

MATTHEW 3:7-17

A. Matthew 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?

1. John the Baptist was a **bold** prophet-preacher. He called Israel's religious leaders of his day descendants of poisonous snakes. "You good-for-nothing scoundrels."
2. Later, Jesus tells how these Israel religious leaders had and were operating against God and truth.

Matthew 21:32-33 - For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him. Matt. 21:33 Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

- a. God planted a vineyard (Israel and her life) and gave responsibility to its leaders to **produce** some fruit.
- b. God had done this with Israel. He had taken them out of the land of Egypt and planted them in a good land (Israel), **God's** vineyard. God entrusted Israel to its leaders (who became priests, Pharisees and Sadducees).
- c. This had started with Moses, Aaron, priests, prophets, judges, kings, etc. These Jewish leaders of Israel were responsible to **build up** Israel and to make sure she maintained faith and her relationship with God.

****By doing this, God's presence could be in her midst and she could reach out to **others**.**

- d. But, as we know, Israel made a **mess** of it. They took advantage of it and used it for themselves to have pride, position, pomp, plenty, and power. By doing this, they **lost** their faith in God and their relationship with Him.
- e. So the owner (God) of the vineyard (Israel) decided it was time to **inspect** the fruit. He sent some of His servants-representatives. But Israel's leaders did not want them, so they **removed** them.

Matthew 21:34-36 - And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. Matt. 21:35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Matt. 21:36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

****Israel's leaders (unbelieving-apostate) were trying by **force** to remain in charge.**

- f. So the owner (God) decided to send His **own** Son, saying, "Surely they will accept Him". Sound familiar?

Matthew 21:37-39 - But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. Matt. 21:38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. Matt. 21:39 And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*.

*The Son (Christ) is not revered and He is even murdered.

Remember:

Matthew 11:12 - And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Acts 7:52 - Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

g. So when the owner (God) comes, what will He do to the leaders?

Matthew 21:40-43 - When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? Matt. 21:41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Matt. 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Matt. 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

(1) **The kingdom will be taken from them and given to another nation (not plural, but singular). It is one nation that will bring fruit to, and in, the coming kingdom. It is to them that God gives the coming kingdom. Who is it?

Luke 12:31-32 - But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

(2) It is the Little Flock, the remnant of true believers within Israel.

*These are the Jewish ones who have prepared themselves through circumcision, faith, repentance, water baptism, law following, and those who follow Messiah and the 12.

(3) But these religious apostate leaders will be crushed by the stone of God.

Matthew 21:44-45 - And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. Matt. 21:45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

**All of this begins with the baptism of John (Mark 1:4-5). John was calling for a national baptism of repentance to separate out the Little Flock for their purpose in the kingdom.

Luke 22:28-30 - Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. Luke 22:29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; Luke 22:30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Joel 2:32 - And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

B. Matthew 3:8-10 - Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: Matt. 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. Matt. 3:10 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.

1. John is saying to these hypocritical leaders that they needed true evidence of repentance. If God wanted to, He could use the stones lying on the ground better than them. He tells them to not go around boasting that they are of Abraham when they have no faith or spirit for God. If they had repented, they would have surrendered to John's baptism.
2. Then John informs them that judgment, **wrath**, God's tribulation, and His coming would determine if they would be cast into the fire.

Note:

Matthew 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.]

- a. *The purpose of God's wrath being poured out in the tribulation is to separate "the wheat" (believers) from the "chaff" (unbelievers) out of apostate Israel.
- b. John is warning them of the urgency for them to turn in **faith** to his message, because judgment was close at hand.

C.

Matthew 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:

1. [I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance:]
 - a. They would have to change their **mind** and recognize that, just because they were descendants of Abraham, there was no righteousness or forgiveness of their sins of apostasy. Also, just because they were religious leaders (Pharisees and Sadducees), there was no righteousness in that. Plus, they had failed miserably scripturally.
 - b. These religious leaders' only hope was to change their mind, put faith in John's message of the coming Lord-Messiah, confess their sins, and be **Jewish** water baptized.
2. [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,]
 - a. In this baptism, **no** water is involved and it takes place after His D.B.R.A. It happens at **Pentecost** to the Little Flock remnant.
Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
 - b. The coming of the Holy Spirit to **em**power them was promised by the Father and the Son.

John 15:26-27 - But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even the Spirit of truth*, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: John 15:27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Luke 24:46-49 - And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:48 And ye are witnesses of these things. Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Acts 1:8 - But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

So they had two baptisms, one by water and the second by the Holy Spirit. This certainly identified them as to **not being a part of, or worthy of, God's "wrath" (Matt. 3:7).

3. [he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:]

- a. Again no water is involved. This fire of judgment will take place **during** and at the **end** of the tribulation. It says in verse 12 that God's "fan is in His hand" and He will purge the land with "fire" of non-believers and all those in Israel who followed apostasy.
- b. In the tribulation, the Jewish believer will experience all **three** of these baptisms. They will be water baptized for the remission of sins after repentance and then they will receive the Holy Spirit. Lastly, they will endure through the tribulation's **fire** or be martyred.

The "fan in His hand" is when God takes the harvest. He separates the chaff from the wheat (grain). The chaff (non-believers) are taken **away and put into the fire (hell). But the wheat (believers) are **left** to go into the kingdom.

Matthew 24:37-41 - But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Matt. 24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, Matt. 24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Matt. 24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Matt. 24:41 Two *women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left*.

c. Question? Why did John use this fire terminology?

Malachi 4:1-3 - For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. Mal. 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. Mal. 4:3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

John connects his message with O.T. prophets (Malachi), making his message as part of the Old Testament. John is **still under law and Israel's prophecy program.

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

1. John fulfills his prophesied ministry as the forerunner to proclaim Christ's coming and then His appearance - "Behold Him, Messiah is here!"
2. Christ came to be baptized of John, but **not** to repent or to confess His sins (He is sinless-II Cor. 5:21). Baptism was for cleansing-confessing of sins. But, baptism also identified one with the message being proclaimed. It identified Jesus with the kingdom message and the office/position of a priest. As a priest, He was washed (He had no defilement) and then anointed with the Spirit.

Hebrews 1:8-9 - But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. Heb. 1:9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Acts 10:38 - How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

3. Baptism also identified Christ with the Little Flock - **remnant**, who were being called out for the coming kingdom.

Jeremiah 33:14-16 - Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. Jer. 33:15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. Jer. 33:16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

4. There were several reasons **why** Jesus Christ was baptized, as we have just seen. Apostle John gives us some more important reasons in the ministry of John the Baptist.
 - a. His baptism was the **in**auguration of His public ministry (age **30**).

John 1:31 - And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.
 - b. John the Baptist was chosen to point out Christ to Israel.

John 1:29-30 - 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.
 - c. John the Baptist was chosen (Israel's prophet) to authenticate, or put on **record**, that Jesus Christ indeed was God's Son.

John 1:32-34 - 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.

*The Spirit upon Jesus identified to John that this **was** the Christ!

E.

Matthew 3:13-14 - Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. Matt. 3:14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

1. Christ came to be baptized by the forerunner to fulfill the reasons we have shown. However, Jesus did **not** come to repent or to confess any sins.
2. Actually, John the Baptist, when in Christ's presence, knew **he** had sin and needed to be baptized by the sinless One!

F.

Matthew 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.

1. Jesus tells John to **allow** this baptism to take place now. He is saying, "John, remember, we both have something to do to fulfill all righteousness. You need to fulfill your ministry in helping me to present Myself to our nation Israel, that we love. Help me to announce My coming as the scriptures have prophesied and promised.
2. [all righteousness] Christ always followed the law, which was righteous.
Matthew 5:17 - Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

G.

Matthew 3:16-17 - 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: Matt. 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

1. An amazing thing happened as Jesus was baptized. The Holy Spirit descended upon the Son, heaven opened (?), the Father gave His approval for His Son, and that marked the **beginning** of Christ's ministry.
 - a. This was a testimony of the Trinity, as all three Persons of the Godhead were there at the **same** time!
 - b. Also, I wonder what the people thought when they saw and heard **this**?
2. This gave Israel (who should have been looking for Him) public notice among believers that His ministry had begun. John the Baptist's ministry from this point on began to **decrease**, while Jesus took the baton and His ministry began to **increase** (John 3:30).
3. Also notice that Jesus coming up out of the water **is not teaching immersion**. Christ had gone down to where John was baptizing, was himself baptized, and then He walked back **up** to the shore-bank.
4. When the Father said [This is my beloved Son], He was saying, "Israel, this is My Son. Do you know who He **is**? He is your prophesied King!"

Also note: When comparing the three baptisms in Matthew 3:11 with the one baptism in Eph. 4:5, we can easily see their **different** programs!