

## 11. John Told About the Coming Ministry of Jesus

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why John was sent to prepare the way for Jesus. We saw that John told the people to repent. He said that true repentance in their hearts would be shown by a desire to obey the Lord. We also saw that John gave the people some practical ways that they could show their obedience to the Lord. In our topic today, we are going to see that John went on to tell the people that the ministry of Jesus would be much greater than his ministry. We also see that John baptized Jesus as Jesus began His public ministry.

Luke 3:15-18 says, “Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ *or* not, John answered, saying to all, ‘I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.’ And with many other exhortations he preached to the people.” Here, we see that as the people heard John speak, many of them began to wonder if he could be the Christ. John realized what the people were thinking and so John made it very clear that he was not the Christ but that he had been sent to introduce the Christ.

John answered the people by talking about three different kinds of baptism. The word translated “baptism” twice in this verse means *to submerge*. We saw in our last topic, that the main area of the ministry of John was along the Jordan River because he was preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Those who accepted his message regarding repentance were submerged in the Jordan River. That is why John said here that he baptized with water. However, John said that God had sent him to introduce One who was much greater than he was. John said that he did not even feel worthy to untie the sandal strap of that One. In this way, John was saying that he did not even deserve to be a bondsman of Jesus because a bondsman would untie the sandal before he washed the feet of his master.

Then, John said that the One who was much mightier than him would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Jesus is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. At the moment that we repented of our sin and placed our faith in Christ, He placed the Holy Spirit in our lives. In John 1:32-33, John said, “And John bore witness, saying, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. 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.”’” Jesus baptizes us with the Holy Spirit at the moment of our salvation as the down payment and guarantee of our salvation. Ephesians 1:13-14 says, “In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” We were given the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our salvation.

In contrast, those who reject Christ will receive a baptism of fire. A winnowing fan was used to

separate the grain for the chaff (small pieces of straw). A Christian is compared to the wheat that will be gathered and taken to heaven. A person who is not a Christian is compared to the chaff. John said that all those who are like chaff will burn with fire that is unquenchable. The word translated “unquenchable” means *the fire of eternal judgment that will never be put out*.

Luke 3:19-22 says, “But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison. When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, ‘You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.’” Here, we see that later Herod put John in prison because John told him that it was sin to be living with the wife of his brother. Later, Herod murdered John. The details of the reason for that murder are given in Matthew 14:1-12 and Mark 6:14-29.

However, before that imprisonment and murder, Jesus came to John and asked John to baptize Him. Matthew 3:13-15 says, “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John *tried* to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’ 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.” Here, we see that Jesus was baptized by John for a different reason than the rest of the people. The other people were baptized to show their repentance. In contrast, Jesus is the sinless Son of God. The purpose of the baptism of Jesus was to fulfill all righteousness. This meant that Jesus was identifying Himself with sinners because He would pay the penalty for our sins and place His righteousness on us.

The Father also had a second purpose for this baptism. The Father chose this baptism as a time to publicly identify Christ as His Son. Mark 1:10-11 says, “And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” Here, we see that God opened the heavens. Then, the Holy Spirit descended in a form that looked like a dove and rested on Jesus. At that moment, the Father spoke of heaven and said, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Here, we see that the Father personally identified Jesus as His beloved Son. The word translated “well pleased” means *to take pleasure in*. Here, we see that the Father was very pleased that Jesus was willing to come and pay the penalty for our sins.

In Luke 3:23-38, we have the genealogy of Jesus through Mary. Verse 23 says, “Now Jesus Himself began *His ministry* at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) *the* son of Joseph, *the son of Heli*.” The phrase “as was supposed” means *to think or suppose*. As we have seen in the first chapters of Luke, most people supposed that Jesus was the son of Joseph. This is why God led Luke to include the information about the way that Jesus was conceived. The angel told Mary in Luke 1:35, “And the angel answered and said to her, *The* Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” Here, we have the miracle of the birth of Jesus explained so that we know that Jesus was the Son of God even though most people thought Jesus was the son of Joseph.

God had given promises to Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David that the Messiah would come through their family. God told David in 1 Chronicles 17:11-14, ““And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took *it* from *him* who was before you. And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever.”” Here, we see that God promised David that one of his descendants would rule forever.

The book of Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph which shows that Jesus has a legal right to be the King since Joseph was a legal descendent of King David and his son Solomon who was the next king of Israel. The descendants of Solomon continued to rule as the kings of the tribe of Judah after the other tribes of Israel rebelled against the son of Solomon. However, God judged Jeconiah (Coniah) and said that none of his sons would ever rule. Jeremiah 22:24 and 29-30 say, ““As I live,” says the Lord, ‘though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off...O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord: “Write this man down as childless, a man *who* shall not prosper in his days; for none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah.””” Because of that judgment, the line of David through Solomon was cut off from being the eternal king.

As a result, the book of Luke gives the genealogy of Mary who was also a descendent of David through his son Nathan. Luke 3:31-32 and Luke 3:38 says in the genealogy of Mary, “*the son of Melea, the son of Menan, the son of Mattathah, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon...the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*” As we look at this genealogy, we see that Jesus is the physical son of God through Adam. Then, as we saw in an earlier paragraph, Jesus was also the Son of God through the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary. That is why Jesus can be the eternal Son of God who can rule as King of kings and Lord of lords for all eternity. Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of man.

Many people have questions about how Jesus can be both the Son of God and the Son of man. That is why we want to help both our physical and our spiritual children learn to explain clearly how Jesus fulfills all of the promises that are made to Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. Jesus is the One who is one hundred percent God and one hundred percent man and He fulfills all of those promises. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain how Jesus is the Son of God that fulfills these promises.