

## Matthew 3

### John the Baptizer Preaches

MATT 3:1-6    MARK 1:1-6    LUKE 3:1-6

MATT 3:1 – In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, {Similar to Luke 3:1-2 & John 1:28}

**[In those days]** – About 30 years after Jesus was born (Luke 3:23).

**[John the Baptist]** – Son of a priest named Zechariah (Luke 1:5), he was also Jesus' older cousin by half a year (Luke 1:36). For info on his birth, see all of Luke 1.

**[the wilderness of Judaea]** – “in Bethabara beyond Jordan” (John 1:28).

MATT 3:2 – And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. {Similar to Luke 3:3}

**[repent]** – G3340 = to change your mind, to hate your past sins. I say, “To turn to God”.

**[kingdom of heaven]** – Literally, kingdom of the sky (which includes the whole universe). This phrase is only used in Matthew. *The Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God are the same.* Compare Matt 4:17 with Mark 1:14-15, or check out Matt 19:23-24. Some people say that the KOH and KOG are different; that the KOG consists of everything and belongs to the Father, while the KOH consists of only the physical universe and belongs to The Son, and because Matthew is the “Gospel of Jehovah's King”. That doesn't make sense to me, and I can't find evidence to support it. Why would Jesus preach two different kingdoms that are coincidentally interchangeable?

**[at hand]** – G1448 = near, approach, close. In other words, it's here.

MATT 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. {Similar to Mark 1:2-3, Luke 3:4-6, & John 1:23}

**[spoken of by the prophet Esaias]** – In Isaiah 40:3

MATT 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. {Similar to Mark 1:6}

**[his raiment was camel's hair]** – Rough clothes were the mark of a prophet (Matt 11:8, Zech 13:4).

Richer people would wear soft clothes. Earthly riches aren't a common mark of a prophet.

**[a leathern girdle]** – Also worn by Elijah (2Ki 1:8). John had the spirit of Elijah (Luke 1:17).

**[locusts]** – Allowed to be eaten in Leviticus 11:22. Not exactly food that rich people would eat.

**[wild honey]** – Honey from the wilderness. John put honey on his locusts. Yummy...

MATT 3:5 – Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, {Similar to Mark 1:5 & Luke 3:3}

**[went out to him]** – John attracted those nearby. Jesus attracted those near and far (Matt 4:24-25).

MATT 3:6 – And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. {Similar to Mark 1:4-5 & Luke 3:3}

**[baptized]** – G0907 = to immerse, submerge; to make whelmed (fully wet). It NEVER means to get partially wet, therefore “sprinkling” is not “baptizing”. Why does it matter? Because being immersed into water symbolizes death and burial with Christ (Rom 6:4 & Col 2:12), sprinkling doesn’t.

**Why Only Immersion Is Correct** – Immersion is the only way that people were ever baptized in the New Testament. In Acts 8:27-39, a rich eunuch traveled on a chariot and learned the gospel from Phillip, and though it’s not written, it’s understood that Phillip explained that to be saved, the eunuch must be baptized. The rich eunuch must have been carrying food and water on his chariot for the journey since he was traveling all the way from Ethiopia to Jerusalem. So when he learned of the requirement to be baptized, why didn’t he say to Phillip, “Hey, I’ve got some jugs of water in the chariot that you could sprinkle me with”? BECAUSE THAT’S NOT BAPTISM! He saw a body of water (Acts 8:36), they went DOWN INTO the water (Acts 8:38), Phillip “immersed - G0907” the eunuch, then they CAME UP OUT OF the water (Acts 8:39). The language and situation all imply submersion and never even hint of sprinkling or that sprinkling is acceptable even once.

**Self Baptism is Wrong** – We can’t baptize ourselves. If we could, I guess Jesus would have.

**Forced Baptism Is Wrong** – As you see, the people John baptized came to him of their own choice and confessed their sins. A person can’t receive the “baptism of repentance” (Acts 19:4) if they don’t sincerely repent. To be baptized, you must “believe with all your heart” (Acts 8:37).

**Baptizing Infants Is Wrong** – Is like forced baptism and is unscriptural. Circumcision was done when a boy was 8 days old (Lev 12:3), but the new covenant is different in that a Christian must preach/teach the gospel before he baptizes, which means a person must learn the gospel and understand it before they’re baptized (Matt 28:19-20 & Mark 16:15). An infant, who has nothing to repent of and practically no understanding of anything can’t receive the gospel and therefore shouldn’t be baptized. An infant can’t “confess the Lord Jesus” (Rom 10:9), much less say anything. Plus, Jesus said we ought to “be converted and become like little children” to enter the Kingdom (Matt 18:3). If we are supposed to repent and become like little children, what are little children supposed to repent of and become like? Not even Jesus was baptized until he was about 30 (Luke 3:23), so let that be an example to us.

**Why the Thief on the Cross Didn’t Need Baptism** – Baptism is necessary for salvation; it saves us (1Pet 3:21). Baptism is symbolic of dying & being buried with Christ, and also raised back to life with Christ (Col 2:12 & Gal 2:20). We only symbolically die with Christ but the thief on the cross literally died with Christ (Luke 23:32 & Luke 23:42-43). That’s why the thief on the cross didn’t require baptism.

**Compare Baptism & Sacrifice** – There is a correct and an incorrect way of being baptized, just like there were right and wrong ways to sacrifice animals in the OT. Take Cain and Able’s sacrifice for example. Cain scarified food that came out of the cursed ground (Gen 3:17), which God didn’t respect (Gen 4:5) because there can’t be a remission for sins without blood (Heb 9:22). The point is that if God didn’t respect Cain’s sacrifice, which wasn’t how people are taught to sacrifice, is it safe to believe that God will respect another form of baptism that we weren’t taught to perform, no matter if the heart is right?

**[confessing their sins]** – Why confess sins at baptism? Because our “old man” or former self, is crucified with Him, which is how Jesus paid for our sins (Gal 3:13), and then from that point on, we don’t sin anymore (Rom 6:1-6). If you don’t confess your sins at baptism, when do you? If you have repented

from your sins, you don't continue sinning or you have turned back to your old ways (2Pet 2:22). Why ask for forgiveness from *past sins that are already forgiven* which He doesn't remember (Heb 8:12)?

## John Preaches Judgment & the Messiah

MATT 3:7-12   MARK 1:7-8   LUKE 3:7-18   JOHN 1:15-28

MATT 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? {Similar to Luke 3:7}

**[when]** – John had already built up some fame and caught the attention of the religious leaders.

**[come to his baptism]** – Did they come to be baptized or just to watch? John assumed they were trying to escape from “the wrath to come”. John 1:19 implies that they just came to find out who John was.

**[Pharisees & Sadducees]** – Religious leaders. The difference in the two is that the Pharisees were conservative and believed there would be an event called the resurrection where every dead person's spirit would go back into their body and they would come back to life (Isa 26:19), but the Sadducees were liberal and denied that people had spirits or that there would be a resurrection (Acts 23:8). It's been said that the Sadducees only believed in the Pentateuch; Moses' first 5 books of the bible/torah.

**[generation of vipers]** – “you brood/bunch of poisonous snakes”. They are compared to the snake that did Satan's will (Gen 3:14). Their doctrine was evil (Matt 16:12), it spread like poison – like leaven spreads (1Cor 5:6). They came from the devil, which is why they're called snakes (John 8:44).

MATT 3:8 – Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: {Similar to Luke 3:8a}

**[Bring forth fruits]** – A common idiom in the bible meaning, “to take action” or “to do” something.

**[fruits for repentance]** – Actions that a person does in obedience to God, such as loving God and neighbors (Matt 22:37-40). We don't love God or the people around us just by feeling like we love them, but by showing love through action, giving, and showing charity like Jesus did. The Pharisees, on the other hand, did not give, but took; were not selfless, but drew attention to themselves; did no good but prevented it (Matt 23).

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. {Similar to Luke 3:8b}

**[We have Abraham to our father]** – Means, “We don't need TO DO anything to become righteous; we're fine just because we're descendants of Abraham”. This way of thinking permitted any kind of behavior, and all they had to do was nothing – Just like stones! On the other hand, they believed gentiles (non-Jews) were damned because they WEREN'T Abraham's descendants. The truth is, sons of Abraham are men who do what Abraham did (John 8:39), which is to be righteous through faith (Rom 4:13 & Gal 3:7). Jesus told the story of Lazarus and the rich man to show that a person isn't safe from Hell just because he descended from Abraham (Luke 16:19-31).

**[God is able of these stones to raise up children]** –The idea is, “if you don't start doing something for God by repenting then He'll replace you with someone else.” The Jews were replaced by the gentiles (Rom 11:16-24). Also, rocks were a somewhat common theme in the gospels (Matt 4:3 & Luke 19:40).

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. {Similar to Luke 3:9}

**[the axe is laid unto the root of the trees]** – Judgment/Condemnation is coming to you (trees/branches) for not being obedient (fruitful) for God. The Jews (natural branches) were cut down and replaced with the gentiles (wild branches) (Rom 11:16-24).

**[good fruit]** – The Pharisees produced bad fruit, called fruits of the flesh (Gal 5:17-21). The good fruit they were supposed to produce is called the fruit of the spirit (Gal 5:22-26). One good fruit is love, while one bad fruit of the flesh is hate. To be fruitful in either direction doesn't just mean to love a lot or hate a lot, but to spread it among other people. The Pharisees spread their poisonous bad fruit (Matt 23:15), Christians spread their good fruit, the good news (Mark 16:15).

**[hewn down, and cast into the fire]** – Punished in Hell (John 15:6, Matt 7:19, Matt 13:50, Mark 9:45). This is the unquenchable fire of Matt 3:12.

See Luke 3:10-15 – The people ask “What should we do?”

MATT 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: {Similar to Mark 1:7-8, Luke 3:16, & John 1:26-27}

**[he that cometh after me]** – The messiah, Jesus, who came in Matt 3:13.

**[mightier than I]** – How was He mightier than John? He could baptize with the Holy Ghost and of fire.

**[baptize with the Holy Ghost]** – This is a reward, like Him storing the wheat in His barn in Matt 3:12. Jesus never baptized anyone (John 4:2). The Holy Ghost wasn't given before Jesus was resurrected (John 7:39). He sent the Holy Ghost on Pentecost (Acts 1:5). Receiving the Holy Ghost is the same as being baptized or filled with the Holy Ghost. Men have received the Holy Ghost before they're baptized with water (Acts 10:47).

**[baptize ... with fire]** – *What is the Baptism of Fire?* – No one listening to John would have assumed that being immersed in fire was good. Being baptized with fire is equal to Hell where a person is burned up with unquenchable fire as the next verse says. John was addressing a mixed crowd of good and evil people. John was really saying, “He will baptize some of you (the wheat) with the Holy Ghost and some of you (the chaff) with fire”. Baptism of the Holy Ghost was for those who repented. Baptism of fire was for the Pharisees who blasphemed the Holy Ghost (Mark 3:29). Three times in Matthew 3:10-12, John repeats the idea of reward for the good and punishment for the bad: “the good fruit, the wheat, is baptized with the Holy Spirit (reward)” but “the bad fruit, the husk, is baptized with unquenchable fire (punishment). Jesus, talking to His apostles, says, “You'll be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days from now” (Acts 1:5). Why no mention of fire? It's because the baptism of fire is punishment in Hell.

MATT 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. {Similar to Luke 3:17}

**[fan]** – G4425 = winnowing fan/shovel, used to toss wheat in the air to separate the husk from wheat.

**[purge his floor]** – Floor = G0257, “threshing floor”. This means to judge the world (Acts 17:31).

**[his wheat]** – Same as the wheat from Matt 13:24-30; Children of the kingdom (Matt 13:38).

**[the chaff]** – Same as the tares from Matt 13:24-30; Children of the wicked one (Matt 13:38).

**[unquenchable fire]** – Punishment in Hell (Mark 9:43).

## Jesus Baptized

**MATT 3:13-17** **MARK 1:9-11** **LUKE 3:21-23** **JOHN 1:29-34**

MATT 3:13 – Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. {Similar to Mark 1:9}

**[from Galilee to Jordan]** – “Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan” (Mark 1:9), “in Bethabara beyond Jordan” (John 1:28). Jesus walked 125km/80mi for 4 days south from Nazareth to Bethabara.

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

**[I have need to be baptized of thee]** – Why? So that he could receive the Holy Ghost of Matt 3:11 and produce the fruits of the spirit (Gal 5:22-26).

MATT 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.

**[thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness]** – In other words, “This is the way we should carry out God’s plan of righteousness.” This was a symbol of Jesus’ death (burial) and resurrection. By choosing to be baptized, Jesus made a statement, saying, “I accept the difficult path that will lead to my death and resurrection”. If it was important enough for Jesus to be baptized, shouldn’t it be as important for His followers?

MATT 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: {Similar to Mark 1:10, Luke 3:21-22 & John 1:32}

**[out of the water]** – Does this imply sprinkling or immersion?

**[heavens were opened]** – The clouds parted where the Holy Spirit came down from.

**[like a dove]** – In a bodily shape like a dove (Luke 3:22). All 4 gospels record this event with the same description. Everyone saw the Holy Spirit coming down onto Jesus, and everyone heard the voice. The dove is a symbol of peace (Matt 10:16).

**[lighting upon Him]** – G2064, “to come”. It landed and set on Him, not going inside of Him. "It abode upon him" (John 1:32). Abode = G3306, "Stay, remain"; Upon = G1909, "on, upon".

MATT 3:17 – And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. {Similar to Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22}

**[a voice from heaven]** – The voice of Father God came from the sky where the clouds parted for everyone to hear. Everyone saw the clouds parting; compare to Paul's experience in Acts 22:9.

**[This is my beloved Son]** – This was a fact since His birth. It was said here because he had now left or "hated" his earthly mother and adoptive father (Luke 14:26). Baptism is the act of "rebirth", which means death to the old life, and being born again with God as the Father (John 3:3-5). If we have died to ourselves, our old family is gone, and only God is our true father; which is why Jesus said, "call no man on earth father except God" (Matt 23:9). This marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry. This fact is what Satan would immediately challenge 40 days from here (Matt 4:1-11).

**The Trinity: Separate Beings** – Trinity isn't a term found in the bible, but means Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19 & 1Jn 5:6). There's a common confusion of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost all being the same person, but they are three separate people with three separate bodies and spirits. If they were all the same, then it would mean that Jesus came out of the water while His own spirit descended onto Himself with the body of a dove while at the same time acting as a ventriloquist, he called from the sky and said "this is my beloved son, who is actually me, and I'm pleased in myself". Jesus had his own body and spirit, because without a spirit, His body would be dead (James 2:26). The Holy Spirit (which is a spirit), descended IN THE BODILY SHAPE of a dove (Luke 3:22). Jesus now sits on the right hand of the Father (1Pet 3:22). Yes, it does refer to Jesus' position of authority as God's "right hand man", but literally, God the Father sits on a throne in body (Rev 5:7) and Jesus' human body was brought back to life (Rev 1:18) and Jesus literally, in human body, can/does/will sit at God's bodily right hand.

**[in whom I am well pleased]** – Similar to Isa 42:1. Why was God pleased? Because Jesus being baptized was a way of saying, "Father, I am willing to die and go to the grave (going under the water) so that humanity might be saved through resurrection (being pulled up out of the water).