

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 7/19-7/20 2021 *Matthew Chapters 2 & 3*

PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE STUDY!

MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN CLASSROOM HS112, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 87858644763 Passcode: 087484

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TUESDAY 7 AM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada).

THE TUESDAY MORNING STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN THE FAMILY ROOM, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 85309150746 - Passcode: 715340

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OPENING PRAYER

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: The Gospel According to Matthew!

Chapter 2 – Wise Men From the East – (vs. 1-12) Flight into Egypt – (vs. 13-15); Massacre of the Innocents – (vs. 16-18); The Home in Nazareth – (vs. 19-23);

Chapter 3 – John the Baptist Prepares the Way – (1-12); John Baptizes Jesus – (vs. 13-17)

Wise Men From the East:

Mat 2:1, (* = fulfillment of prophecy) *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold (idou – behold, lo, see – an imperative - 6X in this study - 2:1,

9,13,19; 3:16,17), *wise men (majos – magician; sorcerer, wise man) from the East came to Jerusalem*

- **In chapter 2, we come to the birth of Jesus Christ.** In Chapter 1, we dealt with His ancestry, His lineage, and the circumstances preceding His birth; and now the birth. We are not sure of the time between chapter 1 and 2, but it appears to be one to two years.
- **On the fortieth day they went to the temple (Luk 2:24) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS.** This demonstrates their being poor at Jesus' temple presentation, which must have been prior to the visit of the *wise men*.
- **The first thing that Matthew mentions at the birth of Christ is the coming** of these wise men called in the Greek the *magi*, inquiring where He is born who was to be the King of the Jews.
- **In the days of Herod, the king...Herod the great was totally paranoid.** He was a small little fellow, about five feet tall, but yet tremendously powerful. He was a genius, as can be seen even today, looking at the structures that he built, including the Herodian Fortress south of Bethlehem; the Masada down at the Dead Sea; the Alexandrian Fortress up the Jordan valley; the city of Caesarea over on the coast, as well as the remains of the Great Wall, that portion of the wall that still stands. This wall consists of huge stones, some were 45 feet long, 8 feet thick, and 5 feet high, which all testify to the genius of this man.
- **This Herod was a great builder but tremendously threatened** as far as his reign was concerned. He felt that his sons and the one he loved most of his 10 wives, Mariamne, were conspiring against him and so he killed some of his sons. He killed his wife, Mariamne, and later regretted murdering her. He built a tower for her. But you can imagine what his feelings were when these men came from the *East* seeking the birthplace of the One who *was born the King of the Jews!*
- **It is interesting that when Jesus was crucified, this is the title** that was placed above the cross in the three languages: "*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*"

Mat 2:2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

Mat 2:3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Mat 2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

****Mat 2:5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:***

Mat 2:6 'BUT YOU, BETHLEHEM, IN THE LAND OF JUDAH, ARE NOT THE LEAST AMONG THE RULERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.' "

- **Here were the *magi*, these wise men from the east inquiring from Herod,** of all people, where He was who was born King of the Jews, for they declared, "*We have seen His star in the east and are come to worship Him.*"
- **The star of Bethlehem** is something that the astronomers have tried to figure out just what it was. Some suggest that it was the conjunction of the planet Jupiter and Saturn that took place in 6 B.C. Others believe that it was a 'supernova', but neither of these explanations are satisfactory because we find that when they left Herod, the star stood over Bethlehem. Thus, it was supernatural and that is all that you can say about it! It was a supernatural guiding star that these men had followed to Jerusalem and then were led to Bethlehem.
- **Herod and all of Jerusalem were troubled over these men.** We hear of the three wise men. There is nowhere in the scripture that says there were three wise men. There could have been many more than three and coming with all of the accompaniment of people with them, it probably did create quite a stir in Jerusalem. Usually, they say three because of the three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
- **As they gathered together the religious leaders, the chief priests, scribes, Herod demanded to know** where the Messiah was to be born. And they declared that it was in *Bethlehem of Judea*. They quoted (*Mic 5:2*) "*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.*" The eternal One who has always existed from *old, from everlasting*, will be born in *Bethlehem of Judea*.
- **It is interesting that He is to be born in Bethlehem** but as we follow through here in chapter two, *He will come out of Egypt and will be known as a Nazarene*, or He will be from Nazareth. So interestingly enough, He is to be born in Bethlehem, come out of Egypt and yet be known as a Nazarene or from Nazareth. Those are prophecies that would seem to have a problem in one person fulfilling them. A part of the argument in the rejecting of Him as the Messiah was the fact that He was known as Jesus of

Nazareth. They said, "Search the scriptures, nothing in the scriptures about the Messiah coming out of Galilee. He's got to be born in Bethlehem." Evidently, they did not realize that He was indeed born in Bethlehem.

- **It is amazing that although Herod was extremely interested in the birth of this Child, the religious leaders did not seem to have any concern!** So cold, so callous, so far from God though they were the religious leaders of the nation that you think they would be the first to go to Bethlehem, only about 7 miles from Jerusalem, to find the child, that they, too, might worship Him! A sad indictment against the religious leaders in that day, who were not really concerned with the birth of the Messiah. We should note this! The religious leaders knew the Scriptures, but they did not act upon what they knew! How fitting is this as it relates to our knowledge of the Bible? Are we translating that into action or are we remaining inactive?

Mat 2:7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined (kept digging into them) from them what time the star appeared.

Mat 2:8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

- **Herod said, "I want to come and worship Him also";** but in reality, his intent was that of destruction, destroying of the young child.

Mat 2:9 When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

Mat 2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy (overwhelming joy!)

- **Just when did you see this star? When did it appear?** Herod inquired diligently. Here is where the traditional Christmas programs and Christmas cards bring in a lot of confusion because we usually see the star above the manger and the wise men with their camels standing there with their gifts by the manger, bringing them to the little Babe in the manger. The wise men probably did not arrive until Jesus was perhaps a year old or more. By this time, they had moved out of the manger quite some time ago and were now in a house.
- **Behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.** We see the star had earlier appeared to them when they were in their home country. They responded by coming to Jerusalem to see the King that had been born. Now they find out that the specific location was Bethlehem. Now the "**star**" reappears and came and stood over the house where the young child was. This is supernatural! It is simply miraculous! The virgin birth is miraculous! The appearing of the angels is miraculous! What goes on in these chapters is miraculous! Our Savior is miraculous! The rapture of the church is going to be miraculous! Where we spend eternity is going to be miraculous! The 'star' was something miraculous! Man has tried but cannot explain how God did it!
- **Consider what the shepherds saw when Jesus was born! (Luk 2:13-15) And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: [14] "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" [15] So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."**
- **This is an interesting picture of a government threatened by Jesus Christ!** Worldly governments do not want Jesus to get in the way! We still live in the middle of that. It is all around us! The same principalities and powers that drove Herod are with us today. It does not want to hear Jesus is born of a virgin. It does not want to hear that God created Adam and Eve. It does not want to hear any of that. But the interesting thing is that **God's work proceeds** even with the opposition of the fallen world! God's work continues even in Covid 19. God's work proceeds even when there are people on the sidelines who do not know what they are doing. Even when things are politicized, and people have motives and agendas against God. Here we see that the most powerful man in the area, can not stop a Baby! It cannot stop God's work from going forward! Nothing happening around us today can stop God's work!

Mat 2:11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

- **They did not see the baby in the manger as your Christmas cards would indicate, but in a house. They presented their gifts to Him - gold, frankincense, and myrrh.** The gold representing the heavenly kingdom; the frankincense the sweet fellowship with God; the incense that is offered as a symbol of the prayer of the saints; and the myrrh which was used in embalming and spoke of His subsequent death for our sins.

- **They worshiped Him!** Not His mother Mary, or His father Joseph, but Him alone! The first to worship Him were Gentiles.

Mat 2:12 *Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.*

- We see how God by the Holy Spirit is overseeing these events. He warns them in a dream, indicating that they stayed at least a night in Bethlehem, not to go back to Herod, not to reveal the whereabouts of this young Child, and they returned to their country another way.

The Flight to Egypt

Mat 2:13 *Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."*

- **Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt!** God, when He pleases, can make the worst of places serve the best of purposes. He makes what use He pleases of it. God makes Egypt a refuge for His Son. God foresees His people's needs, and provides against them beforehand. God intimates the continuance of His care and guidance, when He said, *stay there until I bring you word*, so that Joseph must expect to hear from God again, and not stir without fresh orders. God will keep His people still in a dependence upon Him. If we and our infants be at any time in difficult circumstances, let us remember the difficulties of Christ in His infancy and how they were reconciled.
- **Again, the angel of the Lord is directing the activities.** It well may have been Gabriel, The Lord had put Gabriel in charge of this whole thing and that he was the one. We know that he came to Zacharias in Luke 1, announcing to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Messiah. Now here we find the angel warning *Joseph in a dream*. We notice that the Lord, even in this circumstance, is directing the husband as the head of the family, in keeping with the divine order of authority, giving emphasis to the importance of the family unit, and to the husband as high priest of the family. We see Joseph being spoken to in a dream four times in chapters one and two.

Mat 2:14 *When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,*

- **Those that would make sure work of their obedience must make quick work of it.** Now Joseph, taking *the young Child and His mother* went out, as his father Abraham did, with an implicit dependence upon God, (**Heb 11:8**) *By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. not knowing whither he went!*

***Mat 2:15** *and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."*

- **The second prophecy, "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."** This particular prophecy is in **Hosea 11:1**. Its context is a reference to God bringing His son, the nation Israel, out of Egypt. But it is interpreted here by Matthew as many prophecies are, having a double fulfillment. Yes, a reference, to God bringing the nation of Israel out of Egypt, but also God bringing His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ **"OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."** Another prophecy fulfilled!

Herod Kills the Children

Mat 2:16 *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.*

- **He diligently inquired what? What time they saw the star?** From what they told him, he figured that the child must be under two years old. That is why all of the children under two years old were slain in order to eradicate this imagined threat to his reign there in Israel. This cruel retaliation by Herod, demonstrates that he was an extremely cruel man, killing his sons, his wife, Mariamne, and many others who he thought were a threat to his position. And now, with the death of these infants.

***Mat 2:17** *Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet (31:15), saying:*

Mat 2:18 *"A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, LAMENTATION, WEEPING, AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN, REFUSING TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY ARE NO MORE."*

- **Rachel, the wife of Jacob, died just outside of Bethlehem giving birth to her second son.** The first was Joseph, the second was Benjamin. As she was dying she named the son, Ben-Oni, which means *son of my sorrow*. (**Genesis 35:18**) But graciously after her death, Jacob changed the name to Benjamin, *son of the right hand*. She was buried there. Even today, entering into Bethlehem from Jerusalem, you see the tomb of Rachel beside the road. Thus Rachel, the women of Bethlehem, "**WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN, REFUSING TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY ARE NO MORE.**" The prophecy of the weeping of the mothers of Bethlehem because of their children who were slain by this cruel edict of Herod.

The Return to Nazareth

Mat 2:19 Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

Mat 2:20 saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."

- **It was safe to go back, Joseph. Herod is dead.** According to history, Herod died in the year 2 B.C. You say, "How can that be?" If we begin the dating of our calendars with the birth of Jesus, then how could it be that Herod died in the year 2 B.C., when Jesus was probably at least two years old? There were mistakes made. When they sought to make up the calendar, there is the Julian calendar and the Gregorian calendar. There were mistakes made in the dating when they made those calendars, which are not inspired, or else they would not be incorrect. The Bible is inspired, it is correct.

Mat 2:21 Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

Mat 2:22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee.

- **Archelaus was a son of Herod and was even worse than Herod.** In fact, he really did not last long. He was such a wicked ruler, the Roman government soon took the power away from him and they put a Roman procurator over the land of which Pilate, was then later the Roman governor at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus.
- **At the death of Herod, the Great, his two sons, Archelaus and Antipas, began to reign** over the land. Herod reigned over the whole land. Antipas was given the northern part, the Galilee and on up into Syria, whereas Archelaus ruled in the southern part.
- **Herod Antipas** is the Herod that ordered the death of John the Baptist. He was attracted to the ministry of John the Baptist, but John was condemning him for marrying his brother's wife, Herodias. She got angry with him for condemning him, and so when she had an opportunity, she had John the Baptist beheaded. He is the one when Jesus was in Pilate's judgment; Pilate, not wanting to make judgment, knowing that he was innocent, sent him over to Herod. When Jesus would have nothing to do with him, he said, send him back to Pilate. Herod Antipas had two sons – Herod Agrippa I & Herod Agrippa II.
- **Herod Agrippa I** is the one in the Acts 12 had James killed when he saw it pleased the Jews." He arrested Peter, had him put in jail, intending to bring him forth the next day. That was when the Lord delivered Peter out of jail, as the church was praying. He also, in his thirties, was in Caesarea when men of Tyre who had had some problems and they came down, the city council, and the mayor and all, to try to mend things up. Herod gave this great speech and these guys, trying to play up to him, said, "It's the voice of a god and not a man," Because he did not give the glory to the Lord, an angel smote him. His stomach rotted, and he died.
- **The fourth Herod - Herod Agrippa II** comes in the latter part of the book of Acts 25-26, when Paul, in Caesarea, has been held in protective custody by the Roman government, receiving a political runaround. Paul appealed to Caesar. Festus, the governor, had to send him to Caesar, but Festus did not have any real charges, so he asked Agrippa to hear Paul to come up with charges. Agrippa agreed to listen to Paul. When Paul started pressing home the issue of salvation with Agrippa, he said you almost persuaded me to become a Christian.
- **So Archelaus was reigning in the stead of his father.** His reign was very short, but he was wicked. He was cruel. Rather than coming back to Bethlehem, Joseph and Maey decided to go back to their hometown of Nazareth.

****Mat 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."***

- **We are not told any Old Testament scripture in the English Bible that says He will be called a Nazarene.** But in the Hebrew language, we find the word *Netzer* which is branch-- there are many prophecies concerning the Branch that shall come out of the root of Jesse and out of the stem of David, the righteous Branch--and that is the *Netzer*; and thus, the word *Nazarene* coming from that.
- **It is interesting that Jesus grew up in Nazareth,** a city that had a bad reputation. When Philip came to Nathaniel, we read, (*Joh 1:46*) *And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see!* But Jesus grew up in Nazareth and thus these prophecies also were fulfilled.
- **We see several prophecies fulfilled in Matthew chapter two:** Born in Bethlehem; Came out of Egypt; Great wailing and weeping because of the death of the children; then Coming out of Nazareth, or moving to *Nazareth*, thus called a *Nazarene*.

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

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

Mat 3:2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven (only in Matthew, 32X) is at hand!"

- ***In those days***, that is the days that Jesus was here. ***John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea***, down near Jericho by the Jordan River, **saying, *Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*** he came preaching, "***Repent.***" This first word of God, breaking the silence of 400 years.
- ***The kingdom of heaven is a reference to the rule of heaven over the earth.*** The kingdom of heaven will be here on the earth, but it will be the rule of Jesus Christ. When Jesus reigns and rules, you will be in the ***kingdom of heaven.*** Now, if He is reigning and ruling in your heart, you are in *the kingdom of heaven* right now! Jesus said, "***The kingdom of heaven*** is among you"! It is right here! It is in the hearts and lives of all of those who had submitted to the reign of Jesus Christ.
- **It is more than just carrying out His commands.** We are to obey Him because we love Him. It is a love relationship. (*Joh 14:15*) ***"If you love Me, keep My commandments.***
- **Now repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,** speaking of the gospel dispensation of the covenant of grace; the opening of ***the kingdom of heaven*** to all believers, by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a ***kingdom*** of which Christ is the Sovereign, and we must be the willing, loyal subjects of it. It is a ***kingdom of heaven***, not of this world; a spiritual kingdom. Its original from heaven; its tendency to heaven. John preached this as ***at hand***; then it was at the door; to us. It is come, by the pouring out of the Spirit, and the full exhibition of the riches of gospel-grace.

****Mat 3:3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS: 'PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD; MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.' "***

- ***Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he,*** John the Baptist, ***who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah.*** The fulfillment again of prophecies all the way through Matthew. The prophet Isaiah who said, "***THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS: 'PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD; MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.'*** "
- **Whenever a king was coming to visit a territory, an area, there was just a lot of preparation** prior to the coming of the king. There would be tremendous road building projects, making a highway, filling the valleys, cutting down the mounts, and thus making the roads straight, taking out the curves and thus he's announcing, "The King is coming, get things ready!
- ***The King is coming! PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD! There is a great deal to be done,*** to make way for Christ into a soul, **to bow the heart for the reception** of the Son of David. Nothing is more needful, in order to this, than the discovery of sin, and a conviction of the insufficiency of our own righteousness. That which hinders will hinder, until it is taken out of the way. Prejudices must be removed, prideful thoughts brought down, and taken captive to the obedience of Christ. Gates of brass must be broken, and bars of iron cut asunder, for the everlasting doors to be opened for the King of glory to come in. The way of sin and Satan is a crooked ***way***; to prepare a ***way*** for Christ, the paths must be made ***straight!***

Mat 3:4 Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

- **John the Baptist was an outdoors man, to be sure.** The camel's hair robe and a leather belt around his waist. He was just really a rugged outdoors man, ***eating locusts and honey***, just living off the land.
- **He was attractive in a weird sort of way.** You do draw attention when you wear a camel's coat and a leather belt, and you out in the desert eating wild honey and locusts! John Baptist showed the deep sense

he had of the wickedness of the time and place he lived in, which made the preaching of repentance needful! Every day was a fast day with him.

Mat 3:5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him

- **A lot of people were going out to hear this fellow.** He was calling out to the people to repent and drew a crowd. There may be a multitude of brazen hearers, but few true believers. Curiosity, and affectation of novelty and variety, may bring many to attend upon good preaching, and to be affected with it for a while, who yet never become subject to its power.

Mat 3:6 and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

- **It was a baptism of repentance. He was calling people to repentance, to change.** The river Jordan, interestingly enough, in typology is a type of death. This, the baptism in the river Jordan was sort of the death to that old life. It is a repentance and now a change, going to live a new life, going to bury the old life, and going to live a new life. Now that is somewhat similar to the baptism in Christianity, only our baptism is identifying in the death of Jesus Christ and the new life that we have in the Spirit through Jesus Christ. But John's baptism was the baptism of repentance. I am going to change, I'm going to let that old life die, going to live a new life.

Mat 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Mat 3:8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,

- **Now these are the people that Jesus had real problems with when He began His ministry.** The Pharisees were a religious sect, they were people who had returned to the Mosaic law, from them we get the Talmud. Their idea was the interpreting of the law and the keeping of the law circumspectly, making up all of the rules and regulations surrounding the law. These were the men that Jesus said, "strained at a gnat but swallowed a camel." These were the men who were constantly trying to convert people into their society; they were the religionists of the day.
- **The Sadducees were the materialists of the day.** They wore religious garb, but they did not believe in angels. They did not believe in spirits. They did not believe in resurrection from the dead. They were purely materialists. But they too were attracted to John the Baptist and John saw some of them with their robes and their phylacteries and all in the crowd.
- **You Brood of vipers!** Show some fruit of repentance because the ax is going to be laid to the root of the trees. If a tree does not bring forth good fruit; the good fruit would be the fruits of repentance, the signs that there has been a true change, a real repentance; and if it is not there, the tree is to be cut down and cast into the fire. **John the Baptist was not bashful when he appeared in public, nor did he fear the face of man, for he was full of the Holy Spirit, and of power!**
- **John was preaching repentance, the baptism was one of repentance.** Here came these self-righteous men, religious men. John takes after them, calls them a *brood of vipers*, telling them to show some fruits of repentance or your lives are not changed at all. Show forth fruit of repentance.

Mat 3:9 and 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.

Mat 3:10 And 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.

- **Do not think to say...We have Abraham as our father.** Their boast was we are descendants of Abraham, and they were trusting in that for salvation. They were looking for generational type of salvation. Because I am related to Abraham, I am saved. That is as foolish as thinking that because you are a citizen of the United States, you are saved. Do not say we have Abraham as our father,

Mat 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but 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.

- **Two baptisms: John's baptism, the element is water, the issue is repentance.** There is another One coming after me. He is mightier than I am! I am not even worthy to carry His sandals.
- **He is going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** John is the baptizer, the issue is repentance from sin, the element is water. Jesus is going to come. **He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.** The issue is identifying in the death of Jesus Christ and the new life that we have in the Spirit through Jesus Christ!
- **Now he talks about the fire!** This is not the fire that is oftentimes referred to in the Pentecostal churches as this wild emotionalism, "Brother, we've got the fire!" They are usually making reference to a lot of the emotional outbursts and vigorous physical type of activities. This fire, John defines for us, for he said,

Mat 3:12 His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

- **When they would harvest their wheat, they would put it on the threshing floor.** Then they would walk all over it to break the husks away from the wheat kernel. When the wind would blow, they would take the wheat and the chaff, the husks, throw it into the air and the wind would blow the husks away, the wheat would fall back down on the threshing floor. This is the psalmist was talking about in (*Psa 1:4*) *The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.*
- **If they did not have a site that they had a good breeze, then they had these fans** and when they had knocked the husks off of the kernel, they would fan it and it would blow the husks away with the fan. So, **"His winnowing fan is in His hand!** He is going to thoroughly cleanse or purge His floor!
- **He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.** This is talking about that purifying process of our lives through the Holy Spirit. The fire is that which consumes the chaff in order that we might be cleansed or purified, refined, so to speak, where the impurities of our lives are removed.
- **That is the purpose of the Holy Spirit, the removal of the impurities in your life in order that you might be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.** Burning out from your life anger, strife, those areas of the flesh, purging it that He might just leave that which is pure and wholesome, just the wholesome grain, the wholesome wheat. Thus, the fire of God may make me shout, but I am shouting, "Ouch, that hurts", as **He is burning up the chaff!** It is one that just really hurts when that fire begins to cleanse and burn the chaff, refining the life, getting rid of the dross.

The Baptism of Jesus

Mat 3:13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

Mat 3:14 And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

- **Now this was John's ministry, summed up for us by Matthew.** Tough, straight, and he is foretelling of the One that is coming. Coming after me, He is mightier than I am! I baptize with water. He is going to baptize with the Holy Spirit. John the baptizer in one case. Jesus the baptizer in the other. Jesus is the One who baptizes you in the Holy Spirit. ***Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized.*** Jesus was up in the area of Nazareth, Galilee. He came on down to Jordan where John was baptizing,
- **Now this is interesting because John did not know that He was the Messiah until after He was baptized, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him.** John said, "I did not know until the Spirit descended upon Him because He who sent me to baptize said, 'The same One upon Whom the Spirit descends and abides, He is the One!'" This had not happened yet. Yet, John's acquaintance with Jesus, probably sometime early in childhood, knew the character of Jesus; and thus, when Jesus asked to be baptized, John said, "Really, ***I need to be baptized by You.***"
- **John's parents were old when he was born.** His birth was really miraculous because when the angel told Zacharias that his wife, Elizabeth, was going to have a son, he said, "How can this be, she's old and stricken with years?" That is, she is bent over by her age. They probably died when John was young and thus he, more or less, was sort of on his own, went on out into the wilderness, became a man of the outdoors, and yet was familiar with Jesus because there was a relationship between his mother and Mary.
- **John thinks it very preposterous and absurd, that Christ should be baptized by him; *Are You coming to me?*** Does the holy Jesus, that is separated from sinners, come to be baptized by a sinner, as a sinner, and among sinners? How can this be?

Mat 3:15 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.

- ***Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.*** Jesus is declaring that in doing this, He is fulfilling all righteousness. He was righteous, and yet, He is setting an example. Peter tells us (*1Pe 2:21*) *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: that "Christ has left us an example that we should follow in His steps.*
- **Thus, water baptism is an important step for the child of God in the fulfilling of all righteousness in the obedience to the commands of the scripture. *It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness!***

Mat 3:16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

- **The Baptism of Jesus!** As He came up out of the water, the heavens opened to Him, and John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. To John that was the sign that Jesus was the Messiah! (*Joh 1:32-34*) And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. [33] I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' [34] And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." John said he did not know until he saw this, for the One who sent him to baptize, told him that the One upon whom the Spirit descended and remained, that that was the Messiah! He had been prophesying that the Messiah was coming soon, "***The kingdom of heaven is at hand.***" But now at the baptism of Jesus, John recognized that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Then to confirm it, the voice of God speaking from heaven, saying "***This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.***"
- **To encourage Jesus to go on in His undertaking**, with the prospect of the glory and joy that were set before Him. Heaven is opened to receive Him, when He has finished the work that He is now entering.

Mat 3:17** And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.***"

- **Now at the baptism of Jesus, John recognized that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.** Here it is confirmed by the voice of God speaking from heaven, "***This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.***" "In whom I have found delight!" The Father has already found delight in Him. Where has Jesus been in the last eighteen years? He has been in the carpenter shop! Only three years of His life is public ministry. The Father is saying here, this is My Beloved Son in whom I have found delight! As He worked in the carpenter shop; as He consoled His mother when His stepfather died; as He spoke to His younger siblings about the things of heaven; about the Kingdom; as He worked; as He sweat; as He got thirsty.
- ***This is My beloved Son in whom I am already well pleased!*** That is important for us! At this time, He is a blue collar worker not trained in a seminary. We do not get any sense of this that He says, finally! Finally, I get out of the carpenter's shop. This is what I came to do. I have been working 30 years and I only have 3 years of ministry left. There is none of that. He is delighted, filled with peace, away from human eyes, not recognized, working in the carpenter's shop.
- **I think if you said to Him, are you glad to finally be getting out of here and begin the ministry.** I think He would, say, are you kidding? My communion with God here, My Father. I went out in creation to pick the right kind of lumber and cut it down and dragged it back here. I had great time to talk to James, Jude and Joses, who all would have prominent places in the church. This is My life. This is My family. No, I am not rejoicing that I walk away from all of this. It was never a burden! It was joy!
- **That is important to us, because sometimes our minds we separate the sacred from the secular** like they two different things. But if you are His, be His carpenter! Be His computer programmer. Be His mother in the home with a bunch of little kids, with an endless pile of wash and the dishes are never clean. Be His in those places! He will commune with you through His Spirit, through His Word! Somehow in all of those days, He found great delight in communion with His Father. When no human eye was recognizing Him at all. He finally now is going to step into public ministry, but hears a voice from heaven, saying, ***this is My beloved Son, in whom I am already well pleased!***
- **All that Jesus had in 30 years is yours, wherever you are!** You are there! We may be looking for something ahead but be overlooking where God has placed us in daily life, Just in the right place, so He can mix us with the lost and unbelieving world, where we can work for Him! Whatever we do, we do it unto the Lord with all of our heart, whatever it is! Find Him! Behold Him! What a great lesson here.
- **Notice the three persons of the Godhead:** *Jesus coming up out of the water, the Spirit of God descending* and lighting upon Him, and *the voice of God* speaking from heaven, declaring, "***This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.***" Well pleased because He was obeying and fulfilling all righteousness. Once more, God spoke from heaven and that was at the transfiguration, again declaring, "***This is my beloved Son, hear Him.***" Hear the declaration, I am well pleased!
- **We see here the participation of the Holy Spirit and of the Father!** It was their way of communicating, not only to the people who were there at that baptism, but to all human beings, throughout all of human history, that everything that this Man is about to say. Everything that this Man is about to do, We are behind it 100%! Jesus is representing the fullness of the Godhead in His ministry! **The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all present!** One God, three persons, all of them manifesting Themselves on the scene of Jesus' water baptism. If anyone every tries to pull you into "Oneness Doctrine" or something like this, this is a great passage to say, I cannot get my head around that because of Jesus' water baptism. Everybody was there!
- **God Himself breaking the silence, speaking from heaven, bearing witness of Jesus Christ, "My beloved Son."** Jesus said the Holy Spirit bears witness of Him. The Father bore witness of Him. Then He

declares concerning you, (*Isa 43:10*) "**You are My witnesses,**" says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. Thus, we are to bear witness of Jesus Christ to the world, joining the witness of the Father and that of the Holy Spirit, **truly this is the Son of God. He is our Messiah! He is the King of Kings!**

Summary:

- **The religious leaders knew the Scriptures, but they did not act upon what they knew!** Are we translating our Bible knowledge into action or are we remaining inactive?
- **God's plan moves forward** in spite of the opposition of a sinful world! Think of Herod's plot!
- **We are to serve where we are!** You are there! We may be looking for something ahead but be overlooking where God has placed us in daily life, so that He can mix us with the lost and unbelieving world, where we can work for Him! We are to bear witness of and for Him!
- **Whatever we do, we do it unto the Lord with all of our heart, whatever it is.** Find Him! Behold Him! What a great lessons here.
- **When the Father looked upon Jesus even before His public ministry,** He said this is My beloved Son in whom I am already well pleased! **What would He say right now about you? About Me?**

Jesus is our Messiah! He is the King of Kings!

Closing Song:

KING OF KINGS *Song by Hillsong Worship (4:25)*

In the darkness we were waiting Without hope, without light. 'Til from Heaven You came running There was mercy in Your eyes. To fulfill the law and prophets. To a virgin came the word. From a throne of endless glory To a cradle in the dirt.

(Refrain) Praise the Father, praise the Son. Praise the Spirit, three in one. God of glory, Majesty, Praise forever to the King of Kings!

To reveal the kingdom coming And to reconcile the lost To redeem the whole creation You did not despise the cross. For even in your suffering, You saw to the other side Knowing this was our salvation Jesus for our sake you died *(Refrain)*

And the morning that You rose All of Heaven held its breath. 'Til that stone was moved for good. For the Lamb had conquered death. And the dead rose from their tombs And the angels stood in awe. For the souls of all who had come To the Father are restored. And the church of Christ was born, Then the Spirit lit the flame Now this gospel truth of old Shall not kneel, shall not faint. By His blood and in His name, In His freedom I am free! For the love of Jesus Christ Who has resurrected me! *(Refrain)*
Praise forever to the King of Kings!

Closing Prayer:

Assignment for next week: Read Matthew Chapters 4 & 5