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Bible Text: Matthew 3
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Let me encourage you to turn to Matthew 3. Matthew 3 as far as the context is concerned, it has the baptism of John the Baptist in the beginning, we're gonna make our way to the end of the chapter where actually we have the baptism of Jesus Christ himself. When we get to chapter 4, we're gonna have one of the two accounts that we have in the Gospels regarding the temptation of Jesus Christ. There's one here in Matthew 4, there's also one in Luke 4. Some of you Bible scholars may be saying, "But it's in the Gospel of Mark too." It is but Mark just says he went, he came, he left. It's real quick. Matthew and Luke actually give the specifics of the temptations that Jesus resisted in the wilderness.

So tonight Matthew 3, I'm gonna go ahead and read all 17 verses and that's strategic because as we talk about this concept of baptism tonight, I want to continue kind of our thought last week that John the Baptist made it clear that what he was doing would be different than what Jesus Christ was going to do, and then we also have this issue at the end if Jesus is without sin, then why did he get baptized? These are great questions that you may or may not have thought of asking but I'm gonna ask them for you tonight.

So Matthew 3, beginning in verse 1. It says,

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 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. 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. 5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. 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? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 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. 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. 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: 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. 13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 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. 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: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

So tonight as we walk through this passage in its totality, I have done what I hope will be of great assistance and help to you, I have provided for you a chart, and for those of you that are listening on the radio, I apologize that we cannot communicate this chart by way of radio waves, but if you want to contact us at the church, we will get this to you, if so need be, and I have called or I have labeled this the fact that there are "seven baptisms" in the Bible. Now some of you are very intelligent and you notice that there are actually eight rows on this chart, but one of the rows on the lefthand side is not, shall we say, italicized the same way. It says under Acts 2:38 essentially the same as Luke 3:1-8. So we'll look at that in just a moment.

Here's what I want to do tonight, I want to walk through where the Bible speaks of the idea of the concept of baptism, and I want you to see several major points. 1. The word "baptism" does not by definition necessarily mean water. The word "baptism" means "to be immersed." Some of you are immersed or baptized unto football, okay? It happens, alright? That's what the word means. If you tell somebody, "That person is baptized into their job," all you're saying is they're completely immersed in their job. That's what the word means. The word does not mean necessarily water and the word "water" does not necessarily mean baptism.

The second thing I want you to notice is this, that as we walk through these passages, you're gonna see that the word "baptism" or the act of being baptized was instrumented at different times – listen – for different reasons.

And the third thing I want you to hear very clearly and we're gonna end with this, is this concept, that the idea of baptism, the idea that you and I today to profess our faith in Jesus Christ, we allow ourselves publicly to be placed under the water and brought back out of the water as a picture of what Jesus Christ has done for us, would you believe that in the past 2,000 years of what you and I know as Christianity more people have been martyred for their faith based on their view of baptism than anything else? This is a point of contention. This is a point of which denominations divide, families divide, and all kinds of discussion takes place.

So tonight is an opportunity for us to really look at the entire scope of the New Testament and see what does the Bible really say about the subject matter and how does it address it. What I have done on this chart on the lefthand side walking down is I have given you the passages in chronological order, meaning when they refer to the event, I'm gonna walk through this somewhat slowly and hopefully steadily. If you have questions or clarification, please bring them up. I know that you're all able to read and possibly probably comprehend what is on here, but it just does me good to know that I've walked you through it, alright?

So if you want to turn to the passages, feel free. I'm gonna allude to them for the sake of time. The first one is in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2. It says there that the Israelites as they were coming out of Egypt were baptized unto Moses, and so that's the title of this baptism. It's a baptism unto Moses.

Who are the people that are being baptized? Well, they were Old Testament Jews. That's who these individuals were as they had come into Egypt 400 years earlier. Remember the original reason was they were coming to not only avoid but to get sustenance through a drought that was taking place. Remember Joseph, their brother, provided for them. There was a Pharaoh who rose up who knew not Joseph, slavery ensued for 400 years. The Lord miraculously delivers them. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10 when they came through the Red Sea, that they were baptized unto Moses.

What happened? No one got wet as far as the Israelites are concerned. The only people that got wet were the Egyptians. This is important to the story when we speak of baptism.

When did this happen? During the exodus experience.

How did it happen? No water. Here's what I mean by that, when it says they were baptized unto Moses, Moses did not take the Israelites and place them under the water and bring them up straightway like we read in Matthew 3 or like we see almost every given Sunday on our campus, okay? So that took place. No water.

And why, why did this happen? This baptism was a deliverance of the Israelites from their enemy. Now I think we'd all agree this is an incredible picture of our relationship with the Lord but why did this happen back in the book of Exodus? Why is it alluded to in 1 Corinthians 10? Because God delivered his people from the hands of their enemies through the Red Sea unto Moses and it's called a baptism according to the word of God.

The second passage is the passage in Luke 3 which, by the way, is the parallel to what we just read in Matthew 3, it is the baptism of John the Baptist. We just read through Matthew's account. Who are baptized according to John the Baptist? These were, again, Jewish individuals under the old covenant law. In fact, it was the Pharisees and the Sadducees that came to observe to wonder, I'll be honest, they're basically asking, "Why are our parishioners doing this? Why are our members going through this? Why are they at the River Jordan?" And so everybody who is coming through the Jordan River at the hands of John the Baptist is under the old covenant, under the Jewish law.

What is happening? According to what we just read and what Luke says, they were to bring fruit unto repentance. They were confessing their sins and being baptized in the River Jordan.

When did this happen? In anticipation of the ministry of the Messiah.

Now in the John passage, the Gospel parallel here, what John the Baptist says is as he's baptizing, he tells them to look for the Messiah, the Lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world. The baptism of John the Baptist was not the culmination of their faith journey, it was actually a preparation of their faith journey toward the Messiah, which leads into the when or to the how. Obviously there was water, right? He put them in the Jordan River, brought them right back out of the Jordan River. Why did he do this? Preparation for following Jesus under the old covenant. Here's what he communicates not only in Matthew but in Luke but also somewhat alluded to in John, is he says, "Okay, Judaism is not working for you. You've discovered that you're never gonna be good enough. It doesn't matter how much you sacrifice. Why don't you come be baptized, cleansed head to toe for the remission of sins, and then when you come out of the water, wherever Jesus goes, follow him." That was John the Baptist's baptism. I want you to hold onto that description because we're gonna hear it again in just a moment.

The third baptism is the baptism of Jesus himself. We just read this at the end of Matthew 3. Oftentimes it can be one of the most disturbing accounts of baptism because I know why I was baptized, to display my faith in Jesus Christ because he saved me from my sin. Why does my Savior need to be baptized if he is sinless? This is a question I get asked quite a bit. Well, the baptism unto Jesus, who was baptized? Jesus. What happens? The Father spoke and the Holy Spirit confirmed, correct? You have basically have one of the great passages of the Trinity here in Matthew 3. When did this happen? This is what I think's important. The baptism of Jesus Christ was the initiation of his public ministry. This is a testimony not only of the Father but of the Holy Spirit and there is an audience there. This is critical. Jesus Christ was not repenting of his sin. He didn't have any sin, correct? In fact, John the Baptist says, "Why ware we doing this? I think we need to reverse the model here." What did Jesus say? "Suffer it to be done as it should be." Which leads to how obviously water and why? This is what I think is critical to this, why did Jesus Christ need to be baptized? Alright, the number one reason is to establish himself out of the priestly order of Melchizedek.

Now I gave you a parallel passage here in Hebrews 7. It says four times in that chapter that Jesus Christ will come after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek first shows up in Genesis 14. He is both the king and he is the prince of Salem. Why is that important? Because he's the only person other than Jesus Christ himself who is both a king and a priest simultaneously at the same time. Abraham worships him, gives his tithes and offerings to him, and he is not rebuked by Melchizedek. When you get into Hebrews 7, Jesus was after the order of Melchizedek where it says "without father, without mother, without beginning, without end." And so when Jesus Christ goes to the River Jordan and is baptized by John the Baptist, it was not to identify him as a new covenant versus old

covenant, it wasn't to establish his faith now versus his faith then, what he was doing was establishing himself as the priest after the order of Melchizedek and what did priests do to prepare to intercede for others? They washed themselves. Jesus' baptism was his public initiation or proclamation into ministry and declaring that, "I am the only one who is king, priest and prophet and can intercede on behalf of everybody." And the Father confirmed it and so did the Holy Spirit. Alright, so his baptism really unique.

The fourth one, Acts 2:38. The reason I put under there essentially the same as Luke 3 is critical. You don't see any other baptisms mentioned until the book of Acts. In other words, Jesus' ministry is 3 ½ years in length, nobody during his ministry is baptized for any reason that we hear of. The Bible does speak of disciples of John the Baptist but we know shortly thereafter his head is removed in Herod's palace, or shall I say, his dungeon. By the time we get to Acts 2, Pentecost takes place, the Holy Spirit descends, the church as you and I know it is publicly established.

Here's what's interesting about Acts 2:38. We oftentimes call it the baptism of Peter because he was the one who was proclaiming that day what should take place. I put a slash there, John the Baptist, because it is essentially the exact same thing happening. Who's involved? Jews leaving Judaism for Christianity. When John the Baptist was baptizing he said, "Bring fruits unto repentance and follow Jesus." What does Peter tell them to do? He says, "You need to repent and follow Jesus." Alright?

When does this take place or what happens? They respond to the answer of, "What must we do?" Now this is where I'm gonna divert for just a minute. Go to the book of Acts 2. I know we're on a time frame tonight but I think getting this down is important and next week we're probably gonna answer 30+ questions. In Acts 2, this is what I call the, I know it's a bad word but I'm gonna use it anyway, this is my Jeopardy theology, alright? Y'all know the show Jeopardy? It's a series of answers that questions must be asked that correlate to. If you have the wrong question, you can get the wrong answer, you can have the wrong answer and a wrong question. In Acts 2:38, we have this very famous verse, it says, "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." I want you to go back into verse 37. "Now when they heard this," what is this? Peter basically preached the entire ministry of Jesus Christ prophesied by the prophets, fulfilled in his ministry, buried and rose again. "They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" That's an important question, what shall we do? Contrary to what we're about to read in just a moment, they did not ask, "What shall we do to be saved?" They said, "What shall we do?" His sermon was, "You allowed the right guy to be crucified. You missed the Messiah who walked among you. What do we do?" What does he say? His statement to them is almost verbatim what John the Baptist told people in Matthew 3. "You realize you can't do this on your own, you're never gonna fulfill the law. You need to repent of your sins and you need to follow Jesus."

Alright, next. When did this take place? At Pentecost, according to chapter 2, verse 5, with Jews from every nation. That's important. There are no Gentiles that are mentioned in Acts 2, just like at the River Jordan with John the Baptist.

How did it happen? Obviously there was water.

Why? It was showing their departure from Judaism. These individuals would no longer worship in the temple, they would now worship in what we call the church today. Alright, so it is a departure.

The fourth one on your, or actually technically it is the fourth because Acts 2:38 is almost identical to Luke 3, is Romans 6 and 1 Peter 3. We call this baptism unto death, that we were buried in Christ in baptism as we are buried in his death, raised by the Spirit of God unto life. 1 Peter 3 talks about that baptism does not save us, but demonstrates on the outside the death that Christ Jesus gave for us. So what's important about that is, this passage is New Testament Christians picturing what their salvation looks like.

What happens? It is showing a distinction between the new man and the old man. What I used to be versus what I am now.

When does this happen? I put this phrase and don't panic, I put during the "church age" because this passage is dealing with primarily Gentile people after Pentecost has long been a part of the past and long before Jesus returns one day in the future.

How does it happen? There's no water. Romans 6 doesn't talk about any water. 1 Peter doesn't talk about any water. It just says that we're baptized unto him. Now a lot of times we go, "Oh yeah, what that really means when we're baptized." Baptism does not mean water and water does not mean baptism. I think one of the things that we are so often to do in Bible study is make words mean or say things that we think they mean or say, and don't let them mean what they mean. When it says that we are baptized unto his death, it's not saying in Romans 6 that we're put under the water to his death, it's saying that we are immersed in his death, we die with him so that we can be raised with him. 1 Peter 3 says it's a picture as well. Why is this important? It shows others a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ through one's testimony.

Alright, now Matthew 3 which we just read and John 20, we call it the baptism of the Spirit. Notice what it said back in Matthew 3, that Jesus even though John baptized unto water, Jesus would baptize us unto, what? The Spirit and with fire. We'll talk about that in just a moment. Call it the baptism of the Spirit. Now this is where myself and my very excited Pentecostal brethren can sometimes have disagreements on because I've had people say, "Have you been baptized in the Spirit?" I said, "Yup, the moment I got saved." Alright? And allow me to show you that. What is the Spirit of God? The Holy Spirit of God. Who experiences this baptism? It is the seal and the guarantee of one's relationship with the Lord. What happens? There are no express manifestations or "gifts of the Spirit" that take place immediately upon one's prayer of salvation to say, "Lord Jesus, save me." What is happening in Matthew 3 when John the Baptist says, "Jesus will

baptize you with the Spirit," he is essentially saying this, that once you understand you're a sinner and you ask Jesus Christ to save you, whether you touch a pool of water or not, the Holy Spirit is gonna infuse himself inside of you, you're gonna become the temple of the Holy Spirit, it seals you, it guarantees you an eternal relationship with him. It does not necessitate certain gifts and/or manifestations, it is a baptism, an immersion in the Spirit of God and John the Baptist said this is what Jesus would do not with us so much as to us or allow it to happen.

When does this happen? The moment one believes in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

How does it happen? There is no water necessary for the Holy Spirit to reside in you. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, not whoever goes under water. So the baptism of the Spirit does not require water.

Why does it happen? To allow one to become the temple of the Holy Spirit since the veil has been torn. You realize that you're now the Holy of Holies? You're the Holy of Holies. That's why Romans 12 says that we, he says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present yourself to God a holy sacrifice, a living sacrifice." What did they do in the Holy of Holies? They brought sacrifices because that was the presence of God. You are the presence of God. You house the presence of God and according to what John the Baptist said about Jesus, he's gonna baptize us in the Spirit which means when we get saved, the Holy Spirit dwells within us, does not require water for it to take place, it seals us, it guarantees us.

The next to the last line. If you're a note-taker or someone who likes to highlight, this is your line because this is where you fall in, alright? Now I want to go back and then come back to this line. 1 Corinthians 10 had nothing to do with you. You were not a Jew that came out of Egypt, okay? Luke 3 had nothing to do with you. You weren't at the Jordan River 2,000 years ago. Matthew 3 had nothing to do with you because that's about Jesus and Jesus alone. Acts 2 has nothing to do with you because you weren't a Jew coming out of Judaism at the Pentecost experience. Romans 6 has everything to do with you because it describes what happens to you when you identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Matthew 3 has everything to do with you because as a believer in Jesus Christ, you are baptized by the Spirit of God, you become the temple of the Holy Spirit. And Acts 8, Acts 16 and Ephesians 4, the next to the last line, this is your life. These are the passages that describe biblically what I hope most of you have experienced personally. When you come to a place in your life where you realize that you're the problem and there is nothing that you can do to solve your sin problem, that Jesus Christ has not only lived a sinless life on your behalf but he has died a sacrificial death on your behalf, and you ask him to save you, alright? There is what the Apostle Paul calls the ordinance of baptism where we allow ourselves to be placed under the water and brought back out of the water as a testimony to others on the outside what has happened on the inside.

Now these three passages. Acts 8. This is the very first personal evangelism encounter in your New Testament. The man by the name of Philip finds himself at a chariot where an Ethiopian eunuch just so providentially happens to be opening and reading from the book of Isaiah. He's reading from chapter 53 that says the Messiah will suffer and allow himself in his stripes to heal us. He says, "I don't understand this unless somebody explains it to me." So Philip begins to explain it to him and he says, "Do you believe this?" Verse 37 of Acts 8 is critical to the equation. He confirms that he believes on Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. Verse 38, "What doth hinder me from being baptized?" Philip puts him in the water and brings him up out of the water, not to save him because he's already confessed his belief in Jesus Christ, but to testify of who he is now in Christ.

Acts 16 is the jailer, remember that we have Paul in that inner cell of the jailhouse and he's down there and he's experiencing all the horrific nature thereof and in Acts 16, there's an event that takes place and the guards are coming in and everybody's kinda running this way and that, and the guard falls at his feet because Paul has not left which would have ensued his death. Do you know what he asked him in verse 30 of Acts 16? "What must I do to be saved?" In verse 31 of Acts 16, the Apostle Paul says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It says that they got out of there, cleaned him up and Paul baptized him. His baptism wasn't his salvation, his baptism was a testimony to those around that he had been saved.

Is this sounding familiar to your life here? The story of the Ethiopian eunuch is hopefully your story. The story of the jailer is hopefully your story. That's why in Ephesians 4:1 it says there is one faith, there is one baptism. What that's saying is there's only one reason for us to be baptized and that's to show the world that we're now a believer in Jesus Christ. We call it, I call it the baptism of "the church," those who profess faith in Christ. It's an act of obedience, not of belief.

When does it happen? After one believes. I cannot tell you, I've lost count of how many people have come to me and said, "I've got my baptism on the wrong side of my salvation." In other words, there was a time in their life where they were put under water, sometimes it's when they were a baby, sometimes it's when they were a small child, or for whatever reason they come to a point in their life where now as whatever age or stage of life they're in, "Now I understand what it means to be saved. I've called on Jesus to save me." Well, baptism is supposed to be a testimony afterwards, not a prelude beforehand, and so it takes place after as a testimony.

How does it happen? Obviously we utilize water.

Why do we do this? It shows outwardly a demonstration of faith inwardly.

Now there's one last baptism that was mentioned back in Matthew 3. John the Baptist told us that Jesus would baptize us with the Spirit and with fire. Now I have some folks that I know in life that I think they love the Lord just as much as I love the Lord, and they advocate even in today's context what they call a fire baptism. Can I lovingly say I don't

want any part of that. In verse 12 of Matthew 3, what's it talking about? It's talking about hell is what it's talking about. What John the Baptist basically is saying is this, that Jesus can either baptize you or immerse you with his Spirit, or he can baptize you with fire. One you're saved, one you're not.

So what is this baptism? I call it the baptism unto fire.

Who gets this baptism? Those who do not believe.

What happens? Judgment takes place.

When does it happen? Upon their death.

How does it happen? Um, there's no water involved, right?

And then last but not least, why? As a consequence to one's unbelief.