

Matthew Lesson 03

Matthew Chapter 3

Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies

Email: mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com

Website: www.KjvBibleStudies.net

Memory verses for this week: *Psa 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*

Introduction: We continue our study this week on the book of Matthew. In last week's lesson, we saw how the wise men finally appeared to see the young child after having traveled for as long as a year. We discussed how there may have been dozens of wise men rather than the three depicted in the Christmas traditions. All men (and women) who seek after Christ are wise. This week we cover one of my favorite chapters in the New Testament as we study Matthew Chapter 3 concerning John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus Christ.

I. The Ministry of John the Baptist

Mat 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

Mat 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

John's ministry began by preaching in the desolate Judea wilderness, south of Jerusalem. His ministry was directed specifically at the Jewish nation to prepare them for their Messiah. His message was twofold: (1) "Repent" (2) "the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Prior to the ministry of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist was a forerunner sent by God to prepare the way for Christ's ministry. The first step for the Jew then (and for the gentile now) is *repentance*. It signifies not only regret of sin but also a willingness to change. It essentially is a message of turning from our way and sin and turning to God.

Repentance is a fundamental part of saving faith (Acts 20:21).

Act 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance and faith are inseparable. Unfortunately, there is little if anything preached in many churches about the need for repentance today. But until an individual is willing to turn from his way and turn to God, he is not in a position to trust Him. If an individual don't trust God, he or she will not turn to God. One must be genuinely willing to repent.

The kingdom of heaven is an interesting term.

(1) First, it appears *only* in the Gospel of Matthew and therefore has apparent Jewish connotations.

(2) Second, it is a term that has particular significance of the long-awaited Jewish kingdom.

(3) The kingdom of heaven, in part, is a reference to the literal kingdom that Jesus Christ the King will establish when he returns after the Tribulation.

(4) It is not present today in its fullest sense. To the degree that the King was present in the person of Jesus, it was present then. But not until Jesus returns will the literal kingdom actually be set up.

(5) The kingdom of God is present within us (Luke 17:21) in the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and the regenerate nature given to us by God at the new birth.

Jesus said this about the kingdom of God in Luke 17:21.

Luk 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

Luk 17:21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

(6) The local church on occasion is alluded to as the kingdom in the New Testament epistles. Bible-believing churches indeed are islands of godliness in the ocean of the world and to that degree are

spiritual representatives of the kingdom of God in this age. But the literal kingdom is still to come. It was that of which John preached.

(7) The kingdom was promised to Israel through David in the Davidic Covenant made in II Samuel 7. God reconfirmed it through Daniel (Daniel 2:34-36,44; 7:23-27) and described it in the prophets from Isaiah through Malachi.

(8) The Jews in the time of Christ were particularly sensitive thereto and were looking forward to the coming of their Messiah. They then were a conquered and occupied people under the heel of the Roman government.

(9) The tragic irony is that when their King did appear, they rejected Him (John 1:10-11).

Joh 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

Joh 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

(10) John's essential message to Israel was that the long promised kingdom was at hand (i.e., near) because the King had arrived. Sadly and for the most part, his message was ignored or rejected.

Matthew actually skips 30 years between the last verse of chapter 2 and verse 1 of Chapter 3. We know that John was a special man born for a purpose just he was to fulfill.

Luke 1:11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

Luke 1:12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

Luke 1:13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

The angel of the Lord came to John's father, Zacharias and told him about how that he would have a son and he was to name him John. We won't take time to read all the verses, but if you remember Zacharias lost his ability to speak after this, and the day John was born and discussion was going on

about naming the baby, Zacharias wrote it out on paper that his name was to be John. His voice returned to him at that time. John was the greatest prophet ever born of women according to Jesus Christ.

Luke 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Mal 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

We read there in Malachi that John was called and prophesied of by the prophets. His job was to make ready a people for the Lord.

Luke 1:17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

John was clearly called of the Lord to be a preacher. It is crucial that a man have a call from the Lord to be in the ministry. People who are not called should not be preachers as we think of a minister. All of us, every single Christian, should proclaim the gospel to the lost. But only those called should hold the office of Pastor in the church.

Many prophets prophesied of future events, but John prophesied of things at hand. His place of ministry was in the wilderness of Judea. This shows how God can call a man both to a large city, a small town, or even a remote area such as John. All called ministers of God labor together with God. Only God can give the increase. John's message was clear. He called for men to repent and return to the Lord. This is one of the most needful messages of our time. John proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. For a man, woman, boy, or girl to be saved, they must first see themselves as a lost sinner, repent of the sin, and turn to God for forgiveness. If a Christian drifts away from the Lord, they need to repent and draw back near to the Lord. If a Christian does not, they will face chastening of the Lord. God calls for nations to repent as he did in II Chronicles.

2 Chr 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Mat 3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Mat 3:4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

Verse 3 speaks of the prophecy given by Isaiah about John the Baptist.

Isa 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

When people asked John who he was, his answer always was “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” He called upon those who heard him to prepare ye the way of the Lord and make his paths straight.

John 1:23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

I don't know how well John would fit into the typical church today. It says he wore camel's hair and a leathern girdle and eat locusts and wild honey. He might be a little radical for our groups today. But I think God brought him in a radical way because there were major radical changes coming, and a man like this would get the attention of the people.

J. Vernon McGee said this about John the Baptist

The garb in which he appeared, the figure he made, and the manner of his life, v. 4. They, who expected the Messiah as a temporal prince, would think that his forerunner must come in great pomp and splendor, that his equipage should be very magnificent and gay; but it proves quite contrary; he shall be *great in the sight of the Lord*, but mean in the eyes of the world; and, as Christ himself, having *no form or comeliness*; to intimate betimes, that the glory of Christ's kingdom was to be spiritual, and the subjects of it such as ordinarily were either *found by it*, or *made by it*, poor and despised, who derived their honors, pleasures, and riches, from another world.

1. His *dress was plain*. This same John had *his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins*; he did not go in *long clothing*, as the *scribes*, or *soft clothing*, as the courtiers, but in the clothing of a country husbandman; for he lived in a country place, and suited his *habit* to his *habitation*. Note, It is good for us to accommodate ourselves to the place and condition which God, in

his providence, has put us in. John appeared in this dress,

(1.) To show that, like Jacob, he was a *plain man*, and mortified to this world, and the delights and gaities of it. *Behold an Israelite indeed!* Those that are *lowly in heart* should show it by a holy negligence and indifference in their attire; and not make the putting on of apparel their adorning, nor value others by their attire.

(2.) To show that he was a *prophet*, for prophets wore *rough garments*, as mortified men (Zec. 13:4); and, especially, to show that he was the Elias promised; for particular notice is taken of Elias, that he was a *hairy man* (which, some think, is meant of the hairy garments he wore), and that *he was girt with a girdle of leather about his loins*, 2 Ki. 1:8. John Baptist appears no way inferior to him in mortification; this therefore is *that Elias that was to come*.

(3.) To show that he was a man of resolution; his girdle was not *fine*, such as were then commonly worn, but it was *strong*, it was a *leathern girdle*; and blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he comes, finds with *his loins girt*, Lu. 12:35; 1 Pt. 1:13.

2. His diet was plain; his meat was locusts and wild honey; not as if he never ate any thing else; but these he frequently fed upon, and made many meals of them, when he retired into solitary places, and continued long there for contemplation. Locusts were a sort of flying insect, very good for food, and allowed as clean (Lev. 11:22); they required little dressing, and were light, and easy of digestion, whence it is reckoned among the infirmities of old age, that the grasshopper, or locust, is then a burden to the stomach, Eccl. 12:5. Wild honey was that which Canaan flowed with, 1 Sa. 14:26. Either it was gathered immediately, as it fell in the dew, or rather, as it was found in the hollows of trees and rocks, where bees built, that were not, like those in hives, under the care and inspection of men. This intimates that he ate sparingly, a little served his turn; a man would be long ere he filled his belly with locusts and wild honey: John Baptist came neither eating nor drinking (ch. 11:18)—not with the curiosity, formality, and familiarity that other people do. He was so entirely taken up with spiritual things, that he could seldom find time for a set meal.

Now, (1.) This agreed with the doctrine he preached of repentance, and fruits meet for repentance. Note, Those whose business it is to call others to mourn for sin, and to mortify it, ought themselves to live a serious life, a life of self-denial, mortification, and contempt of the world. John Baptist thus showed the deep sense he had of the badness of the time and place he lived in, which made the preaching of repentance needful; every day was a fast-day with him.

In verse 3, again, Matthew appeals to the authority of the Old Testament Scripture in quoting from Isaiah 40:3.

"For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight".

The message and ministry of John was to prepare for the coming of the King. John's ministry began in the wilderness of Judea (the *Jeshimon*) and it was certainly desolate country. It no doubt typified the spiritual condition of official Israel of that day. To "make his paths straight" meant to make it appropriate for the King to arrive. The thought pertains not to the condition of the physical roads, but rather to the condition of the hearts of Israel spiritually.

God has always sought after hearts which are true, upright, sincere, and on the level, not to mention straight in contrast to crooked. It should be noted that it is God who initially brings about the change thus being the cause of the New Birth.

John's manner of life was rustic. John lived off the land and was clothed in simple, country clothing. Cloth of camels' hair was the garment of the humble nomads of the region.

A broad, leather girdle (belt) was that worn by common laborers of the day. The Levitical law permitted the eating of locusts (Leviticus 11:22).

Lev 11:22 Even these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind.

The thought was simply that he lived off the land, eating also of the wild honey he found in the region. The implication was he was not influenced or tainted by the corrupt culture of the day.

Mat 3:5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

As such, John was somewhat of a curiosity. He had the dress and aura of an Old Testament prophet and may have been considered as such by many. John was New Testament, not old and not in

between. He was a New Testament Preacher. Large segments of the population of the region of Judea, Jerusalem, and the Jordan River valley went out to hear him preach.

Mat 3:6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

Notice that when you do things God's way in God's plan, there is great success. It says multitudes came out to hear him, and many were baptized of him in Jordan after they confessed their sins and repented. Even the Pharisees and Sadducees came out to be baptized of him.

John's message was repent for the King is at hand. His baptism was a public expression of repentance on the part of the Jewish hearer. The church was somewhat a mystery among those who were born again and baptized in this early hour. It would be similar to building an Ark and never seeing rain or flood.

Some believe that this baptism wasn't sufficient for entering into the church body. Acts 19:3-5 is often misinterpreted making John's baptism out to be a Jewish believer's act of faith thus making the baptism insufficient for membership. Paul merely taught the disciples the truth concerning their baptism. Whether some were baptized again wasn't an issue of authority. If any were re-baptized, it was due to a lack of understanding concerning the new birth and baptism.

Act 19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

Act 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Act 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Remember that Jesus and His chosen disciples all were baptized by John. There was no reason to re-baptize any of them.

Mat 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Word of these unusual proceedings certainly reached the Pharisees and Sadducees headquartered at Jerusalem. These were the two major religious denominations within Judaism of that day and were the elite of the Jerusalem.

After hearing, they came to watch his baptisms. It is significant that no mention is made that these religious leaders came to *be* baptized of him. The Pharisees were a strict sect within Judaism which literally meant 'the separated ones.'

In later Jewish history, they came to be known as the *pharushim* {the interpreters} because of their inordinate emphasis upon interpreting the law. It was the Pharisees, during and after the Babylonian captivity, who began the oral traditions of rabbinical Judaism which continue to this day.

These oral traditions of interpreting and embellishing upon the Law of Moses came to have at least equal credence to the Law and often superceded the Law in practical importance in the mind of many Jews. Moreover, they held that God had also orally communicated to Moses their commentary explaining the law. Therefore, their commentary (traditions), which they greatly espoused, carried equal weight with the Law of Moses in their minds

The Pharisees were those who helped develop the synagogue system in the diaspora and became the caretakers thereof. They were correct, moral, zealous, and self denying. But they were also strongly self-righteous and considered themselves above any need for repentance.

They were true legalists in that they believed by keeping the letter of the law (especially as they interpreted it), they would become righteous before God. The Sadducees were the religious liberals of the day. They denied or doubted anything supernatural such as angels, miracles, and especially the resurrection.

They were particularly represented in Jesus' day in the priesthood and the Sanhedrin (government). They accordingly controlled the Temple. John disparaged both of these groups. He called all of them a generation of vipers (a bunch of snakes in the grass).

He by Gods authority asked them, “who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” The question was saturated with disdain. The idea is, ‘Who warned you self-righteous pompous leaders to flee coming judgment? I thought you guys had no need of repentance because you have no sin.’

Mat 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

Mat 3:9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

John tells these religious leaders of the day to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. It was not a popular message in John’s day, and many don’t want to hear it today. Many had the excuse that they were Abraham’s seed and had no need. Being of Jewish descent was not enough to save a person. They were of Abraham’s seed, but not Abraham’s children from a spiritual standpoint.

John 8:37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

John 8:38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

John 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

John 8:40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

John 8:41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

John 8:42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

John 8:43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a

lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

If a person belongs to Christ then that person is Abraham's seed. We become children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

Gal 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

To the contrary, John's message to them was, Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. In other words, true repentance will manifest itself in its fruit. True repentance will show itself in a changed life.

Implicit is that the religious leaders of the day had a profound need for repentance. John continued to rebuke them. *"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham"*.

The Pharisees and Sadducees took pride in that they were the descendants of Abraham. John thundered that God was able to raise up children of Abraham from the stones. (The land of Israel is full of stones. They are as prolific as grass might be in America).

In Christ however, God raised up children of Abraham from the gentiles which the Jews considered little different than the common stones on the ground. (The word *gentile* to the Jewish mind had the sense of 'common ones.')

Mat 3:10 And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

The ax was laid at the root of the tree... only those who bring forth fruit is permitted to stand. God

wants us to be fruitful Christians and bring others to Christ.

John warned that the judgment of God was impending if there was not the good fruit of repentance in Israel.

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire".

There is truth established here that no doubt some Jews understood. In Isaiah 5, Israel as a nation was likened unto a vine planted by God in the land. John implies that God was about to chop it down.

If a fruit bearing tree did not bring forth good fruit, it was cut up into firewood. The good fruit sought by God would come as a result of repentance on the part of Israel. Sadly, Israel, in the main, was destitute of such fruit. In little more than a generation later, the vine of Israel personified in Jerusalem would be cut down and cast into the fire of Roman judgment under Titus.

Mat 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

John baptized with water but Christ was to baptize with the Holy Ghost. The baptism he spoke of took place on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

Acts 2:6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

Acts 2:7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

Acts 2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Acts 2:9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

Acts 2:10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

Acts 2:11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

Acts 2:12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

Acts 2:13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

The Holy Spirit was the mode Christ used to baptize the church on the day of Pentecost. The only other possible record of baptism of the Holy Ghost came at that house of Cornelius. Besides those two instances, all baptisms have been by water. When we are saved, the Holy Ghost comes and takes up residence inside the believer. He guides us in our daily walk and convicts us of sin when we make mistakes.

Note there in verse 11 how John again alludes to how his baptism was unto repentance.

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire".

But John now speaks of the One coming after him. He humbly spoke how that he was not worthy to even carry the shoes of Him. He then prophesied that Christ would baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost would come on Pentecost about three years later.

This baptism speaks of the empowerment of the church after the Lord ascended to the right hand of God. The baptism of fire spoken of here has no reference to Acts 2, but rather is a prophecy of judgment when Jerusalem would be destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70.

Notice that the reference to the baptism of fire is in the context of harsh rebuke to the Pharisees and Sadducees and immediately precedes prophecy of impending judgment in the next verse.

Mat 3:12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

There is a remarkable prophecy here. John foretold that the day was coming when the Messiah would winnow (the word *fan* is a reference to a winnowing shovel) the wheat from the chaff.

In ancient times, the wheat was winnowed or separated from the chaff by first treading it upon a threshing floor and then throwing the grain into the breeze. The grain would fall into the prepared catching cloth, but the chaff would drift with the breeze.

After the process was completed, the chaff was gathered onto the threshing floor and burned. Here is a reference of impending judgment of Israel. As the church was formed, believers were separated from the mainstream of the Jews and were spared the judgment that came in A.D. 70. Jerusalem was then destroyed and over one million Jews perished.

There may be latent prophecy how the church will be removed in the Rapture before the fire of judgment falls in the Tribulation.

Mal 3:2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

Mal 3:3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

Mal 3:4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

2Th 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

2Th 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

2Th 1:9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

2Th 1:10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

One day there will be a separation by the Lord of the saved and the lost. The wheat speaks of the saved going into garner, where the chaff is the lost going to be burned.

Barnes Notes on the New Testament said this about verse 12.

Shall purge—Shall cleanse or purify. Shall remove the chaff, etc.

The garner—The granary, or place to deposit the wheat.

Unquenchable fire—Fire that shall not be extinguished, that will utterly consume it. By the floor, here, is represented the Jewish people. By the wheat, the righteous, or the people of God. By the chaff, the wicked. They are often represented as being driven away like chaff before the wind, Job 21:18; Ps. 1:4; Isa. 17:13; Hos. 13:13. They are also represented as chaff which the fire consumes, Isa. 5:24. This image is often used to express judgments, Isa. 41:15: "Thou shall thresh the mountains and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff." By the unquenchable fire is meant the eternal suffering of the wicked in hell, 2 Thes 1:8-9; Mark 9:48; Matt. 25:41.

II. The Baptism of Jesus

Mat 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

Mat 3:14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

Jesus thereafter came to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. There is no evidence that John had ever met Jesus, though they were related through their mothers. Nevertheless, John clearly perceived who Jesus was.

This is evident from John 1:29. Christ was likely revealed by the Holy Spirit in John.

Joh 1:33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

Though John protested, Jesus by Gods authority (being God) commanded John to baptize Him. Jesus' baptism was a fulfillment of righteousness—it was right to do. Though Jesus had no sin of which to repent, He did fulfill the will of God the Father. Moreover, in being baptized by John, He placed the approval of God upon John's ministry. Though John may not have perceived that, in retrospect, Jesus' baptism clearly authenticated the ministry of John.

Most importantly, this baptism delivered to the Lord and disciples was from God the Father. Submission to this baptism is just as necessary today as it was then. Our authority to perpetuate the church rest solely on this ordinance.

Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan, a journey of about 60 miles, to be baptized by John. It is important that we understand that Jesus did not come like the others to be baptized for remission of sins. Jesus never sinned and had no need to repent. We are not really baptized to receive remission of sins, we are baptized because we have repented and received remission of our sins. The reason he came is explained in verse 15. Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, and to set an example of how we should follow our Lord in baptism and fulfil all righteousness. Salvation is totally of the Lord, and we are saved by faith. It is not by works of righteousness that we are saved.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

John declares that he is unworthy to do this baptism. He argues that he is not worthy to baptize

Christ. In verse 11 he states that when Jesus came he was not worthy to bear his shoes. John declared that Jesus was the Lamb of God.

Mat 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John 1:30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

Mat 3:15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Mat 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

Mat 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

As Jesus was baptized, the Spirit of God descended *like* a dove. The Holy Spirit did not descend as a dove, but rather *like* a dove. The greater point is that a visible presence of God descended upon Him, indicating God's blessing and approval.

The modern symbolism of a dove *in relation to* the Holy Spirit is overworked. At no other time is the ministry of the Holy Spirit so likened.

God gave not only visual approval of Jesus' baptism, but made it clear with a verbal blessing.

"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

This same blessing was also given at the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:5). God clearly put His blessing on the baptism and beginning of Jesus' ministry. This same statement is essentially found in Psalm 2:7, clearly in the context of the Messiah.

Psa 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Though few likely caught the significance at the time, God clearly was designating Jesus as both (1) His Son and (2) Messiah.

God was pleased in the obedience of His Son. To a lesser degree, the same might be said each time a newly adopted son follows the Lord in the waters of baptism.

John does as commanded, and baptizes Christ. At this point, we see the Holy Trinity in one place. Jesus, the Son of God, is in the Jordan River being baptized by John. The Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove and lights upon Christ. Then we have the voice of God the Father speaking from heaven. He declares Jesus to be the Son of God and declares that God is well pleased with Christ.

The Holy Trinity is a clear doctrine in the Word of God.

John had been told that Jesus could be identified by the Holy Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and abiding on Christ.

John 1:32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

John 1:33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

John 1:34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

KJV Bible Studies are prepared and distributed free of charge. The lessons may not be sold without consent. If you have questions or wish to discuss the lessons, or possibly need help in finding Jesus Christ as your Personal Lord and Savior, contact us at the email below.

Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Email: mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com

Website: www.KjvBibleStudies.net

Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.