

The Baptism of Jesus  
Matthew 3:11-17; Mark 1:7-11; Luke 3:15-23

### Introduction

Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 3. This morning we are going to be examining the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. That immediately brings up several questions. What is baptism? Why was John performing this ritual? What did it mean? Why was Jesus being baptized? Christianity has been divided over the issue of Baptism for many centuries, and you need to know what the Bible states as opposed to the theologies developed by the various denominations.

### John's Call to Repentance

Last week we examined the ministry of John the Baptist, or "Baptizer" to be more accurate, who came as the forerunner of the Messiah. John came *"in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the father back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord"* (Luke 1:17 cf. Malachi 4:6). John was the herald of the coming king specifically sent by God to prepare the way for the Christ who was soon to come in fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3-5.

The means by which John would accomplish this God given task was to preach, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* This call to repent was a very strong message that was in keeping with the message of the Hebrew prophets of old. He implored the people to turn back to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He was calling for them to turn back to trusting and obeying God which would of necessity also require a turning away from their sinful disobedience to Him. It was a call for conversion. It is the same message that we are to proclaim today since the message of Jesus and the apostles also called people to religious and moral conversion.

It has become common in our day for evangelists and preachers to try to soften the tone of this message in order to make it more acceptable to American society. They define repentance as simply changing your mind about Jesus. This is the foundation for their gospel messages which try to get you to change your mind about Jesus the same way as you might change your mind about what brand of soap you like best. They market Jesus like a product that will make your life better. Frankly, that is a distortion of the gospel at best, and often is another gospel which Paul warns about in Galatians 1. It is a gospel that cannot save a person from their sin.

Repentance is not just a change of mind about Jesus as if you can have an intellectual assent to the claims of Christ and be saved without it also changing your life. Repentance is a change of mind about Jesus, yourself and your sin and that will of necessity radically transform your life. The faith that saves includes a change of mind to believe that Jesus is God in human flesh, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, willingly died on the cross as the substitute payment for your sin, and was raised from the dead on the third day. However, that cannot be believed without a corresponding change of mind about yourself and your sin so that you are humble enough to believe that His death was sufficient to redeem you from your sin and then seek His forgiveness because of it. Recognizing your own sinfulness and that Jesus is God and savior will of necessity result in a different approach to life. If there is not a change in the manner of life, then there are legitimate questions as to the profession of belief. A different Jesus cannot get you to heaven, and God's grace is extended to the humble, not the proud and self-righteous. (See: *The Ministry of John the Baptist*).

Those that responded to John's message were then baptized as they confessed their sins (Matthew 3:6). John's baptism is specifically called a "baptism of repentance" in Acts 19:4. But why baptism? What was it? What was it supposed to do? Why was it done?

### **John's Baptism of Repentance**

Some have tried to connect John's baptism with a group called the Mandeans. However, this sect arose centuries after John had died, so John did not get it from them. Others have tied it to the Qumran sect, which has some possibility, but if so, then John changed the character and meaning to suit his own purpose. John's message was much more urgent and was tied to the coming of Messiah. John also proclaimed his message to the whole nation whereas the Qumran sect was exclusive.

John's baptism has some similarities with Jewish proselyte baptism, but there are also some major differences. In proselyte baptism a Gentile that sought to follow the God and laws of Israel would be baptized as a sign of his change from Gentile to Jewish orientation. John's baptism was also a sign of a change in returning to believe and follow God, but it was practiced on Jews as well as Gentiles. Also, proselyte baptism was political and ritual whereas John's baptism was ethical and eschatological as a response to a change of character and looking for the coming of Messiah.

Regardless of what John may have picked up from other groups and practices, his baptism would be tied back to Levitical law in which things made unclean were to be washed, and that included humans. Leviticus 15:13 even speaks of the person bathing in "running" water. All Jewish rites of baptism trace back to the Levitical precedent of washing. The scribes and Pharisees had reduced the Levitical commands to ceremonial cleansing for which they would later criticize Jesus and the disciples for not keeping them (Matthew 15:2). John's baptism was not such a ceremonial cleansing for it still retained the meaning of the symbolism expressed in the washing.

John was preaching repentance. He was calling for people to have a radical change of heart and mind and turn away from sin and to God. The baptism symbolized the cleansing away of the sin. Note that the people were confessing their sins when they were being baptized (Matthew 3:6). The baptism itself did not take away sins, but it symbolized the righteousness and cleansing given to the individual as they confessed their sins and placed their trust in God alone. 1 John 1:9 explains that cleansing from sin comes God's character as we confess our sins and not from keeping of a ritual.

Though our subject here is John's baptism, at this point I need to make sure you understand the difference between it and Christian baptism. John's baptism was in preparation for the coming of Messiah. Christian baptism looks back on the finished work of Christ and identifies us with his death, burial and resurrection. In Acts 19 Paul meets some disciples of John and makes it plain that there is a great distinction. Acts 19:2-6, *and he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." and Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.* Note first that they were baptized again, but this time in the name of the Lord Jesus. Note also how they were prepared by John's message and baptism to follow the Lord.

One other thing we can note about John's baptism is that it included a lot of water. Note first from out text here in Matthew that John was baptizing the people *"in the Jordan River."* In John 2:23 we find John *"baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there."* John's baptism was one of immersion which is exactly what the word "baptism" refers to. It means to "immerse" or to "dip" as in cleaning something (clothes, dishes, the body), or when clothes are dyed (and the item becomes identified with the dye), or dipping the finger or food into something (i.e., Jesus dipped the sop into the cup - John 13:26).

As a side note here, let me add that the Christian church practiced only baptism by immersion until the Middle Ages. Even the Catholic Theologian Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) said, *“In immersion the setting forth of the burial of Christ is more plainly expressed, in which this manner of baptizing is more commendable.”* The Roman Catholic church did not recognize other forms of baptism until 1311. The Lutheran and Reformed churches inherited the form of sprinkling from the Roman Catholic Church. The Church of England (Anglican/Episcopal) did not begin sprinkling until 1645. The case for sprinkling is weak for it goes against the meaning of the word, the obvious examples of Scripture and church history.

With this understanding of John's Baptism of repentance, let us now turn back to our text and see the interaction of John and Jesus.

### **The Better Baptism** - Matthew 3:11-12, Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:15-18

While John is baptizing people, some of them began to wonder if John might be the promised Messiah (Luke 3:15). John quickly points out that he and his ministry, including the baptism, was only in preparation for the coming of Messiah.

Matthew 3:11-12, <sup>11</sup>*“As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”* <sup>12</sup>*“His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”*

John was a humble man who knew who and what was important. He was simply getting the people ready for arrival of the Messiah, and that was a serious matter. John's baptism was with water and was simply a sign of repentance. The Messiah would bring a baptism by the Holy Spirit and fire. Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were baptized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). That was fulfilled in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit descended on those first believers and appeared to them as tongues of fire on the head of each one. Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 12:13 that every true believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit into His body, the church. The vast difference between the two explains why John would not see himself as even worthy to take off the Messiah's shoes. Such humility should be a characteristic of every Christian.

The Messiah was also coming with His winnowing fork which would be used to separate the righteous and the unrighteous. In Matthew 25 Jesus describes this as a separation of the sheep and the goats. The righteous would be gathered into His barn, the sheep would enter into the Father's kingdom and eternal life. The unrighteous would be burned up as chaff, the goats would be cast into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels.

### **The Arrival of Jesus** - Matthew 3:13; Mark 1:9

It is while John is in the lower Jordan valley baptizing people that Jesus arrives. Matthew 3:13, *“Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him.”*

The text does not define the specific time other than saying, *“Then.”* Some time after John had rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees for their false repentance, Jesus comes from the region of Galilee. Mark 1:9 adds that He came specifically from Nazareth. We do not know how long John had been active in his ministry. We suspect it was perhaps 6 months to a year. We do know from Luke 3:1-2 that he began his work in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar (~AD 26). We also know from Luke 3:23 that Jesus was “around 30 years of age” when He began his ministry, and that ministry began after He was baptized by John.

Jesus arrives at the Jordan to see John for a very particular purpose. Matthew 3:13 states it was *“to be baptized by him.”* The grammar here (aorist passive infinitive) emphasizes this is the purpose of Jesus' coming. This causes us to wonder, as it did John, what was Jesus trying to do?

### **John's Reluctance - Matthew 3:14**

John would have known from childhood the identity of Jesus for it was known to his mother (Luke 1). Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the one who would sit on David's throne, the "*Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29). John recognizes that Jesus is without sin, for He will be the one that will remove sin from the world. This being true, John is very reluctant to baptize Jesus with a baptism of repentance. Matthew 3:14, *But John tried to prevent Him, saying "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"*

The grammar of the verb, "prevent" (imperfect, active, indicative) here is one of continual action. John kept trying to prevent Jesus from being baptized by him. John is as strongly opposing baptizing Jesus as he was opposing baptizing the Pharisees and Sadducees, but for opposite reasons. Jesus was sinless and had no need of this baptism. The Pharisees and Sadducees were still in their sins and had not repented. In addition Jesus is the one who is to "*Baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire*" (vs 11). John tells Jesus that Jesus should baptize him, not the other way around. This leaves us with a question as well. Understanding the nature of John's baptism as being one of repentance, one in which the person confessed their sins and were then immersed in the Jordan as a sign of the washing away of their sin, why is one who is without sin coming for this baptism?

Some have used this to attack the sinless nature of Jesus and said that because He sought out a baptism of repentance, then He must have sinned. That goes against the reaction and testimony of John as well as the attestation of the rest of Scripture that Jesus was without sin (2 Corinthians. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5; Hebrews 4:15).

Others have used Jesus' baptism to attack His deity claiming that Jesus was just a man and did not become the Son of God until His baptism. They reason that Jesus had to be baptized so that God could make Him His son. However, Scripture is clear that Jesus was already the Son of God at His birth and not made Son of God at His baptism or any other time (Matthew 1:23; 2:15; Luke 1:32; 2:11; John 1:1,14).

Jesus gives the reason why He wanted to be baptized in verse 15.

### **Jesus Fulfills All Righteousness - Matthew 3:15**

*15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit [it] at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him*

Jesus did not deny John's claim that John should be baptized by Jesus rather than John baptizing Him. Jesus simply tells John to permit it to be done at this time because it would be part of all righteousness being fulfilled.

There has been much spilt ink over how this was fulfilling all righteous. Speculation has ranged from this being some kind of sign to the Gentiles to come into the kingdom through proselyte baptism, to his baptism being vicarious and part of the atonement in taking away man's sin. Neither of those views is supported by Scripture and the later is directly against it. The solution is not difficult if it is kept in mind who Jesus is and what He did do throughout His life.

Jesus was born under the law of Moses (Galatians 4:4) and he kept the law, not the Pharisaical interpretation of it, but God's original intent. Jesus said in Matthew 5:17 that He came to fulfill the law. Jesus voluntarily submitted to divinely approved ordinances whether religious or secular. For example, He was circumcised, presented in the Temple and celebrated the feasts even though His own relationship with God was independent of God's covenant with Israel. Jesus' submission to the rituals of the covenant brought Him into full identification with all of Israel. Jesus even paid taxes to Caesar though He was exempt as the Son of God (Matthew 17:25-27). Jesus came into the world to identify with man so much so that Isaiah 53:12 says he would be "*numbered among the transgressors.*" The self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees would call Jesus a glutton and drunkard, a friend of sinners because of His identification with man (Matthew 11:19).

In the Levitical law, a clean person that touched an unclean person, or in some cases even something that an unclean person had touched, would also then be considered unclean and would have to wash (Leviticus 11, etc.). Jesus was sinless and clean, and because His righteousness was internally generated and not externally granted (as is our righteousness), nothing could actually make Him unclean (such as the woman in Matthew 9:20f that touched His garment). However, in being baptized, Jesus fulfills all righteousness by fulfilling the Levitical code of ceremonial cleanliness. Jesus came to minister to unclean mankind, and in His Baptism He identifies Himself with sinful man even though He Himself was without sin. Jesus' baptism also gives approval to John's message and sets the example for those who would follow Him.

Jesus' baptism was also symbolic of His death and resurrection. He only spoke of personal baptism in two other passages and in both He related baptism to His death. In Luke 12:50, Jesus speaks of His soon coming crucifixion as a "baptism." In Mark 10:38, Jesus asks James and John if they would be able to "*drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized*" which was a reference to his coming death. It would be in His death that all righteousness would be completed as Jesus would bear the full price of the sin of men in Himself so that He could impute His own righteousness to sinful men. Jesus' baptism by John was part of His identification with sinful men pointing to the time when He would bear the sin of men.

Jesus' baptism also signified something else. It was the beginning of His public ministry as He was anointed by the Holy Spirit.

### **Jesus Anointed by the Holy Spirit - Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21-22**

Matthew 3:16, "*And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him.*"

Notice again that there is a lot of water present. It would be a real stretch of the imagination for the phrase "*Jesus went up immediately from the water*" to mean something other than Jesus came up out of the river.

When Jesus comes up out of the Jordan river, the heavens are opened. The veil that keeps us from seeing the dwelling place of God was lifted. Some have tried to make this some sort of physical veil, and there may be some physical aspect to it, but it seems from the description given to it by Elisha in 2 Kings 6:17 when he prayed that his servant's eyes would be open to see the army of the Lord that was there to protect them, that the veil is spiritual. God opens it for some while keeping it closed for others.

Luke 3:21 notes that heaven was opened while Jesus was praying. Jesus then saw the Spirit of God descend upon Him in bodily form as a dove. From John 1:33-34, we know that John the Baptist also saw this vision and it was in fact the confirmation of what God had told him earlier that the one he saw the Spirit of God descending upon and remaining is the one that baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit that anoints Jesus for ministry. Notice that it is not a real dove, but it was the Holy Spirit coming as or like a dove. This is the only place that a dove represents the Holy Spirit. Why a dove? Some possibilities: In Genesis 8, Noah sent out a dove which eventually brought back an olive twig. The Dove brought back hope. In Matthew 10:16 the Lord speaks of the dove being "innocent." But probably the most striking is the fact that the dove was the common sacrificial animal for the poor (Matthew 21:12). It was a symbol of sacrifice. All those ideas would be fitting for the Holy Spirit's anointing of the one who was innocent, who would be the sacrifice for mankind, and who would bring hope by being the first born from the dead (Colossians 1:18).

Why did the Holy Spirit come upon Jesus? Jesus did not lose His deity in becoming a man, but in His humanity, Jesus would need to be anointed for service and granted divine strength for ministry. This fulfilled Isaiah 61:1, "*The Spirit of God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners.*" In His humanity, Jesus would become tired and hungry and sleepy. His humanity

would need strengthening, and that strength was supplied by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:1; Luke 4:14). It was by the Holy Spirit that Jesus worked miracles such as casting out demons (Matthew 12:28) and performing signs & wonders (Acts 10:38).

The coming of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus fulfilled prophecy, strengthened Him in His humanity and was a visible sign to those who saw that this was the messiah. Matthew 3:17 records the commendation of the Father.

### **Jesus Commended by the Father** - Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:23

Matthew 3:17, *“and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”*

I wonder if any of the people there who heard this thought of the children of Israel in the time of Moses when God would talk with him? Out of heaven the voice of God was heard pronouncing his commendation. God says *“this is my son,”* or literally, *“this is the son of me, the beloved.”* God loves the world and He calls those in Jesus Christ “beloved” in Romans 1:7, but Jesus is uniquely *“the beloved.”* Jesus is the second person of the triune God and therefore has a unique relationship with God the Father.

In addition, God has adopted believers into His family as sons, but Jesus is uniquely *“the son,”* the *“only begotten son”* (John 3:16). When the term *“son of God”* is applied to Jesus, it speaks of His deity. Jesus is of the same essence as God Himself. The Jews tried to stone Jesus for making Himself out to be God because in John 10:30 Jesus said, *“I and the Father were one.”* The charge against Jesus that He should be crucified was that *“He made himself out to be the Son of God.”* They understood that by doing so He was claiming to be God. The New Testament writers are clear on the subject. Jesus is God in human flesh. He is the second person of the triune God. The writer of Hebrews declaring in 1:3 that the Son is *“the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”* The writer goes on in the chapter and demonstrates the superiority of the son to angels declaring that all the angels should worship Him (1:6), that His throne was eternal (1:8), that He laid the foundations of the earth and created the heavens (1:10), and that He is unchanging (1:12). Jesus is no less than God Himself in human flesh.

God the Father commends Jesus, God the Son, that He is well pleased with Him. Not just pleased, but with emphasis, *“well-pleased.”* Why? Because Jesus is perfectly fulfilling all righteousness.

Those who place their faith in Jesus alone can also please the Father because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them, that is, when God looks at the believer, He sees the righteousness of Christ and He is pleased.

If you are here today and do not please the Father because sin is still controlling your life, today is the day to get right with God. Talk with myself or one of the Deacons or ladies from our Women’s Servant Council who will be up front. Any of us would be happy to show you how you can be made right before God and pleasing to Him through faith in Jesus Christ.

If you are here today and are pleasing to the Father because Jesus has made you righteous, then rejoice in God’s mercy and grace.

## Sermon Notes - 4/28/2013

The Baptism of Jesus - Matthew 3:11-17; Mark 1:7-11; Luke 3:15-23

### John's Call to Repentance - Matthew 3:1-10, Mark :2-6; Luke 3:3-14

John came as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Messiah in fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3-5 & Malachi 4:6

John \_\_\_\_\_ people for the coming of the Messiah through his message of repentance

Defining repentance to be just a change of mind about Jesus changes the \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel

Repentance is a change of mind about Jesus, yourself and your sin that radically \_\_\_\_\_ your life

If there is not a change in the manner of life, there is legitimate reason to \_\_\_\_\_ what is believed

### John's Baptism of Repentance

John's \_\_\_\_\_ did not arise from either the Mandeans or the Qumran sect

There were similarities to proselyte baptism, but John also baptized \_\_\_\_\_ & it was ethical & eschatological

Like all Jewish baptism rituals, John's baptism was based in the \_\_\_\_\_ codes for washing unclean things

John's baptism was not just ceremonial cleansing, but retained the symbolism expressed in \_\_\_\_\_

John's baptism was an outward symbol of the repentance that had occurred in the \_\_\_\_\_

John's baptism anticipated the coming of Messiah; Christian baptism looks back on His \_\_\_\_\_ work

There was a lot of water involved in John's baptism - John 2:23. Baptism requires \_\_\_\_\_

Even the Roman Catholic Church recognized only baptism baptized by immersion until the \_\_\_\_\_ century

### The Better Baptism - Matthew 3:11-12, Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:15-18

John was \_\_\_\_\_; pointed to the coming of the Messiah, and baptized with water in preparation for that

Messiah would baptize with the \_\_\_\_\_ and fire - fulfilled in Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12:13

Messiah would also \_\_\_\_\_ the righteous who were blessed from the unrighteous who would be punished

### The Arrival of Jesus - Matthew 3:13; Mark 1:9

Jesus arrives from Nazareth at the Jordan sometime \_\_\_\_\_. John had rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees

Jesus came specifically to be \_\_\_\_\_ by John

### John's Reluctance - Matthew 3:14

John would have known the identity and character of Jesus - and so was reluctant to \_\_\_\_\_ Him

Jesus was not baptized as a sign of repentance for He was \_\_\_\_\_ - 2 Cor. 5:21; 2 Pet 2:22; 1 John 3:5

Jesus did not become God's son at His baptism - He is the \_\_\_\_\_ son of God - Mt. 1:23; 2:15; John 1:1,14

### Jesus Fulfills All Righteousness - Matthew 3:15

Jesus told John to \_\_\_\_\_ as part of fulfilling all righteousness

This was neither some \_\_\_\_\_ to the Gentiles nor a part of the atonement in taking away man's sin

Jesus was born under the \_\_\_\_\_ (Gal. 4:4) and came to fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17)

Jesus voluntarily \_\_\_\_\_ to all the law including those not required of Him as God's son (Mt. 17:25-27)

Jesus' baptism fulfilled the Levitical \_\_\_\_\_ cleansing laws (Leviticus 11)

Jesus' baptism gave \_\_\_\_\_ for John's message

Jesus' baptism was \_\_\_\_\_ of His death and resurrection (Luke 12:50; Mark 10:38)

Jesus' baptism was the beginning of His public \_\_\_\_\_

### **Jesus is Anointed by the Holy Spirit** - Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21-22

Jesus came up from the water - it was a baptism by \_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_\_ between man and heaven is lifted (cf. 2 Kings 6:17)

While Jesus is praying the Holy Spirit descends in bodily form as a \_\_\_\_\_ anointing Him for ministry

Why as a dove? Genesis 8 - \_\_\_\_\_; Matthew 10:16 - innocence; Matthew 21:12 - \_\_\_\_\_

In His \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus would need the strengthening of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 61:1; Matt. 4:1; 12:28)

### **Jesus is Commended by the Father** - Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:23

Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ "*the beloved*" as the second person of the triune God

Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ "*the son*," the "*only begotten son*" as deity in human flesh

The Father is well \_\_\_\_\_ with Jesus for He is fulfilling all righteousness

The Father can be \_\_\_\_\_ with people who become righteous through faith in Jesus

### **KIDS CORNER**

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

**Young Children** - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up later. 2) Count how many times the word "baptize / baptism" is said. Talk with your parents about the meaning of baptism and who should be baptized.

### **THINK ABOUT IT!**

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What was the purpose of John the Baptist's ministry? How did his call to repentance fulfill that ministry? What is repentance? What should be expected of those that genuinely repent? What similarities and differences does John's baptism of repentance have to proselyte baptism? What is the relationship of John's baptism to the Levitical law concerning cleansing? How is Christian baptism different from John's baptism? What evidence is there that immersion is the proper mode of baptism? What evidence is there that John was a very humble man? What is the difference between John's baptism and the baptism that would the Messiah would bring? When did the Messiah begin to bring about His baptism? How is that fulfilled today? How will the Messiah separate people in judgment? Why was John reluctant to baptize Jesus? How do some people use Jesus' baptism by John to attack His deity? His sinless nature? How did Jesus' baptism fulfill all righteousness? How was Jesus' baptism symbolic of His death and resurrection? What does it mean that "*the heavens were opened*" (Matt. 3:16)? In what manner did the Holy Spirit descend? Explain. What are some possible reasons a dove would be used to represent the Holy Spirit? Jesus is God in human flesh, so why would He need the Holy Spirit to come upon Him? How is Jesus uniquely "*the beloved*" of God? How is Jesus uniquely "*The son of God*"? Why was the Father well pleased with Jesus? What would make God the Father well pleased with you? Explain.