

Matthew 3:1-17

- REVIEW...

- Immanuel...

- While still BETROTHED – a young woman named Mary was pregnant of the Holy Spirit...
 - An Angel of the Lord came to her husband Joseph in a DREAM...
 - The child to be born was to be called JESUS – because He would save us from our SINS...
 - All of this happened according to the PLAN of God – spoken by the prophet – **Isaiah 7:14**
 - The Virgin will give birth – the child will be called IMMANUEL – God with us!

- Birth of Jesus...

- After these things [Matthew does not record the birth of Jesus]
 - Wise men [μᾶγοι] came to WORSHIP the new King of the Jews [three gifts]
 - But when Herod [the great] heard about Jesus – he sought to KILL him...
 - Joseph was warned in a dream – and fled with his family to Egypt...
 - After the death of Herod – they returned – but settled in Nazareth!

- 1ST – JOHN THE BAPTIST... vs. 1-6

- 1st – Who was John... vs. 1

- 28 Years...
 - In those days John the Baptist came!
 - The Gospel of Matthew picks up almost 28 years later - **Luke 3:23**
 - Jumping from the return of Jesus to Nazareth – to the start of His public ministry...
 - It began with a man called John the Baptist - one of the KEY men in the Story of Jesus!
 - Cousin of Jesus – **Luke 1:13-17**
 - John was the son of Zachariah [priest] and Elizabeth [relative of Mary]
 - They were UNABLE to have children – and were VERY old – **Luke 1:7**
 - But an angel appeared to Zechariah in the Temple – Elizabeth would have a son called John...
 - JOHN [יֵהוֹנָן] – meaning the LORD [יְהוָה] is GRACIOUS [חַנּוּן]
 - He would be a NAZARITE from birth [no alcohol] – set apart to serve the Lord – **Numbers 6:2**
 - Filled with the Spirit...
 - **Luke 1:15** – “[John was] filled with the Holy Spirit - even from his mother’s womb.”
 - After Mary found out she was carrying Jesus – she went to see Elizabeth...
 - When Elizabeth heard Mary John leapt in her womb – filled with the Spirit– **Luke 1:41**
 - There is a great deal of controversy today over when life begins...
 - The Bible removed all question - makes it very clear - life begins at conception!
 - **Psalms 139:15-16** - “You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born.” [NLT]
 - Prophet Elijah...
 - **Malachi 4:5** – “I will send Elijah the prophet before the... great and dreadful day of the LORD.”
 - The very last verse of the Old Testament promised the return of Elijah...
 - Elijah was one of only TWO men in the OT who never died [chariot of fire] – **II Kings 2:11**
 - Elijah will return and prepare the hearts of the people to receive the Messiah...
 - John the Baptist would deny he was Elijah - **John 1:21**
 - But Jesus would confirm John was Elijah to those who BELIEVE – **Matthew 11:14**
 - To UNBELIEVERS - Elijah will return as one of the TWO witnesses – **Revelation 11:3**

- 2nd – His message... vs. 2

- Preaching...
 - Preaching in the wilderness of Judea!

- The Judean wilderness extends all the way from Jerusalem eastward to the Jordan River...
- It is a barren desert wasteland – with very rain or vegetation – or PEOPLE...
- The only source of water is the Jordan river that flows through it into the Dead Sea...
- It was here that John began PREACHING [κηρύσσω] his message!
- PREACHING [κηρύσσω] is not the same as TEACHING [διδάσκω]
- The emphasis on PREACHING is declaring the TRUTH...
- The emphasis on TEACHING is explaining the TRUTH!
- Repent...
 - Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!
 - The MESSAGE of John was simple – people need to REPENT...
 - REPENT [μετανοέω] – to think about our sins [νοέω] – and CHANGE our ways...
 - And to do so while there was still time – because the Kingdom of heaven is CLOSE!
 - Sadly the message of REPENTANCE has been neglected by the church in recent years...
 - While it is TRUE that God does accept SINNERS – he does NOT accept SIN...
 - The KEY to receiving Jesus – is seeing our need to CHANGE!
- o 3rd – His Purpose... vs. 3
 - For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah. The voice of one crying in the wilderness.
 - Prepare the way of the LORD. Make His paths straight!
 - The PURPOSE of John – according to the prophet Isaiah – **Isaiah 40:3**
 - Was to prepare the way for the coming of the LORD [יְהוָה]
 - He prepared the hearts of the people to receive Jesus – by telling them to REPENT...
 - So that the LORD could bring comfort to His people – by forgiving their SINS!
 - **Isaiah 40:1-2** – “Comfort My people... that her iniquity is pardoned.”
 - God gave us the most incredible GIFT - He DIED so that we could LIVE – **John 3:16**
 - What is amazing – is that MOST of the world does NOT want His GIFT!
 - The problem is most people do NOT want to admit they are SINNERS...
 - But if we do NOT admit the PROBLEM – we will NOT see our need for the SOLUTION...
 - Jesus [יְהוָה] came to take away our SIN – but FIRST we need to prepare our hearts and REPENT!
- o 4th – His appearance... vs. 4
 - Now John himself was clothed in camels hair - with a leather belt around his waist.
 - And his food was locusts and wild honey!
 - The clothing of John was a direct connection to Elijah...
 - Who was also described as HARRY [camel] – with a leather belt – **II Kings 1:8**
 - The food of John ate was based on a KOSHER diet - honey and locusts [protein] – **Leviticus 11:22**
 - Put together it spoke of a man who lived SIMPLY – desiring to follow the commands of God!
 - That does NOT mean we have to wear camel hair and eat locusts...
 - It does mean we realize it is NOT about the outside – it is about the inside...
 - We should NOT be putting on a fashion show – drawing attention to ourselves...
 - We should want instead people to see what is on the inside – let them see Jesus in us!
 - **I Timothy 2:9** – “Be modest in appearance... wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention... by the way [we] fix [our] hair or by wearing gold... or expensive clothes.” [NLT]
- o 5th – His audience... vs. 5
 - Then Jerusalem - all Judea - and all the region around the Jordan went out to him!
 - Multitudes continually [imperfect] came from ALL [πᾶς] over to see John...
 - But WHY did so many people want to come see some guy preaching in the wilderness...
 - It was the very question Jesus would ask them the multitudes!
 - **Luke 7:24** - “What did you go out into the wilderness to see?”
 - Malachi was the LAST of the prophets from the Old Testament...

- God had been silent – He had not spoken to His people – for FOUR hundred years...
- Which is why when John spoke – a prophet of God - everyone came – **Luke 7:26**
- They were willing to walk for days – into the desert – just to hear the Word of the LORD!
- We live in unprecedented times - with access to the Word of God like no other generation...
- Not only do we have church – we have online teachings – Bibles on our phones...
- The question is do we have the DESIRE – to we make the time to hear the WORD!
- o 6th – His Baptism... vs. 6
 - Unclean...
 - [They] were baptized by him in the Jordan - confessing their sins!
 - John BAPTIZED the people that came in WATER – as they CONFESSED their sins...
 - He used the picture of needing a BATH – so show people they were spiritually DIRTY!
 - Water baptism was common even back in the Old Testament among the Jews...
 - They would use MIKVEH [מִקְוֶה] to become ceremonially clean!
 - If someone never takes a bath - they might think they are OK – but in truth they STINK...
 - If we refuse to tell them - confront them - they go on smelling BAD...
 - In the same way we need to confront SIN - let people know they are UNCLEAN...
 - Let them know they are SINNER - so they see their need for a SAVIOR!
 - When ...
 - There is some debate within Christianity over WHEN someone is baptized...
 - John was NOT baptizing INFANTS – these were ADULTS!
 - BAPTISM is about CHOOSING to REPENT and letting God make us CLEAN...
 - An INFANT cannot CHOSE – therefore baptism is for those old enough to DECIDE!
 - How...
 - There is also a debate over HOW to baptize – sprinkle or dunk...
 - BAPTISM [βαπτίζω] literally means to be fully immersed!
 - The poet Nicander [200 B.C.] wrote down a recipe for making pickles...
 - You BAPTIZE [βαπτίζω] the cucumber – and it comes out changed – a PICKLE!
 - I love the picture – when we are BAPTIZED [βαπτίζω] – we go in a SINNER...
 - But we come out something different [pickled] – we come out a SAINT!
 - Picture...
 - We are commanded as believers to be water BAPTIZED – **Acts 2:38**
 - But water BAPTISM does not save us – the thief on the cross – **Luke 23:43**
 - Neither does BAPTISM make us part of a denomination...
 - BAPTISM is a picture of what happens when we believe in Jesus!
 - **Romans 6:4** – “We were buried with Him through baptism into death - that just as Christ was raised from the dead... even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
 - If we have a diploma – the paper does not give us any more knowledge...
 - But the paper represents the time and effort that went into earning that diploma!
 - Water baptism is the OUTWARD statement of what takes place WITHIN us...
 - We are BURIED with Jesus – taken under the water – a picture of our DEATH...
 - We are RAISED up with Jesus – taken out of the water – a picture of new LIFE...
 - We do it publicly so that everyone can see – we believe in Jesus – **Romans 10:10**
- 2ND – RELIGIOUS LEADERS... vs. 7-12
 - o 1st – Vipers... vs. 7
 - Two Groups...
 - When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism.
 - Not everyone who came to John was there to be BAPTIZED...
 - There were TWO groups who came to SEE what John was doing!

- Pharisees – a conservative SECT of Judaism created after the Babylonian Captivity...
- Sadducees – a liberal SECT of Judaism who did NOT believe in the supernatural...
- These TWO groups DISAGREED on almost everything – unless it challenged their POWER...
- And the large crowds coming to see John – was just such a THREAT!
- Warning...
 - He said to them - Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
 - Generation [from] of VIPERS – a title both John and Jesus used– **Matthew 23:33**
 - Connecting them to their TRUE father – the SERPENT [satan] - **John 8:44**
 - They taught empty RELIGION – that KEPT people from a true relationship with God...
 - Therefore - John warned people to flee from them – because of the COMING [present] wrath!
 - **Mathew 23:13** – “Woe to you... Pharisees - hypocrites! You shut up the kingdom of heaven to men. For you neither go in yourselves - nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”
 - We live in a country where many are hardened towards the Gospel...
 - Because they have been indoctrinated in a lifetime of RELIGION...
 - And they need to be WARNED – their RELIGION will not save them from the coming WRATH!
- o 2nd – Empty Religion... vs. 8-10
 - Good Fruit... vs. 8
 - Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance!
 - John would challenge RELIGION in THREE ways...
 - FIRST – he called on them to examine their FRUIT...
 - Just because they went to the water – it was NOT enough!
 - Just because we have been BAPTIZED – does not mean we have REPENTED...
 - Our lives after we BELIEVE in Jesus should be DIFFERENT – there should be good FRUIT!
 - **II Corinthians 13:5** – “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves - that Jesus Christ is in you.”
 - Stones... vs. 9
 - Do not think to say to yourselves - We have Abraham as our father.
 - For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones!
 - SECOND – John warned them NOT to put their FAITH in their NATIONALITY...
 - Some Jews believed because Abraham was their FATHER – they were SAVED...
 - But God could make ROCKS children of Abraham – and ROCKS are not going to heaven!
 - Just because someone is born in the Philippines - does not make them a Christian...
 - Just because someone belongs to a church - does not make them a Christian...
 - It does not matter if our parents are Christians - even if they are a pastor [sorry Hallel]
 - Everyone has to CHOOSE for themselves - God does not have grandkids!
 - The Fire... vs. 10
 - Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees.
 - Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire!
 - THIRD – John warned of the DANGER of NOT bearing GOOD [καλός] fruit...
 - The AX was already [present] on the root of the tree [religion]
 - If God did not see GOOD fruit – He would chop it down – and throw it into the fire!
 - **John 15:6** – “If anyone does not abide in Me - he is cast out as a branch and is withered. They gather them and throw them into the fire - and they are burned.”
 - Those who are RELIGIOUS – people who just go through the motions [even baptism]
 - Anyone who thinks they are a Christian by birth – or church membership
 - But are not ABIDING in Jesus – if there is no good FRUIT – then they are NOT saved...
 - And the consequence for NOT being saved – is ending up in the FIRE [hell]
- o 3rd – Baptism of the Spirit... vs. 11

- External...
 - I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance!
 - John was LIMITED to water BAPTISM – it could only change the EXTERNAL...
 - It was an outward confession made to show someone had REPENTED!
- Internal
 - He who is coming after me is mightier than I - whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.
 - He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire!
 - John knew someone MIGHTIER than him was coming...
 - A person so great he did was NOT even worthy to carry His shoes...
 - This person [Jesus] – would BAPTIZE in the Holy Spirit – setting us on FIRE for God!
 - It is one thing to ADMIT we are SINNERS [baptism] – but how do we STOP sinning...
 - Not one makes us SIN – we SIN because we want to – **Romans 7:15**
 - And we do NOT have the POWER to be able to change our desires...
 - But God can – His SPIRIT can transform us INTERNALLY – change our DESIRES...
 - Jesus can FILL us – OVERFLOW [ἐπι] us – BAPTIZE us in the Spirit - all we have to do is ASK!
 - **Luke 11:13** - "Your heavenly Father [will] give the Holy Spirit to those who ask..."
- o 4th – The Harvest... vs. 12
 - The Wheat...
 - His winnowing fan is in His hand - and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor.
 - [He will] gather His wheat into the barn!
 - John concluded by stating God had already started His HARVEST – His fan was in His hand...
 - And he would separate all men into either piles of WHEAT or CHAFF!
 - In biblical times the way to separate what from chaff – was with WIND [fan]
 - The chaff was lighter and would be carried farther than the wheat...
 - Because much like when rice when it is first harvested – it is not ready to be cooked...
 - The rice stalk needs to be dehusked – to separate the labhang [chaff] from the bugas [wheat]!
 - God uses this LIFE to separate us into two piles – we either chose to be WHEAT...
 - And He will gather them into His BARN – take them to Heaven!
 - **II Timothy 2:19** – “Having this seal: The Lord knows those who are His. Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”
 - The Chaff...
 - He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire!
 - Those who do NOT chose to REPENT – will be counted as CHAFF...
 - They are gathered together – and thrown into the unquenchable [ἄσβεστος] FIRE!
 - **Mark 9:43** – “Hell... the fire that shall never be quenched [ἄσβεστος].”
 - There is only ONE alternate eternal destination for men...
 - Those who do not end up in HEAVEN [wheat] – will be burned forever in HELL [chaff]
- 3RD – BAPTISM OF JESUS... vs. 13-17
 - o 1st – Unworthy... vs. 13-15
 - Baptism... vs. 13
 - Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him!
 - This is one of only handful of events in the life of Jesus – recorded in all FOUR Gospels...
 - We do NOT know how long [weeks - months] John was preaching before Jesus came...
 - But when the time was RIGHT – it was Jesus turn to be BAPTIZED!
 - Argument... vs. 14
 - John tried to prevent Him – saying - I need to be baptized by You - and are You coming to me?
 - At first John REFUSED [imperfect] to baptize Jesus...
 - He recognized Jesus as being the one who should do the BAPTIZING!

- Righteousness... vs. 15
 - But Jesus answered and said to him - Permit it to be so now.
 - For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he allowed Him!
 - Jesus commanded [imperative] John to Baptize Him...
 - Not because John was wrong – Jesus was the greater [He is God]
 - But the BAPTISM needed to happen to fulfill ALL [πᾶς] righteousness!
 - The purpose of BAPTISM – is to confess our SINS – desire to be CLEAN...
 - Why then would Jesus need to be BAPTIZED – He had NO sin!
 - **I Peter 2:21** – “Christ... [left] us an example - that you should follow His steps.”
 - Everything Jesus did – was meant to be a PATTERN for our lives to follow...
 - That is why Jesus came to the earth as a CHILD [born]
 - He was called out of the world [Egypt] – to live separate for God [Nazarite]
 - And when the time came – He was water Baptized – as He began His ministry...
 - Because in every way – we can look to Jesus – and know how we also are to walk!
- o 2nd – Trinity... vs. 16-17
 - The Son... vs. 16
 - When He had been baptized - Jesus came up immediately from the water...
 - Behold - the heavens were opened to [John]!
 - Something miraculous happened at the Baptism of Jesus...
 - The moment Jesus out of the water – the heavens opened [clouds parted] for John [dative]
 - Holy Spirit... vs. 16
 - [John] saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon [Jesus]!
 - Jesus was filled [ἐπλήσθη] with the Spirit – at His Baptism...
 - This was the confirmation John was looking for – that Jesus was the SON of God!
 - **John 1:33** – “[God] told me - The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit... [He is] the Son of God.” [NLT]
 - The Father... vs. 17
 - [Behold] a voice came from heaven - This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!
 - The FINAL evidence was the VOICE that came from heaven...
 - The FATHER declared Jesus was His SON – and He was PLEASED [εὐδοκέω] in Him...
 - God was PLEASED because Jesus was willing to be the SACRIFICE to save us...
 - Because the dilemma was – God was NOT pleased by any other sacrifice!
 - **Hebrews 10:6** – “In... sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure [εὐδοκέω].”
 - As Jesus went under the water [death] – and came back up [new life]
 - His Baptism foreshadowing the HOPE that He would bring through the cross...
 - Do not miss WHO was there to CONFIRM His calling and purpose...
 - All THREE persons of the Godhead [Trinity] – as Jesus officially began His Ministry!