

John Predicts and Baptizes Jesus

by David Servant

David Servant explores the foundational messages of John the Baptist, emphasizing repentance, judgment, and the significance of Jesus' baptism.

Duration: 26:07

Scripture: Matthew 3:11

Topics: "Baptism And Repentance", "Jesus Ministry"

Description

This sermon delves into the ministry of John the Baptist, emphasizing his message of repentance and the urgency of preparing for the coming judgment. It explores the significance of baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, highlighting the need for genuine repentance and bearing good fruit. The sermon also discusses Jesus' baptism as a foreshadowing of his identification with sinners and the Trinity's manifestation.

Transcript

Welcome to Heaven Word TV, I'm David Servett. Should we expect to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire? Stay with me. Thank you so much for joining me as we continue once again our chronological study of the entire New Testament.

And we're looking right now, of course, at the life of Christ. We're in Matthew chapter 3. If you've got your Bible, could you open it to Matthew chapter 3? You can read right along with me. We're looking at the amazing ministry, the exemplary ministry, I want to add, of John the Baptist.

He was a person whom Jesus highly esteemed, one time saying, among those born of women, as far as I know, most people are born of women, among those born of women, there's no one greater than John the Baptist. So when you criticize John the Baptist, you're criticizing somebody whom Jesus esteemed very highly. The reason I say that is because the message of John the Baptist, if John the Baptist appeared on the scene today, I'm afraid that many preachers would immediately label him and castigate him as a gloom and doom or fire and brimstone.

Oh, God forbid, a fire and brimstone preacher, because he loves the people he's preaching to so much that he's trying to bring to them the reality of the truth, that if they don't repent, if they're not ready, when the king of heaven comes, they're going to be cast into hell. That becomes very clear in his message. And as I mentioned previously, a lot of these things, if not all of these crucial elements of the message of John the Baptist, have just simply been removed from the modern gospel.

They're not spoken of anymore. Why? Because, sure, they're not popular. Well, Jesus told us what to do when they don't receive us.

Okay, so we're starting today now in verse number 10 of Matthew chapter 3. And we're breaking into the middle of one of John's sermons, as it were. And, again, Matthew just has so many verses, a very limited amount of time. This guy preached for days and days and days and weeks and weeks and weeks, probably.

So he uses a wonderful metaphor here in Matthew 3, verse number 10. And he says, the axe is already laid at the root of the tree. Okay, stop right there.

What is he trying to convey? The axe is already laid at the root of the tree. Well, obviously, the visual picture that is being created is that there's an axe by a tree, and it's been laid there. That is, people getting ready to cut down the tree.

They've brought what it takes, and it's just a very short time until they start cutting that tree down. So there's an urgency. And also, there's an implication there of judgment to come, right? Axe going to cut down a tree.

The tree is going to fall. The axe is already laid at the root of the tree. Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

So you've got many trees here that represent every single person. And what is the guy with the axe looking for? He's looking for trees without fruit. And when he sees them, he's going to cut them down.

That's why John had said in a previous verse, when he was speaking to the Pharisees and the Sadducees who were just going along with the crowds coming out there to watch or to be baptized or whatever they were doing, without any sincerity, he said, in keeping with your repentance. God is looking for fruit. That's why Scripture makes it so plain that when we stand before Jesus, when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ, we're going to be judged according to our deeds.

A lot of folks think, well, you know, if we prayed that prayer, the sinner's prayer, that's sufficient, you know, because it's all by grace. Certainly it's not by works, is it? Well, it's not by works. Your works can't save you.

Are you kidding me? You're a rotten, filthy sinner before you repent. And so it's too late for your works to save you if your works are going to save you. Only grace can save you, and grace is received by faith.

And faith, however, always results in deeds of obedience. And so we can judge the validity of your faith by your actions. James said, show me your faith without your works, which of course is impossible.

You can't show anyone your faith without works. And he said, but I'll show you my faith by my works. So God's going to look at works to determine who has faith, and that determines who's saved.

And so it couldn't be clear, could it? And so again, this is so foundational. I've said this repeatedly, so foundational to the gospel, we just wonder, whatever happened to this? Why aren't we hearing this? Why isn't every preacher on TV, every evangelist, every pastor who's trying to win souls, following the example of John the Baptist that's recorded for us in the Bible? And Jesus had the exact same message, by the way. Repent, and the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Now, keep reading verse number 11. As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance. It's like, you know, I'm gonna get that word repentance in there any way I can.

I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I. I'm not fit to remove his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. So I'm a baptizer who foreshadows a much greater baptizer.

I'm baptizing you in water. He's gonna baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. Now, John didn't say with the Holy Spirit or fire.

He did say with the Holy Spirit and fire, and so there is some debate as to specifically what he meant. The most logical, sensible way to interpret Scripture, or interpret anything for that matter, any written or spoken communication, is to always look at the contents. If you just pull one sentence out of anybody's conversation, you might misunderstand them.

You have a better chance of understanding if you listen to everything they said and interpret that one sentence in light of everything they said before and after. Well, in the very next verse, John mentions fire again. He's mentioned fire right before it.

In verse number 10, you know, the trees that don't bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Then he talks about this baptizing in the Holy Spirit and fire, and then in verse number 12, he talks about fire again, and it's clearly in both verses 12 and 10, the fire is the fire of hell. And so it's logical to conclude that the fire in verse number 11 is the fire of hell.

Okay, let's talk about this more. Be right back. All right, we're studying the amazing ministry of John the Baptist in Matthew chapter 3 and breaking into the middle of one of his sermons in verse number 12, and I actually want to read again verse number 11, I guess.

John said, I'm baptizing you in water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I'm not fit to remove his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. So our question is, what's he talking about there? He'll baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Because sometimes we hear guys say, have you been baptized in fire yet? God wants to baptize you in fire. I think that's a misunderstanding of what John the Baptist is talking about here, because in the verse before that, the verse after that, both times he mentions fire, and both times it's the fire of hell. And so it becomes logical to think that the fire in verse number 11 is also the fire of hell.

Well, is Jesus gonna baptize hell-bound people in the Holy Spirit and fire? Well, yes and no. I would have rather if John had said, he'll baptize you in the Holy Spirit or fire. That is, you're gonna get either salvation or damnation.

And just because he said and doesn't necessarily mean that the implication wasn't or. Didn't necessarily have to mean you're gonna get these both. It depends on how you relate to him.

You either receive the Holy Spirit, his baptism in the Holy Spirit, or you receive his baptism in fire. In any case, it's very clear that John the Baptist is not afraid to mention hell when he preaches the gospel. Let's look at verse number 12 now.

His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor, and he will gather his wheat into the barn, and he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. If that isn't a reference to hell, what is? And what gets burnt? The chaff. Now, this is a wonderfully clear illustration of what's gonna happen.

A little bit foreign to people who are living in the modern countries, but this is something very familiar to people who live all around the world who are growing wheat and rice and so forth. When they would gather the stalks of wheat and so forth, you know, onto a certain place on the field. It's a flat place.

It would just be called a threshing floor. And they have to separate the wheat from the chaff. The wheat, the actual berries of wheat, the fruit, as it were, from the little leaves and little particles that are really not part of it, okay? So it's just cleaning the wheat, as it were.

And the way they would do that is by, you've got it all mixed together. You're looking at this wheat, but there's all this chaff mixed together. So they take the winnowing fork, kind of like a shovel, throw it in there, and throw it up into the air over here so that the wheat falls directly underneath the chaff, but the chaff, which is light and more easily carried off and affected by the wind, blows away into a spread-out pile over here.

So you have to have a little bit of breeze going, at least, to separate the wheat from the chaff. And as you continually do that with what you've gathered in altogether, and it's all mixed together, and isn't that an interesting illustration? Because right now on the earth, the wheat has not been separated from the chaff at all. We're all living amongst one another.

But the day is coming when there will be a separation. And so here comes the winnowing fork, and he's speaking of Jesus. He's just like that.

The winnowing fork is in his hand. Again, John is emphasizing the urgency of all of this, and he's gonna thoroughly clear his threshing floor. So he hasn't come to do a half-hearted job or do part of the job.

He's gonna do all the job. He's gonna go to work on that big pile of wheat and chaff, and he's gonna work it and work it until the wheat is completely separated from the chaff. And then he has a different destination in mind for both of them, just like the person who does this around the world.

They're gonna take the wheat. That's the good stuff. That's the fruit.

That's the nutritious stuff. That's the whole reason that the original grains and seed were planted was to get this fruit. And so he takes the fruit, the wheat berries, now that they're all separated, gathers them, puts them safely in his barn because that was the goal along, and he takes the chaff and he burns it because it's worthless.

What a clear picture. And, you know, it's very obvious that John's entire gospel really revolved around several facts, several foundational facts. One, people are sinners.

Number two, that's bad news for them because God is a holy God and he's a God of wrath and he's gonna judge everybody. And three, there's a reward for those who repent and obey, but, however, there's a punishment, a severe punishment for those who will not repent. They go to hell.

Three things. Sinfulness of man, the wrath, holiness of God, and his judgment, his future judgment, and the reality of heaven and hell. Separation from the righteous, righteous from the unrighteous.

Well, those are the most foundational principles of the gospel, yet I have heard repeated times over the years from pastors, so-called evangelists, even people who are doing witnessing. They'll tell people, oh, you don't have peace in your life, but you can have that peace. The world is in such turmoil today and we have terrorism and we have the stock market falling and gone all the current stuff and present Jesus as the solution to bring you peace because we're trying to be relevant.

You know, people are troubled, so we gotta meet them where they're at. Well, they're troubled, but they should be more troubled. They should be greatly troubled if they haven't repented because much worse things are happening than a little lack of peace or a falling stock market or terrorism sporadic here and there around the world.

Much worse things are happening. And so the astute evangelist, an astute person who's sharing my gospel, tries to cover those three elements. And you don't have to do it wagging your finger and condemning people.

You can do it with tears and compassion. Can't you? Sure you can, okay? And so showing them the love of Christ, okay? I'll be right back. ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ Okay, let's continue our study of John the Baptist in Matthew chapter 3. Previously, we've looked at his gospel.

It's a great gospel. Every preacher and teacher and anyone who shares the gospel should aspire to follow the example and the message of the great John the Baptist. And so we come to the point here where we get a narration from Matthew about the arrival of Jesus.

Remember, John has been baptizing people. They've been confessing their sins. He's been calling them to repentance.

And there's been, really, what we would call a revival. Not one of these revivals where there's a, you know, guy up there in a white suit, you know, some slick preacher, and people are falling around on the ground and laughing hilariously and doing strange contortions with their bodies and maybe even, you know, so-called healings and so forth. Folks, that's not a biblical revival.

That's nonsense. And this is a biblical revival when people are confessing their sins and being baptized because they're convicted and they want to be ready for the coming kingdom. So, verse number 13 of Matthew chapter 3. Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan, coming to John to be baptized by him.

But John tried to prevent him, saying, listen to this, I have need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me? But Jesus answering said to him, Permit it at this time, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. And so then he permitted him. Now, interesting stuff there.

We do have to wonder why in the world Jesus would be baptized, and we'll talk about that in a second. But I want to point out something that is often missed. People think that John was resistant to baptizing Jesus because he knew that Jesus Christ was the divine son of God and Messiah.

He was a relative of John's, of Jesus' through their mothers, but it's clear from scripture that although John knew Jesus perhaps all of their lives, and this is, you know, 30 years of life at this point in time, he didn't realize that Jesus was the Messiah yet. Let me read to you in John's gospel, and in chapter 1, John is

testifying after he does know that Jesus is the son of God. And he says in John 1 in verse 30, speaking to the crowd, this is he, Jesus, on behalf of whom I said, quote, After me comes a man who has a higher rank than I, for he existed before me.

I did not recognize him, but so that he might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water, verse 32. John testified, saying, I have seen the spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and he remained upon him. I did not recognize him, but he who sent me to baptize in water said to me, He upon whom you see the spirit descending and remaining upon him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

So here comes his cousin to be baptized. He's known him all his life. He doesn't know that Jesus is the Messiah, but he's resistant to the idea of baptizing him.

So what must have been his reason? Because he knew how pure and holy Jesus was, and that was it. And think about it. Jesus never sinned.

He always loved God with all of his heart, mind, soul, and strength. He always loved his neighbor as himself. I mean, anyone who knew him knew this guy had a perfect reputation as being obedient to all of God's commandments.

I wish I knew exactly what that looked like, but anyways, Jesus was that. Praise God. And so John said, You need to baptize me, because you're way beyond me, objecting based upon his holiness.

She says, We need to do this to fulfill all righteousness. Now, what's all that about? Well, I'm not sure anybody exactly knows, but certainly Jesus did not need to be baptized to have his sins forgiven, right? That's off the table, non-negotiable. We know that.

Why then did he need to do it to fulfill all righteousness? Some have suggested, and this is the best answer that I've heard of, and so that's why I'm going to tell you, that Jesus did it to foreshadow his identification with sinners. Because isn't it true that the Bible teaches that on the cross, Jesus took our sin upon him, and he bore the wrath of God on our behalf. And so identifying with sinners is really what he came to do.

He came to bear our sins on the cross. Now, I look at it this way, because going down under the water is symbolic of burial, coming out of the water is symbolic of resurrection. Of course, water also has the implication of a cleansing upon a person, they're dirty, they come up clean, and so forth.

And so that's what John's baptism was all about. People were getting clean with God, and so it's symbolized by this baptism. It's not symbolizing death and resurrection, at least I don't see it here.

And so all those people are going in the water, and as it were, symbolically, coming out clean, their sins are forgiven, they're now washed. But they left all their sins, all their dirt, all their sweat in the water. Granted, the Jordan River is flowing, not a perfect analogy.

But Jesus then comes, and he goes under the water, and he comes up. I like to think of it this way, Jesus went down perfectly clean, but he came back up drenched in the water, covered with the sins of everybody else. So this is an amazing foreshadowing of what he came to do.

Pretty cool, pretty cool. And so verse number 16, after being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and

lighting upon him. And behold, a voice out of the heavens said, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

He never sinned, I mean, this is my Son, I love him very much. I think that one thing we can gain from those couple of scriptures there at the end of chapter 3 is it's a very clear indication of what we call the Trinity, the triune God. He's revealed right from the start of scripture, let us make man in our image, and here we have Jesus on the earth, the Son of God, he's taken on the form of a man, he's being baptized in the water, then the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus, so he comes from heaven, there's the second person here in the Godhead, and then we hear this voice from heaven, this is the Father obviously speaking, this is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased.

So they're not all the same person, but there's one God eternally revealed in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Okay, that's all the time we have for now. Thank you so much for joining me, and I'll see you next time.

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