

John Baptizes Jesus – Discussion Notes¹

(Updated 1/2020; Dr. Baines, Jr.)

Read: Matthew 3:1-6, 11-17

Summary Highlights: John the Baptist is preaching and baptizing. He is pictured as a forerunner of Jesus. People are coming to him to repent and be baptized. John talks about how he is less than the One to come after him, Jesus. Jesus actually shows up. John did not want to baptize Him at first. However, he did so in obedience to the prophecy. The baptism that the Messiah was expected to perform (see vs. 11-12) was and is probably related to how Jesus is so sweet to those who accept Him, but for those who don't accept Him, they are on their way to a burning Hell. After Jesus is baptized, we see the Holy Spirit, and we hear from God the Father.

Introduction: A key idea in today's lesson is that Jesus was baptized in preparation for His ministry to us. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to do what God is calling us to do, so we can be great ministers to those in need.

Key Points:

1. God's kingdom. Notice in vs. 2 the mention of the kingdom of heaven. In the immediate context, this term refers to the future rulership of God. However, right now, God ought to have rulership in our lives. Consequently, the kingdom of God should be in every believer, every day. Wherever the King rules is the kingdom. *Let's work on allowing God's kingdom to be found in our lives.* Loving God, ourselves, and others are telling features of God's rulership.

2. The trustworthiness of God's word. Notice in vs. 3 that the prophecies of God are trustworthy. When God says that something is going to happen, we can trust that it is going to happen. God has said that He will bless those who obey Him and punish those who do not. *Let's live as if we believe that God's word is trustworthy.* Such living is known for obeying God's word.

3. Ministering to people at their level. Notice in vs. 4 that John wore cloths associated with Elijah the Prophet and ate the food commonly eaten by the poor and working-class people that he ministered to. John appears to have some understanding of how we must become all things to all people to save some (see I Cor. 9:22). He appears to have understood the importance of meeting those he sought to minister to at their level. *Let's work on ministering to people at their level.* This may impact our dress and diet. It may impact what we say and how we act. Since Jesus died for us, after leaving glory to be

¹ Prepare to discuss the following: What is the point, what scripture supports the point, what is the application sentence, and what is an example of living by the material? After the material is covered, be prepared to answer the following: Which point do you want to spend extra time on, why do you think this point is so important, and what tips do you have for living by this material, in spite of the challenges? **What is one thing you will take from this session and work on, in regard to your discipleship goals?**

born in a manager, surely, we can bend and do some inconvenient things for the sake of effective ministry.

4. Resurrected living. Notice in vs. 11 that there was a baptism of John; however, passages like Romans 6: 3-4 teach that the Christian baptism has a different meaning. Whereas John wanted the people to change from being disobedient to the Law, Christian baptism identifies one with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The one who is baptized is to die to sin and be resurrected to live an obedient life. Jesus was baptized according to John's tradition to identify with those He minister to, not to turn from any of His personal sins. Jesus was sinless. More important than long discussions about the doctrines of baptism is our living like baptized believers. *Let's give our best to living like we are those who are resurrected to live for Jesus.* Such living should include enthusiastic worship, proportionate giving, stewardship of our health and wealth, and ministering to the needs of others (e.g., evangelism, community service, and advocacy).

5. God's plan. Notice throughout our text that God has a plan. The plan has some forerunners like John and some redeemers like Jesus. The plan has a time table. The plan includes God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (i.e., Holy Trinity). The plan is so much bigger than anyone of else. *Let's work on knowing and doing our part of the plan.* We are not the main events. We are to be pointing people to Jesus for salvation and Christian growth. All that we have is a gift from God. God does not show us all of the details of His plan. We just have to trust Him with that which is beyond our part to play.

6. Showing appreciation, now. Notice in vs. 17 that the Father announced His pleasure with His Son. There are too many who wait until people die before they talk about how much they love the person. *Let's work on sharing our love and appreciation for one another, while we are alive.* When the funeral comes, it is too late for flowers and cards that will benefit the deceased. At best, they make us feel better and attempt to say something to onlookers about how we felt about the deceased. Again, however, the deceased receives no benefit from the funeral service and burial arrangements.