

## **SUNDAY SERMON**

**Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church  
Willow, Alaska**

**Date: August 02, 2020**

**Scripture Read: Matthew 3:1-12**

**Text: Matthew 3:1-12**

**Subject: The Baptism of John the Baptist**

**Matthew 3:1-2 (KJV) *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.***

***In those days*** – The expression “in those days” refers to the days when Joseph, Mary and Jesus were living in Nazareth of Galilee as we saw in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Matthew.

***In those days came John the Baptist, preaching...*** -- John the Baptist came preaching. John was the son of the priest Zacharias and his wife, one of the daughters of Aaron, whose name was Elizabeth. Elizabeth was barren and both she and Zacharias was well stricken in years. The angel Gabriel came to Zacharias while he was ministering in the priest's office in the temple and announced to him that his prayer was heard and Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. Let's read Gabriel's report to Zacharias:

**Luke 1:13-17 (KJV) *But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and***

*the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; **to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.***

***preaching in the wilderness of Judaea***, -- This place called wilderness was situated along the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, to the east of Jerusalem. The term wilderness does not mean a place of endless forests which was entirely destitute of inhabitants. It is a mountainous, rough, and sparsely settled country, covered, to some considerable extent, with forests and rocks, and such. It is a place better fitted for pasture than for farming. There were inhabitants in this wilderness, and even villages, but they were the comparatively unsettled portions of the country. This part of the country was the home of Nabal and Abigail according to **1SA. 25:1-2**. In the time of Joshua there were six cities in what was then called a wilderness, and was part of the land allotted to the tribe of Judah when the land was divided by Joshua.

**Joshua 15:61-62 (KJV)** *In the wilderness, Beth-arabah, Middin, and Secacah, 62 And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and En-gedi; six cities with their villages.*

***And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*** – John's message was a message of repentance. Bible repentance is not "penance" which is wrongfully taught and practiced by the Roman Catholics. True repentance is the consequence of godly sorrow for sin. The verb "repent" means to affect oneself with contrition or regret for something done or something one failed to do that was good. It is a drastic change of mind.

***Repent ye*** means "Consider your ways, *change your minds*; you have thought amiss; *think again*, and *think aright*." Those who truly repent have *other thoughts* of God and Christ, and sin and holiness, and this world and the other, than they have had before. This change of the *mind* produces a change of the way in which people conduct themselves. Those

who are truly sorry for what they have done amiss will be careful to do so no more. This repentance is a necessary duty, in obedience to the command of God who now commands all men everywhere to repent. (Acts. 17:30).

Why should men repent? Because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The expression "kingdom of heaven" is unique to Matthew and appears thirty-two times in that book. The term "kingdom of God" is also found four times in Matthew. The kingdom of heaven undoubtedly means that kingdom in which Jesus Christ shall reign as king over all the earth and all shall be subject to him. Immediately, it would be seen in the Lord's church as those who are subject to him as their Lord and their king.

**Matthew 3:3 (KJV) *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.***

This verse explains that John the Baptist was the "voice of one crying in the wilderness" as prophesied in Isaiah 40:34-5.

**Isaiah 40:3-5 (KJV) *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.***

**Matthew 3:4 (KJV) *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.***

John the Baptist came in the "spirit and power of Elijah" and he was also dressed like that famous prophet of God.

**2 Kings 1:7-8 (KJV) [King Ahab to the messengers of the king] *And he***

*said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words? **8** And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.*

**Luke 1:17 (KJV)** *[Gabriel to Zacharias, father of John] And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

They who expected the Messiah as a temporal king, would also think that his forerunner must come in great pomp and splendor. Such an one should be clothed in very magnificent and gay clothing. But this proves quite the contrary. The Angel Gabriel said of John the Baptist "he shall be *great in the sight of the Lord,*" but he appeared very mean and lowly in the eyes of the world. In this sense, John the Baptist was much as Christ himself, "*having no form or comeliness.*" Those of Christ's kingdom were to be glorious spiritually, but they were common and lowly persons generally speaking. John the Baptist's dress was plain. This same John had *his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; he did not go in long clothing, as the scribes, or soft clothing, as the courtiers, but in the clothing of a man of the country; for he lived in a country place, so his clothing matched his circumstance. His diet was plain; his meat was locusts and wild honey.*

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (KJV)** *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: **27** But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; **28** And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: **29** That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

So, outwardly, this was John the Baptist.

**Matthew 3:5-6 (KJV) *Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,***

[John Gill's Commentary] The uncommon appearance of John, the oddness of his dress, the austerity of his life, together with the awfulness and importance of his doctrine, and the novelty of the ordinance of baptism he administered, and the Jews having had no prophet for some hundreds of years, and imagining he might be the Messiah, quickly drew large numbers of people to him. and "all Judaea", a great number of people from all parts of that country. "All" is here put for "many". This is another case where all does not mean every person without exception, it means a large number of people came to John the Baptist.

**Matthew 3:6 (KJV) *And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.***

This great host of people were baptized of John the Baptist in Jordan. Mark's account says it was the Jordan River.

**Mark 1:5 (KJV) *And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.***

This is the first instance of the word baptized in the New Testament. Since there has been brought into professing Christendom a variety of things "called" baptism, I cannot presume that you all know for sure what that means, so I will tell you what the term means. The English word baptize comes from the Greek word: βαπτίζω baptizo. This Greek word appears 80 times in the New Testament and 76 of those times is translated as baptize. It is translated as wash two times; once as Baptist; and one time as baptized. The Greek word means to: dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk). These people

who came to John at the Jordan River were dipped or plunged into the water then raises up by him. This is New Testament baptism.

- Sprinkling a person with water is not baptism.
- Pouring water on a person is not baptism.
- Immersing a person for the wrong reason is not baptism.
- A person immersed by someone other than the Lord's church which is now commissioned to baptized believers is not biblical baptism. Seminaries, bible schools, and other religious institutions were not given the command to baptize disciples – but New Testament churches only.

Our text says "were all baptized of him in Jordan, **confessing their sins**. – John preached the baptism of repentance. These people all knew they were sinners and were ready to confess or acknowledge their sins before God and man. Repentance is when one is affected with contrition or regret for the wicked things he or she has done. Godly sorrow for sin works this repentance. This was not true of all who came to John's baptism as we shall see.

**Matthew 3:7 (KJV) *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?***

The Pharisees and Sadducees were very religious people in Israel when John the Baptist came on the scene. As you know, they were the enemies of Jesus as he began his personal ministry and were of those who crucified him. They taught for doctrines the commandments of men rather than the commandments of God. When they sought baptism at the hands of John the Baptist, John did not spare his words to them. He knew of them – that they were religionists.

***O generation of vipers***, – Strong words, are they not? It seems their

parents before them were vipers, and they their offspring were like them, in hypocrisy and malice. The viper appears very beautiful outwardly, but is full of poison; it looks harmless and innocent, as if it neither could nor would do any hurt, its teeth being hid, but is a most deadly and hurtful creature: so these men, though they made many pretenses to religion and holiness, yet were full of the deadly poison of hypocrisy, malice, and error. A very disagreeable salutation this must be to men, who were desirous of being reckoned very religious, and who boasted of, and trusted in, their being the seed of Abraham; when they were the children of the devil, the seed of the old serpent, and the offspring of the worst of men. Our Lord Jesus Christ used the same kind of words when he spoke to and rebuked the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes.

**Matthew 12:34 (KJV)** *O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*

**Matthew 23:33 (KJV)** *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*

**John 8:44 (KJV)** *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

**Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?** -- who has suggested this to you? from whom have ye received this? who has pointed out the way to you to escape divine vengeance, or the ruin which will quickly come upon you? There is a *wrath to come*; besides present wrath, there is future wrath, the stores of which are treasured up for hereafter. (2.) It is the great concern of every one of us to flee from this wrath. (3.) It is wonderful mercy that we are fairly warned to flee from this wrath; think--*Who has warned us?* God has warned us, he warns by

the written word, by his ministers, by conscience. (4.) These warnings sometime startle those who are hardened in their sin and rebellion against God especially people who have a very high opinion of themselves.

**Matthew 3:8-9 (KJV) *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:***

This entire message from verse 7 through 10 is intended for these religious, but disobedient people. ***Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*** -- That is, if you are truly repenting of your sins; if you have a proper sense of sin, and true repentance for it, do such works as are suitable to it, and will show the genuineness of what you profess.

**Matthew 3:9 (KJV) *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.***

***And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father:*** -- John knew the prevailing opinion these religionists had given into. Therefore, he cautions them. It is true they were the descendants of Abraham – and were his seed, but this fact did not save them or give them favor in the sight of God. Being Abraham’s seed they trusted in and boasted of. Doubtless they would often think of it within themselves pleasing themselves with the thoughts of it and speak of it to others. It is like modern people who say because mom, dad, or grandma were children of God, so am I. Folly! Wonderful did John tell them “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

**Matthew 3:10 (KJV) *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.***

*The axe is laid unto the root of the trees.* Laying the axe at the root of a



tree is intended to show that the tree is to be cut down. It was not merely to be *trimmed* or to be cut *about the limbs*, but the very *tree* itself was to be struck. That is, a searching, trying kind of preaching has been commenced. A kingdom of justice is to be set, up. Principles and conduct are to be investigated. No scheme or no hypocrisy will be successful. Men are to be tried by their lives, not by birth, or profession. They who are not found to bear this test are to be rejected. The very *root* shall feel the blow and the fruitless tree shall fall. This is a beautiful and very striking figure of speech and a very direct threatening of future wrath. The tree (pointing to the individual) shall be hewn down and cast into the fire.

**Matthew 3:11 (KJV) *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:***

***I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance:*** -- John's message was "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was a call to repentance. John indeed (emphatic) baptized with water unto or for (because of) repentance. He refused the Pharisees and Sadducees because of the lack of their repentance.

***but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear:*** -- Here is John's reference to Jesus Christ who was to come after him. Christ was mightier than John. John saw himself unworthy to do to Christ the very meanest act – unworthy to bear his shoes.

***He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*** -- That is, Jesus Christ would do that. The Holy Ghost did not baptize anyone, but Christ did baptize his waiting church with the Holy Ghost fifty days after his resurrection from the dead at the feast of Pentecost. Fire speaks of judgment and the fire of judgment yet shall be done as he explains in the

very next verse.

**Matthew 3:12 (KJV) *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.***

***Whose fan is in his hand, --*** A fan is a portable instrument, made light, so that it might be easily carried about. The fan is a well-known agricultural instrument which was used by the Jews, as it is at the present day, to separate grain from the chaff. The usual custom was to throw the grain in the air by means of a large shovel so it allows the wind to drive the chaff away. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the noun "fan" as instrument for winnowing grain. A basket of special form (also earlier, a sort of wooden shovel) used for separating corn from the chaff by throwing it into the air. Jesus has the separating instrument in his hand to separate the chaff from the wheat.

***And he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; --*** The floor is a place where the grain is separated from the chaff. That floor will be thoroughly purged by the Lord. He shall gather his wheat into the garner, a storehouse for grain.

***but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*** – O, beloved, this is the whole tenor of scripture. The chaff or that which is refused shall he burn up with unquenchable fire.

**Mark 9:43-48 (KJV) *And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into***

*the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: **48** Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

**Matthew 13:41-42 (KJV)** *The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

Truly, the baptism of John the Baptist was done by a man sent from God for two purposes. (1) to manifest Christ to Israel, and (2) to prepare a people for the Lord, those who Jesus Christ would call into his church, the church at Jerusalem.

**John 1:6-8 (KJV)** *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.*

John the Baptist bore witness that Jesus Christ was the light of the world. Did John know he was the savior. What saith the scripture?

**John 1:24-33 (KJV)** *And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. 28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. 29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. 30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit*

*descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 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.*

In these twelve verses and their companion scriptures in the other gospels, we have an account of the baptism of John the Baptist. Some people (some preachers) say John's Baptism was not Christian baptism. Let's consider that. Did our Lord say anything about John the Baptist? Indeed, he did.

**Matthew 11:7-15 (KJV)** *And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? 8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. 10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. 15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

### **Jesus words with the inquiring chief priests and elders.**

**Matthew 21:23-27 (KJV)** *And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you*

*by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? 26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.*

What can we conclude from Jesus' words concerning John the Baptist and his question to the chief priests and elders? What do you think? You are wise men and you know the answer. John's baptism was of heaven and not of men. Moreover, it was the same baptism as the Lord's churches administer today. It is Christian baptism. Consider this:

1. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist as we can see from verses 13 through 17 of this 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Matthew.
2. All the apostles were baptized by John the Baptist.
  - a. **Acts 1:20-26 (KJV)** *For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. 21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 **Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.** 23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven*

*apostles.*

3. The apostles were the first officers of the Lord's church.
4. None of us will doubt that the women and the other seventy who were sent forth of the Lord had the baptism of John the Baptist.
5. These baptized disciples were the membership of the Lord's church at Jerusalem – the first church.

**Acts 1:12-14 (KJV)** *Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

John the Baptist finished his course – being beheaded in prison by Herod after rebuking Herod for taking his brother Philip's wife saying, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." The disciples of Jesus made and baptized disciples. This is the first converts baptized by the church at Jerusalem.

**John 4:1-3 (KJV)** *When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) 3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.*

After the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he met with his disciples at a place appointed and gave the church this commission.

**Matthew 28:18-20 (KJV)** *And Jesus came and spake unto*

*them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. **19** Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **20** Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

By way of application, I ask you whether or not you have biblical baptism. John the Baptist refused the Pharisees and Sadducees because they had not repented and changed their ways. Therefore, if you had not repented and been converted before baptism – yours was not biblical baptism. If you were sprinkled as an infant, yours was not biblical baptism. If someone poured water on you which they called baptism – it was not biblical baptism. If you were immersed before you repented and were converted, your immersion was not biblical baptism. If an entity other than a New Testament Baptist church immersed you, that was not biblical baptism.

Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your savior? Did he die to save you from your sins when he hung on the cross? Did you, at some point, see yourself as a sinner before God dead in trespasses and in sins? Did you turn from your sins to Jesus Christ as your only hope for forgiveness and for eternal life? If you have been saved – then, the next thing the Lord commands is baptism. And that baptism is much like John's baptism in that it was because of repentance – an immersion in much water by one sent from God. May it be so.