (Isaiah 40:3; 48:20-22; Hosea 2:14-15; 12:9). We don't know if such thinking influenced John the Baptist, but what we do know is that he preached and baptised to prepare the way for the one who was to come. Thus, in accordance with Isaiah 40:3, he preached in the desert or wilderness.

John baptised a repentant people. The exact relationship between their repentance and their baptism – and any possibility of separating the two – is never discussed in scripture. The association of the two elements was apparently so intimate that they were considered part of the same experience. Further, the baptism was not merely an individual experience, but a corporate ceremony that involved becoming part of a community awaiting the coming of the Messiah. John told that whereas he baptised with a baptism of repentance the coming Messiah would baptise with "the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11).

The Jews expected that the Messiah would both judge the wicked and deliver the righteous. The reference to fire in John's message can thus best be seen as a judgement on the unrighteous - see (Matthew 3:12). Most Jews believed that the messianic judgement would involve the destruction of their enemies and the restoration of Israel to greatness. For them, his coming would involve retribution and redemption, damnation and deliverance, judgement and justice. However, Jesus had other ideas, he did not believe that his ministry would bring immediate judgement on the nations, nor would Israel be restored to her former greatness. He believed that judgement on the world would certainly come, but not at the present time, and that this judgement would involve not just the Gentiles but Israel as well (Matthew 25:31-46). He also believed that a more immediate judgement faced Israel (Mark 12:1-12; Luke 11:45-52; 19:41-44).

John also baptised Jesus, why do you think Jesus needed to be baptised?

Indeed, it is difficult to comprehend why Jesus had to be baptised by John. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance for sin, but the sinless Jesus had no need of repentance. We are told that John himself was reluctant to carry out this baptism, but was persuaded by Jesus that it was right to do so:

"But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness." Then John consented." (Matthew 3:14-15)

Exactly what Jesus meant by fulfilling all righteousness is not clear. Probably it meant following in the path God had revealed to Jesus was his will for Jesus' life. Possibly, Jesus was baptised to show that he was acceptable to God and consecrated in his service, rather as a priest was washed with water to consecrate him to office (Leviticus 16:4). Additionally the

baptism may have been to identify Jesus with sinners so that they might be identified with him when he gave himself on the cross as a substitute for them. Certainly, the baptism was so that Jesus should be anointed with the Holy Spirit in order that he might fulfil his messianic role.

Whatever the exact purpose, this was a unique baptism. Even though all who accept Jesus as Lord are commanded to be baptised (Matthew 28:19), there is no suggestion whatsoever in scripture that in doing this we are following in the footsteps of Jesus.

John's baptism of repentance involved a radical break with the past. So too for Jesus his baptism involved a radical break with the past and identification with the kingdom community and an assumption of his messianic role. The 'silent years' had come to an end.

Whether Jesus knew at this time that his task involved the cross is uncertain, but it is certain that here he submitted completely to the will of the Father, even if this involved death – he well knew what had happened to the OT prophets.

The Gospel accounts associate three unusual events with Jesus' baptism. Firstly, the heavens were torn apart (Mark 1:10) – I believe this was both a physical and a spiritual reality. Secondly, we read of the Holy Spirit 'descending like a dove' on Jesus (Mark 1:10). Thirdly, a voice from heaven was heard

"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1:11)

Some have attempted to make this the occasion on which God adopted Jesus as his Son. However, this is clearly not how the Gospel writers saw it. John states right at the beginning of his Gospel that Jesus was the Son of God even before the universe existed.

There has been much speculation about the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus. However, neither scripture nor external sources give us any answers. I believe that they probably conducted independent ministries in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Immediately after his baptism Jesus was tempted in the wilderness – why do you think that might have been?

Intimately associated with the baptism of Jesus is his temptation, both Mark and Matthew make it clear that this followed swiftly after the baptism (Mark 1:12; Matthew 4:1). No explanation is given as to why the temptation was necessary, although it was apparently God's will since we are told that the Spirit led or even drove Jesus into the wilderness. In order to plunder Satan's kingdom Jesus would have to defeat him and the temptation was to be the first of Satan's defeats. We might also ask how the Gospel writers obtained their material since only Jesus and Satan are stated to be present. Presumably, Jesus must have shared these events with the disciples, or at least some of them, as part of their spiritual training.

The question of the nature of the temptations also arises – were they real and objective or subjective and visionary? At least one temptation (that on the high mountain) must have had visionary elements since there is no place on earth from which the whole of it is visible. I believe they were probably subjective and visionary – but let us never forget that the temptations truly came from Satan and were truly experienced by Jesus.

Matthew and Luke contain the most detailed account of the temptations and although they differ as to the order in which these occurred (probably because of their different theological emphasis, or possibly because temptations on the three themes recurred) they do agree as to their nature.

They are both agreed that the first temptation was

“ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."” (Luke 4:3)

Like Satan’s original temptation of Eve, this first temptation involves eating. Jesus had been in the wilderness fasting for forty days and he was hungry. Satan’s statement and Jesus’ response both imply that as the Son of God he had the power to perform this miracle.

Jesus’ response was “man does not live by bread alone” (Luke 4:4).

Generally, there is nothing wrong with satisfying our hunger, but when this conflicts with the will of God, it is sin. For Jesus this temptation was about how he would carry out his mission. Would he use his power in the material world, and at least partially for his own ends, or spiritually? Would he depend on God and serve him in obedience, faith and submission?

Taking Matthew’s order the second temptation was:

“The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, “throw yourself down from here.”” (Luke 4:9)

In support of his challenge Satan quotes from OT scripture:

“ For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” (Psalm 91:11-12)

Jesus’ response was brief and pointed:

“[scripture] says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” (Luke 4:12)

I don’t believe that Satan was here tempting Jesus into making a spectacular sign to cause the people of Israel to follow him, there is no mention of a crowd of onlookers, or indeed of any observers at all. Rather I believe that Satan was tempting Jesus to ‘dare’ God to supernaturally save him. I think there is a strong lesson for us all here. In depending on God we must be careful that any ‘leap of faith’ does not amount to an unwarranted dare. There is a fine line between depending on God for one’s needs in life and asking God to rescue us from difficulties we have ourselves created or invited.

The third temptation was to worship Satan:

“ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.”” (Luke 4:5-7)

Since Jesus did not challenge Satan’s ability to make such an offer, we may assume that Satan is indeed the ruler of this present age. The question of what would happen in the final judgement with respect to Satan’s authority was not an issue here; we can assume that Satan had authority at that time. This amounts to a temptation of Jesus to win the world without drinking the ‘cup’ which God the Father would call him to drink. We can assume that such a ‘crossless’ solution would have resolved all problems of hunger, war, injustice, poverty and so on. However, it would not have dealt with the problem of our sin and our need to be reconciled to God. Such a victory by Jesus would have been hollow - “ What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?” (Mark 8:36).

However, Jesus was well aware that any path which denied God as the one supreme God would come to nothing. He would certainly have been aware of the OT commands that the LORD was the only God:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

and so he responded to Satan in the only way he could:

“Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” (Matthew 4:10)

After this third temptation Satan gave up for the time being and left Jesus (Matthew 4:11).

Here Jesus settled the issue of what kind of Messiah he would be. He rejected all political concepts, especially the path of the Zealots and accepted the path of the suffering servant that God had ordained for him. As he faced the cross, he would not use his messianic powers to rescue himself. Here, I believe we need to emphasise the humanity of Jesus. Along with the writer of Hebrews, I believe that Jesus had the capacity to sin and was genuinely tempted, but was without sin (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15).

Only after his baptism and settling the nature of his Messiahship did Jesus call his disciples. Jesus selected 12 men to be uniquely with him during his ministry, although we know he had many other followers as well, even including women.

The 12 were selected to be with him during his ministry, to learn from him and of him. They uniquely witnessed his actions and deeds and heard his teachings. He also called them to become his apostles “ones sent out” to preach his message and help in his ministry. After his death on the cross, these men were to become part of the foundation on which Jesus would build his church. Of course, Jesus is the ultimate foundation of the church, but the NT also tells us that it is founded on the apostles and the prophets.

Although we do not read of a number of the disciples (Bartholomew, Simon the Zealot, James son of Alphaeus) elsewhere in the NT and Thaddaeus/Judas son of James is only mentioned once (John 14:22) I believe that they were real historical individuals because of the testimony of all the Synoptic Gospels and because of the frequent references to “the twelve” elsewhere in the NT (e.g. Acts 6:2; 1 Corinthians 15:5 etc). Furthermore, Acts tells us that one of the first acts of the early church was to choose a replacement for Judas Iscariot. The man chosen, Matthias, played no important role in the early church and thus there would have been no reason for this story to have been invented.

Jesus’s teaching is important, but I’m not going to cover that in great detail – why do you think that might be?

Jesus was an extraordinary teacher and he frequently attracted huge crowds. The miracles of the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:30-44) and the four thousand (Mark 8:1-10) were directly attributable to this aspect of his ministry. He brought a message that was fresh and new, not simply derived from the traditions of the past. He expressed himself in numerous literary forms including poetry and parables. A central message was the arrival of the kingdom of God (Mark 1:15; Matthew 4:23; Luke 4:42-43 etc) and the phrases “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of Heaven” occur 87 times in the Gospels. It would seem that Jesus believed that the kingdom of God was now realised in and through his coming – although that realisation will not be fully completed until the second coming. Jesus, certainly spoke of this

second coming (although he admitted that he did not know the time of this), but many of his prophetic utterances appear to me to relate to the forthcoming destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. In my view passages such as Matthew 22:2-10; Mark 13:5-23; Luke 19:41-44 relate to the destruction of Jerusalem, passages such as Mark 13:2; Luke 13:33-35 relate to the destruction of the Temple whilst passages such as Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-36 relate to the end of the age. We need to maintain a careful balance between the 'already' and the 'not yet' in our consideration of the kingdom of God.

The ethical teachings of Jesus appear in some ways as paradoxical. They are in a sense new, and yet not new, different and yet familiar. This sense of familiarity derives from the fact that God's character is unchanging, thus Jesus' teachings have a quality of sameness with OT teachings. Most of the sense of newness arises out of the fact that Jesus presented a brilliant selection of what is most important out of a host of teaching and tradition – and this in a day when OT teachings were weighed down by layers of tradition and Pharisaical additions.

Although there is this strong sense of continuity with OT Laws and teachings, Jesus did not come to 'observe' the Law, rather he came as the 'fulfilment' of the Law. The prophets and the Law both pointed towards Jesus and by suffering in his own body the death penalty prescribed for breaking the Law Jesus secured our deliverance from judgement under the Law. Thus although he said "Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them." (Matthew 5:17), I believe we must differentiate between 'observe' and 'abolish'. Jesus was the final Interpreter of and Authority over the Law and its meaning, as other passages in Mathew indicate. Jesus restated some of the Old Testament laws (Matthew 19:18–19), but some he modified (Matthew 5:31–32). Some he intensified (Matthew 5:21–22, 27–28), and others he changed significantly (Matthew 5:33–37, 38–42, 43–47). Some laws he abrogated entirely (Mark 7:15–19). Jesus was not advocating the continuation of the traditional Jewish approach of adherence to the Law. Nor was he advocating that the Law be dismissed altogether. He was proclaiming that the meaning of the Law must be interpreted in light of his coming and in light of the profound changes introduced by the New Covenant which was shortly to be made in his blood and also that the Law should not be interpreted narrowly as Law, but rather more widely in the light of its moral foundations.

The whole question of how and to what extent Christians today are subject to OT Law is a fascinating topic in itself, but unfortunately it's too far away from our main subject matter for me to tackle it in any detail today.

Jesus' ethical teachings are intimately connected to the coming of the kingdom of God. Since God is unchanging these teachings have continuity with OT teachings and are unchanged in so far as the OT teachings stem from the moral character of God himself. Yet, with the arrival of the kingdom in and through the person of Christ, the attainment of this holiness has been enhanced by the 'already' aspect of the kingdom we mentioned. We move from the 'childhood' of the Law to the 'adulthood' of the New Covenant' and with that development comes both freedom and responsibility. Paul expresses this clearly in his epistle to the Galatians (Galatians 4:1-7).

We now really see what it means to love outcasts, sinners and enemies, but we are supported in this by the knowledge that we are indeed God's children and can call him Abba and that we have been forgiven and receive continual forgiveness. Whilst we are called to renounce

the world, the flesh and the devil we know that Satan has been defeated and we are heirs of the kingdom.

In his teaching ministry Jesus also challenged us to reflect on who he really was (e.g. with the rich young ruler Mark 10:18). Jesus revealed his own understanding of who he was in three ways, (i) through his actions, (ii) through what he said and (iii) by the titles and worship he accepted.

Jesus' actions present a unique claim to authority. He claimed authority over the Temple (Mark 11:15-19), over demons (Mark 1:27, 32-34), over Satan (Mark 3:27), over sickness and disease (Mark 1:29-31, 40-45), over natural forces (Mark 4:35-41) and even over death (Mark 5:21-43). He also performed actions that were the exclusive prerogative of God such as the forgiveness of sins (Mark 2:7; Luke 7:49). Although OT prophets such as Moses and Elijah had worked miracles, the scope and extent of the miracles performed by Jesus combined with his claim to forgive sins constituted a unique claim to be the Christ.

Jesus stated that he possessed authority over the Law (Matthew 5:31-32, 38-39) and, as we have already noted, even felt free to revise or annul certain aspects of the Law – which was considered damnable by the Israelites (b Sanhedrin 99a). He also claimed the divine prerogative of judgement (John 5:22). Jesus also uttered an absolute demand for allegiance, stating that our futures – Heaven or Hell – centred on that response (Matthew 10:32-33; Matthew 11:6). He also claimed to be the 'only' Son of God (Mark 12:6; John 3:16).

The claims to be God implicit in Jesus' words and actions were made clear in his acceptance of worship – which might only be lawfully offered to God – on a number of occasions. Jesus accepted worship from the disciples (Matthew 14:33), from a blind man he healed (John 9:38) and after his resurrection (Matthews 28:9).

Towards the end of his public ministry, Jesus and the disciples made a journey into the primarily Gentile region of Tyre, Sidon, Caesarea Philippi and the Decapolis (a federation of ten cities in the north of Israel that were under Greek influence). He finished in Caesarea Philippi where we have Peter's famous confession of Jesus as the Christ.

The location Jesus chose for this teaching is interesting. Caesarea Philippi nestles at the foot of a sheer cliff at the base of Mount Hermon where a major source of the river Jordan emerges as a full blown river straight from the cliff face. It was a shrine of pagan religions with niches carved into the cliff containing statues of Gods, including a statue of Caesar who was thought to be a God and Pan a God who appeared on earth as a man – indeed the old pagan name for Caesarea Philippi was Pansis or the city of Pan. Here the boundary between the human and the divine could be seen as blurred, an interesting spot for Jesus to teach the disciples who he was.

Jesus commenced by eliciting a firmer and deeper understanding of who he was. Having made the disciples expound who others thought he was, he then made them tell who they thought he was (Mark 8:29). Peter responded for the disciples "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus commanded all the disciples to tell this to no one, probably because such an open confession would have raised false hopes and brought about an open conflict with the Roman authorities before Jesus was ready for it – because of the political connotations attributed to the Messiah.

Why do you think this was the turning point of Jesus's ministry?

Following Peter's acknowledgement of Jesus as the Christ, Jesus then began to teach the disciples about the real substance of his mission – his death and resurrection.

“[Jesus] then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.” (Mark 8:31-32)

Matthews' gospel makes it even clearer that this was a fundamental turning point in Jesus' ministry:

“ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” (Matthew 16:21).

Although Jesus had previously alluded to his death, he was now specifically preparing the disciples for this event, and the references to his death became clearer and more frequent (e.g. Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:32-34, 38-39, 45; 12:1-12; 14:3-9, 34).

This preparation of the disciples was most necessary. Despite Peter's confession, neither he nor the other disciples understood what this meant. Prior Jewish expectations concerning the Messiah and his mission were too strong. Indeed Peter's initial reaction was to completely reject Jesus' teaching (Mark 8:32-33). For me this episode has great historical credibility – who would invent an episode in which one of the Church's greatest heroes was called Satan?

Matthew's account of the events surrounding Peter's confession contains an additional comment that has had enormous influence on the development of the Church. Here Jesus is quoted as saying:

““Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”” (Matthew 16:17-19).

The Roman Catholic Church has used these verses as its major support for the institution of the papacy. Their view is that here Jesus established the apostle Peter as his vicar on earth until he returned and that this leadership role was passed on upon his death to successors called 'popes'. In my view the importance which has been given to this passage is far out of proportion to the role it plays in the NT. Apart from the fact that it is generally unwise to build a whole theological system upon one single passage, especially when it is only recorded in one Gospel, it clearly goes beyond the words of that passage to interpret this as a permanent authority transmissible at the edict of a part of the universal church and in any event Ephesians (Ephesians 2:20) tells us that the church is built on three things – (a) the Apostles, (b) the Prophets and (c) Jesus as its cornerstone.

Rather we should focus on the importance of these passages as presenting the watershed of Jesus' public ministry and the start of his preparation of the disciples for his death and resurrection.

Immediately after the events of Caesarea Philippi we have the Transfiguration. Apparently the transfiguration took place six days after the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 9:2; Matthew 17:1). Apart from the events between Palm Sunday and the resurrection

and the observing of the Law with regard to the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:21-22), we find almost no other specific chronological connections in the Gospels.

We're not certain where the Transfiguration took place, but it was probably Mount Hermon which is close to Caesarea Philippi. On this occasion, Jesus took with him three disciples – Peter, James and John. No reason is given for this, but they do seem to have formed a leadership hierarchy amongst the twelve (see Mark 5:37; Mark 14:33). Jesus was transfigured – that is he underwent a supernatural transformation – before the disciples (Mark 9:2). This was clearly not a natural phenomenon. Luke adds that Moses and Elijah also appeared “in glory” with Jesus. The disciples apparently understood this as a temporary glorification of Jesus, and the sight was such that they were terrified.

Do you think the Transfiguration was a real event or a vision?

I believe that this was a real event in the life of Jesus rather than a vision or an illusion. Firstly it is quite clear that the Gospel writers understood it in that way and secondly this is also true of the account in 2 Peter 1:16-18. In this latter passage, the transfiguration is seen as foreshadowing the glory Jesus will possess at his second coming. In this context, we should also remember that the passage follows immediately after Mark 8:38 which refers to the Son of Man coming in glory.

We cannot be sure why the transfiguration took place or why Moses and Elijah appeared. Perhaps it was to fulfil Jesus' words that they would not taste death before they saw the Son of Man coming into his kingdom (Matthew 16:28), or perhaps it was because they were prophesied to appear before the coming of the messianic age.

The final major event that took place at the transfiguration was the speaking of a voice from heaven. In contrast to the voice at Jesus' baptism which was addressed to Jesus (although for the benefit of the onlookers), the voice here is addressed to Peter, James and John. We are told that the voice said:

““This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”” (Mark 9:7)

The first part of this message was presumably designed to reinforce their belief in who Jesus actually was, whilst the second was reinforcing their need to remember and accept the teachings from Caesarea Philippi and constituted a rebuke of their rejection of Jesus' conception of the nature of his messianic role.

The voice from heaven frequently delivers a similar message to believers today.