

100 days with Jesus

Group Study No: 2

Mark 1:2-11

Introduction

Jesus has grown from baby to boy to man, and he is about to launch out on his great mission. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin. As with Jesus, his birth was announced by angels; it made a huge impact on his parents Elizabeth and Zechariah (Luke 1:5), and was commemorated by a great early Christian hymn (Luke 1:67).

The supply-line of prophets in Israel had dried up years before. Suddenly there was a new one; a great one too. John was a young man in his mid to late 20s who lived an austere lifestyle; righteous and uncompromising, he called a spade a spade and a sin a sin.

John travelled around the towns and villages of Judah, which was in the south. With great passionate eloquence he called people out to be baptised in the River Jordan, and out they came by the truckload.

There was something in this of a return to the great days of Moses and escape from Egypt; a new, purified people of God, a new Exodus. Israel would be a newly cleansed, promised land, and John's baptism or 'soaking' was the new crossing of the Red Sea.

Discussion

1. How was John preparing the way for Jesus?
2. Why do you think so many people were attracted to such a demanding message?
3. If you were responding to John's message, would you have much to repent of?
4. What response do you think John would receive today?
5. How would you compare and contrast the ministries of John and Jesus?

6. V9 Why do you think Jesus, the one without sin, should be baptised?

7. V10 What is the significance of the Spirit descending like a dove?

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,
Your light exposes my darkness,
Your purity highlights my sinfulness,
Your love contrasts with my selfishness.
So may your truth point to my failing,
Call me to repentance,
And wash me in forgiveness,
And may I emerge from the water
Newer, cleaner, and better for you.
Amen.