

## CHAPTER 3: BEGINNINGS (W3)

### John the Baptist Prepares the Way

**1** In those days John the Baptist (**one who administers baptism**) came preaching in the wilderness of Judea (**Desert, a place of intimacy with God, prayer, struggle, and temptation, but also a remembrance of God's grace and salvation for Israel in the wilderness**), **2** **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**

**3** For this is he who was spoken of by **the prophet Isaiah** when he said,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’” (**Prov 11:3, crookedness=sin/unrighteousness**)

He is preaching a message of repentance/preparation.

It is the same message as Jesus (4:17).

(11:7-10) Through his person and preaching, John is shown as the prophet in the last days sent by God

For Matthew, John is the fulfillment of Isa 40:1-5) Discuss, note Gentile inclusion.

John is an Escene, a sacred monastic community regarding themselves to be the holy remnant of Israel.

**4** Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. **5** Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, **6** and **they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.**

John's Baptism:

- John's baptism bound its subjects to repentance, and not to the faith of Christ. It was not administered in the name of the Trinity, and those whom John baptized were rebaptized by Paul (Acts 18:24; 19:7).
- John demands repentance, confession of sins (v. 6), 'conversion', the abandonment of past sinful ways, and a life yielding fruit in conformity with one's conversion (v. 8)
- An efficacious act saving from God's judgment by fire (3:10b, 12) but not a sacrament in the Christian sense, in which the Holy Spirit is at work.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **8 Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. What does this mean?**

9 And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘**We have Abraham as our father,**’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. **National identity isn’t enough. Descent from Abraham with its sign, circumcision, was a source of pride for all Israelites (John 8:33, 53; Rom 4:11)- It was their guarantee of salvation.**

“From stones” God can/would raise up a new Israel (of faith) Galatians 6:14-18.

10 Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. **Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Pss. 79:5; 89:46)**

11 **“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**

12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but **the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” (Ps 1)**

### **The Baptism of Jesus**

Joshua 1 (commission), 3 (crossing), 4 (12 stones)

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” 15 But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus **it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**” Then he consented.

16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw **the Spirit of God descending like a dove** and coming to rest on him;

- Exodus 29 (consecration of Aaron= Priest)
- 1 Samuel 16 (consecration of David= King)
- 1 Kings 19:16 (consecration of Elisha=Prophet)
- 1 Samuel 16:1-13 (prophet anoints a king)
- Acts 10:36-38

17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. (Isaiah 42)