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In this first of a series of articles, we will discover the Jesus we may scarcely know—Jesus, the Prophet-like-Moses. We begin with his baptism in the Jordan and his anointing.

BY DR. JIM SIBLEY

Many are familiar with the Emmy award-winning television show *Undercover Boss*. It originated in England in 2009 and now has franchises in twenty countries. Of course, it's a reality show where high-level corporate executives take up jobs, often blue-collar jobs, anonymously to discover how the rank-and-file employees view their jobs and to discover those whose talents exceed their positions. What makes the show work is that the executive's role has been changed. Actually, by humbling himself, or herself, the executive gains more respect, not less.

Jesus was born "King of the Jews" (Matt 2:2), but he obviously wasn't ruling as a king from the manger! He was born to be a king, but he fulfilled a different role, or function, in the days of his earthly ministry. In fact, I am convinced we cannot fully understand the Gospels without understanding him in his role as the Prophet-like-Moses.

This terminology comes from Deuteronomy 18:15: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him." He would be like Moses in many respects, but he would speak with the very authority of God himself and would be vastly greater than Moses.



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No one knows the exact spot where Jesus was baptized, although it was most likely near the traditional site known in Arabic as Qasr al-Yahud. Regardless, Jesus was almost certainly baptized in the same stretch of the Jordan River where the Israelites entered the Land. The Jordan marked the limit beyond which Moses could not go. Jesus was greater than Moses and began his public ministry where Moses concluded his.

Since Jesus came as the Messiah, and since “Messiah” means “the anointed one,” when was Jesus anointed? Our failure to recognize his identity as the Prophet-like-Moses may prevent us from understanding this. We know prophets were anointed, for in both Psalms and Chronicles we read, “Do not touch my anointed ones; and do my prophets no harm” (Ps 105:15; 1 Chron 16:22). Here, the prophets were called “the anointed ones.”

Kings and priests were anointed with olive oil, but prophets were anointed with the Spirit. One example is Elisha. God commissioned Elijah to anoint Elisha, but there is no record of this taking place, at least not with oil (1 Kgs 19:16). Instead, we are told that Elisha received the Spirit. Second Kings 2:9 says that when Elijah and Elisha had crossed over the Jordan River, “Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you.’ And Elisha said, ‘Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.’” He received the prophet’s anointing, an anointing with the Holy Spirit.

This is in keeping with other prophets who seem to have been anointed, not with oil, but with the Holy Spirit. For example, Saul had an experience with the Holy Spirit that called to mind God’s

anointing of prophets. We read, “When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily, so that he prophesied among them” (1 Sam 10:10). Here, it was the fact that “the Spirit of God came upon him mightily” that seems to have been most characteristic of the prophets. Of course, Saul was anointed as king with oil by Samuel as well (1 Sam 10:1). Perhaps more significantly, Isaiah prophesies, “Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have put my Spirit upon Him” (Isa 42:1; see also Matt 12:18).

Following his baptism, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. He was always the Son of God, but this was the moment he became the Messiah or Anointed One. At Jesus’ baptism, the dove came down from heaven as a visible sign of his anointment with the Spirit. As Peter would say, “You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). Once we understand the significance of his anointment with the Holy Spirit as the messianic Prophet-like-Moses, we can understand his baptism as a ceremonial preparation for this anointing by the Spirit.

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