

(Following the Footsteps of Christ) the Ministry Begins

by Willie Mullan

The sermon explores the beginning of Christ's ministry and the pivotal role of John the Baptist as His witness and forerunner.

Duration: 1:11:58

Scripture: Matthew 3:3, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:14, Luke 2:21-24, Luke 3:3

Topics: "Footsteps Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being sent by God to preach the gospel. He highlights the role of John the Baptist as a witness to Christ, sent specifically to bear witness of the light. The preacher cautions against aspiring to be preachers without being truly sent by God, as it can lead to ineffective ministry. He encourages individuals to take their time and be sure of their calling, emphasizing that being sent by God is more important than any qualifications or titles.

Transcript

772, please. 772, throughout the lifeline, across the dark waves, there is a brother whom someone should save, somebody's brother, or who then will dare to throw out the lifeline his peril to share. 772, please.

772. Throughout the lifeline, across the dark waves, there is a brother whom someone should save, somebody's brother, or who then will dare to throw out the lifeline his peril to share. Throughout the lifeline, throughout the lifeline, there is a brother whom someone should save.

Throughout the lifeline, throughout the lifeline, there is a brother whom someone should save. Throughout the lifeline, throughout the lifeline, there is a brother whom someone should save, somebody's brother, or who then will dare to throw out the lifeline his peril to share. Throughout the lifeline, throughout the lifeline, there is a brother whom someone should save, somebody's brother, throughout the lifeline, throughout the lifeline, there is a brother whom someone should save.

Throughout the lifeline, through dreams and others, seeking their way, there is a brother, without a name, there is a brother, without a name, there is a brother. Throughout the lifeline, throughout the lifeline, there is a brother whom someone should save. Throughout the lifeline, throughout the lifeline, there is a brother whom someone should save.

Throughout the lifeline, throughout the lifeline, there is a brother, without a name, there is a brother, without a name, there is a brother, throughout the lifeline, there is a brother, throughout the lifeline, throughout the lifeline, there is a brother, without a name, there is a brother, without a name, throughout the lifeline, throughout the lifeline, there is a brother, without a name. Peter Luke's Gospel, Chapter 3, please. Gospel by Luke, and we're at the third chapter.

For some weeks now, in fact for six weeks past, we've been following the footsteps of Christ. And we looked at the miraculous conception for one of those evenings, and then we followed Mary and Joseph from Nazareth down to Bethlehem, and we looked at the birth of Christ, and we looked very carefully at the babe of Bethlehem. And then we took an evening on the circumcision of Christ, and then the presentation of the child in the temple at Jerusalem.

And then we followed him on down into Egypt, and we looked at the boyhood days, and we looked at the childhood days, and the babyhood days of Jesus. And now we take a dump this evening, because not much has given us, in fact, nothing at all about the early young manhood days of Jesus. We come to meet him now when he's thirty years of age.

We're at Luke's Gospel, and we're at chapter three, and verse twenty-three. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being as was supposed. And you can see there's the parenthetical bit that the writer has put in.

Because all the people up at Galilee really believed that he was the son of Joseph. In fact, he was called the carpenter's son, right throughout Galilee. But we're meeting him here when he's about thirty years of age, and it was then that his public ministry began.

So we're beginning this evening with the ministry of Christ. And two great things happened as his ministry began. John the Baptist gave great witness to him.

And we're going to take time to look at the witness of the Baptist. And I believe that when we have looked at all that John had to say about Jesus, we'll come to the conclusion that John witnessed or testified to his deity and to his all-sufficiency, so to say. But then there's another great witness here as the ministry begins.

It is not only the witness of the Baptist, John the Baptist himself, but it is the witness of baptism. For our Lord Jesus was baptized. Baptized by John in Jordan.

And I think that when we get that tidied out of this evening, you'll find that John witnessed to the deity and sufficiency of Christ, and that this great mode of baptism witnessed to the humanity and the sincerity of Christ. So that's the path we're going along, and there are problems way down deep in the heart of the subject this evening. Now let's go to Matthew's Gospel, because we must bring all the Gospels with us this evening.

Matthew's Gospel, chapter 3, please. And at verse 13. Matthew 3, verse 13.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized with him. And I think you can visualize the Lord Jesus breathing a breath and crossing the Jordan up here, because on this occasion he did not come through Samaria, but crossed the Jordan on the usual route over to the Golan Heights, came down what we call the Syrian side of the Jordan, and came to Bethabara, just beyond Jordan where John was baptized. Remember his age, he was about 30 years of age.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized with him. Do you notice that this chapter begins like this? Chapter 3, verse 1. In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Now I think you know this without us turning the pages, that John the Baptist was six months older than Christ.

I think you remember the angel coming to the Virgin Mary and saying, Thou shalt conceive in my womb and bring forth a son. And then the angel said that Elizabeth, thy cousin, because Elizabeth was a cousin of the Virgin Mary's, The angel said, thy cousin Elizabeth is already six months with child. Three months later John the Baptist was born, and then of course six months later the Lord Jesus was born.

So that John the Baptist was six months older than Christ. This book doesn't tell us that they met, but I'm perfectly sure they did. I think that when Mary and Joseph came down when Christ was twelve years of age down to the temple, it was the great Passover feast.

I'm perfectly sure that Elizabeth and Zacharias and John the Baptist was there too. But the book doesn't give us any details, therefore we cannot go into that. And it seems that these two boys were kept much apart, until both of them became men.

And when Christ was certainly and John was just over it, they meet at the Jordan. Because John the Baptist had a very wonderful job in life. You know, God sent John.

Let's look at John's Gospel for a moment or two. John's Gospel, chapter one, verse six. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

The same came for a witness. And there's a lot of things there that we could take time with. You see, it's a picture.

It's going to be the picture to the nations who witness for Christ. The first thing that he must be absolutely sure about is this. That he's sent by God.

Because how can you preach except you're sent? And we get far too many young fellows now because they've got a smattering of educators too, who start to make up their minds that they're going to be preachers. God pity you. You haven't as much sense as you think you have.

Because most of you children here can go to a Bible school and pass. And pass with others. But that doesn't make you a preacher.

I've seen so many of them. And the church helps them. And you turn their money into them.

And they make people after it's all spent. Just because they were never sent. That's all.

So just take your time, you know. Make absolutely sure about it. And I'll tell you, we too.

That if God sends you, your own name will do you. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. You don't need to be the very doctor, reverend, this or that, or the other, you know.

Just John will do you if you're sent. Because I intend to end my life, Willie Mullen. And nobody will change it.

And I don't want to change. Somebody said to me not so long ago. Do you want me to write to one of the universities in America to become a doctor? Yeah, Willie.

I'll do as I am. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. That's how God conducts affairs.

If it's potpourri you want, well you need to go to North Street, don't you? Now, let's get the hold of this. He was sent. And his own name would do him all right.

And I'm sure his own collar would do him too. But I needn't go into that tonight, need I? Walked into a hospital one day, me Roman Catholic nurse. I knew she was Roman Catholic by looking at her.

She said, you haven't got all her long collars. I says, do you think this is a square one? Ah, when you're sent, you know. When you're sent, it'll do.

And your name will do you. You don't need to fiddle around when you're sent. I'll tell you a wee thing.

The Lord never wanted to make the preacher attractive. The Lord wants you taken up with a message more than the man. So John will do, or Willie will do, or Willie will do.

Just whatever way you like it. Well, let's get this now. Verse 6. There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

The same came for a witness. He was sent specially to be a witness to Christ. To bear witness of the light that all men through him might believe.

He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. Now this was some witnessing. See verse 15.

John bear witness of him. That is, John bear witness of Christ. And cried saying, this was he of whom I speak.

He that cometh after me. There are six months after me. Is prepared before me.

For he was before me. You know, he's a witness to Christ's pre-existence. In fact, in one word, he's a witness to Christ's eternity.

He believes all that's in this gospel, you know, that in the beginning was the Word. He's witnessing now to Christ's eternity. Watch him again.

See verse 19. Now this is the record of John. It's great to see it put in language like that.

This is the record of John. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? John was in the wilderness of Judea in those days. And these priests and these Levites came from Jerusalem.

And they got round them in the wilderness and said, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ. You know, this man never got in between the people and Christ at all. This man attracted the people to Christ.

He said bluntly, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he said, I am not. Art thou that prophet? That's the prophet that was talked about in the Old Testament.

Moses said, The prophet like unto me shall arise. And they say, Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? That we may give an answer to them that sent us.

What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. My, what a wonderful character he was. You know, he had nothing to say for himself.

He says, I'm just a voice. It's the Lord who uses my lips. That's all there is to it.

I'm only a voice. He didn't think anything about himself. He knew it was the Lord.

He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord. And he's quoting from the prophecy of Isaiah.

And when he said, Make straight the way of the Lord. He's again witnessing to Christ. He's not only witnessing here in John 1. To Christ's eternity.

But he's witnessing to Christ's authority. He says, He's the Lord. I'm the forerunner of the Lord.

I'm sent to witness to him. It is something that the Russellites will have to get down to. Because when the babe was born.

The angel said unto you this day in the city of David is born the Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And it was the angel of the Lord that was talking. And it was the glory of the Lord that met up the heavens.

And now John the Baptist said, I'm preparing a way for the Lord. I hope you're getting it. Because he was testifying.

He was witnessing to the eternity. And he was witnessing to the authority. He was the Lord.

Verse 25. And they asked him and said unto him, Thou baptizest thou then, if thou be not of Christ, nor of Elias, neither of the prophets. John answered them saying, I baptize with water.

But there standeth one among you whom ye know not. He it is, who coming after me is prepared before me. Whose shoes latcheth, I am not worthy to unloose.

You see he was witnessing to the eternity. He walked before me. He was witnessing to the authority.

He says he's the Lord. He's witnessing to the superiority. He says, you know, I'm not even worthy to stoop down and lose his shoes.

And I'll tell you, we've seen you preachers. If you have faith at all, you'll get yourself out of it. Oh, you'll always exalt Christ.

The men that were never sent have something else to talk about. If the Holy Ghost's taking you up, you'll exalt the Lord and you'll never think that you're anything. We have a wee man who's over there.

He always prays in the prayer meeting, Lord, the pastor's no use. And I always say, Hallelujah. Thank God for people who know the man and the purpose and the good.

Oh, yes, anything that's ever done this, it's the Lord that does it. We're just bits of clay, you know, dust and ashes in his sight. And don't get excited ever about the preacher.

And if you're a preacher for any sake, don't get excited about yourself. It's the Lord you need to exalt. So that he's a witness, isn't he? And he's a good one.

He's witnessing to the penalty and he's witnessing to the authority. And he's witnessing to the superiority of the Lord Jesus. Verse 28 says, These things were done in Bethlehem above and beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Now, verse 29 is a great verse. The next day, John sees Jesus coming unto him. He was coming down from Nazareth now, wasn't he? And he's coming down to the eastern side of the river there.

And he's coming to Bethlehem where John was baptizing. And here are these two great personalities, face to face at last. And John knew all about them.

John had been witnessing for him when he wasn't there at all. And it says in verse 29, the next day John sees Jesus coming unto him and says, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. You know, that was a mighty moment in this wonderful story.

I think that all the Jews that were gathered round John, and you'll find as you read the story closely, that all Jerusalem and all Judea had gone out to meet John when he was baptizing at Bethlehem. The Pharisees and Sadducees were there in the hundreds. And yet as John looked upon the face of Jesus, he cried at the top of his voice, Behold the Lamb of God, which is God's Lamb, the one that beareth away the world, the sin.

Let's keep it the sin, the sin of the world. You know, he's witnessing to the all-sufficiency of Christ. And the Jews knew exactly what he meant.

You know, when John speaks like that, all the Jews that were standing round, they knew all about the work of the Lamb, you know. They could go back in the Old Testament to Genesis 22, and they could see Isaac later from the altar. And then of course the Lamb of the Lamb appeared.

And the Lamb of the Lamb was placed in this doomed sinner's place. And he was set gloriously free. And that's what you call a Lamb for a man.

It's the Lamb for a man. Of course these old Jews could go back to pass over night, you remember it. They killed the Lamb and they put the blood on the lantern and the two side posts of the door.

And they were all in the house. And when the avenging angel went through the lounge, everybody in the house was perfectly safe. Because God had promised, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

But that's what you call a Lamb for a house. Way back there these Jews knew about a Lamb for a man. And a Lamb for a house.

Now on the great day of atonement in Israel, there was a Lamb offered for the nation. That's what you call a Lamb for the nation. That was the day of atonement for Israel.

And John knew that they knew about the Lamb for a man. And a Lamb for a house. And a Lamb for the nation.

Oh but this is the Lamb for the world. My what an exit he was getting over to. This is God's Lamb.

This is the one who is the anti-type of all the types. This is the one that the law and the prophets were talking about in the old economy. This is the Lamb of God.

This is the one that bareth away the sin of the world. And he was witnessing to the sufficiency of Christ. Do you see this? It says here verse 32.

And John bare record saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove. And it abode upon him and I knew him not. But he that sent me to baptise was better the same said unto me.

For the God who sent him was the God who talked to him in the wilderness. When John was alone God said unto him. Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him.

The same is he which baptises with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God. He is witnessing you know to the Deity now.

This is God's Son. Didn't John bare witness? He was a great witness there. He bare witness to the eternality of Christ.

He was before me. He said you know I know I was born humanly speaking before him. Ah but he was before me.

And then he said he is the Lord. He is the Lord from heaven. He is all the authority of heaven.

And then he says you know I am not worthy to stoop down on those who stand against. He is superior to me. And then he says he is the Lamb of God and then he says he is the Son of God.

And the Son of God became the Lamb of God to bare away the sin of the world. But you know John did this most wonderfully if you look at it from this angle. You can see that in verse 29 that he bore witness that Christ was the Lamb.

But go to John's gospel chapter 3 for a moment. John chapter 3 verse 25. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

And they came unto John and said unto him He that was with thee beyond Jordan to whom thou barest witness. Behold the same Bob Thyself and all men come to him. John answered and said the man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.

Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ. But that I am sent before him. He was Christ's forerunner.

Listen to verse 29. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.

This my joy therefore is fulfilled. You see he not only said that he was the Lamb to bear away the sin of the world. But he said he's the bridegroom.

And one day the bridegroom will come and he'll take the bride away from the world. One of these nights the bridegroom's voice will be heard. And you know he said he was the Christ and in the last portion we had in John's Gospel chapter 1 he said he was the Son of God.

But here's another thing, let's get the hold of this. See verse 30 here where we are. He must increase but I must decrease.

You know this must be the belt and heart of every true witness of Christ. All that's getting him exhausted about everything else no matter what happens. He must increase.

I must decrease. What is the matter about me? The more you read of John the more you can see the kind of man that God sent. This man never got in the forefront.

This man was looking for no honors for himself. It was just a humble character who was in the hands of God. He said in verse 30 he must increase but I must decrease.

He that cometh from above is above all. He knew where Christ came from. He that is of the earth is earthly and speaketh of the earth.

He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what ye have seen and heard that ye testify it. And no man receiveth his testimony.

He that hath received his testimony hath said to his seed that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God. For God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him.

The Father loveth the Son. And hath given all things into his hand. What John is testifying now is this.

That Christ is the heir of all things. You know he owns everything you see. Get down what I have written for you.

He was a witness to Christ's eternity. He was a witness to Christ's authority. He was a witness to Christ's superiority.

He was a witness to Christ's sufficiency. He was a witness to Christ's deity. A witness to the Lamb.

A witness to the Bridegroom. A witness to the Christ. A witness to the Son.

A witness to the heir. What a wonderful thing this is. He is the Lamb to bear away the sin.

He is the Bridegroom to take the church home. He is the Christ to redeem Israel. Because he is Israel's King.

He is the Son that will glorify the Father. He is the heir of all things. And the best bit about it is that every believer in this meeting is a joint heir with him.

You see as Christ stepped forward and his ministry began, then John came forward to give this wonderful testimony. Now the greatest part of tonight's meeting of course is about the baptism of Christ. It's the witness of John.

Look at verse 23. John Gospel 3 verse 23. And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim because there was much water there.

And they came and were baptized. And I think we should settle forevermore the argument about the mode of baptism. You see John went down the river to this place where he was baptizing.

And although Mr. Torres was just sitting over there, he and I were down at this place one day. Just at this very spot. It's a deep place in the river where if you step out from the side, you're up to the width of the river right away.

There was much water there. Now I think a man that argues that sprinkling is the mode of baptism must be a fool when he reads this. You wouldn't think you could go down the river to where there was much water and you were going to sprinkle them would you? The very fact that it's there must make you think.

In fact you know we would never rest the fruit of believer's baptism on an influence. For that's all it is. But it's a good one.

The word baptism in the Greek means to bury. You have to be buried to be baptized. And the word for sprinkling or pouring is a different word altogether.

And no scholar worth his thought would dare to argue that fact. The word would tell you what it means. It means to be buried.

And John went to a place where there was much water so that he could put them under the water and bury them. It's a burial, we'll just see that in a moment. Now I want you to get the hold of this.

You know there's one thing that the three gospels Matthew and Mark and Luke are united in. As we go through the gospels following the footsteps of Christ we'll come to places where only one gospel records the events at that place. That's why it's a difficult task to follow the footsteps of Christ because you've got to weave in the four gospels chronologically and find exactly where he was at a particular time and get the thing in its sequence.

Well Matthew and Mark and Luke are all united about the baptism. You'll find it in the three gospels. You see I've taught you already that Matthew, he was writing about the king.

Well the king was baptized by a merchant. Let's get that quite clear. And of course Mark was writing about the slave or the servant of Jehovah.

Well the servant was baptized by a merchant. And Luke was writing about the man. He was writing all about the man Christ Jesus.

Oh well the man was baptized by a merchant and you must know now that it wasn't a kid that was getting sprinkled for he was thirty years of age. They're united in this that the king and the slaves and the man was baptized when he was thirty years of age bar John down where there was much water because it was the burial. And you can see the unity about the baptism and you can see the maturity about the baptism.

He was thirty years of age so he was a mature man. Of course the big point tonight is the necessity of this baptism. Was this necessary at all? Well we've got one or two problems there that we must take time to pry the out for this class.

You see I believe that there are a great many Baptists who don't know this. They don't know that believers baptism which is the baptism we practice in this place, just believers. They don't know that believers baptism and the baptism of John which is called John's baptism and Christ's baptism were all different.

They were all pulled apart. They didn't mean the same thing you know. Oh I mean they were baptized by immersion I know that's what the word means but when they were put down it was all different.

Well let's get it tidied up properly so that you'll not make any mistakes. You know about believers baptism let's just say a word about that. Let's come to Mark's Gospel the last chapter.

Mark's Gospel chapter 16 it is and it's Resurrection Day and the Lord is alive and verse 14 says Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat the eleven apostles of course and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. These were apostles and yet there was a great dose of unbelief in them and so he had to upbraid them and put them last. And when he had got them on to a level keel he said unto them verse 15 Go ye into all the world he's commissioning them now and preach the gospel they were to preach the good news that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son and that Jesus had come into the world to save sinners and had died and finished the work and rose again and that there was a living savior for every sinner who would accept him.

They were to go into the world and preach this gospel this good news about Christ's coming and dying and rising and they were to preach that to every creature and remember there are no limitations there for some of you after Calvinists think that you just preach to some oh not on your life you don't this gospel goes out to every creature black and white and red and yellow and learned and illiterate and protestant and catholic and arab and jew and all the rest of it every creature take that gospel to every creature tell them about Christ and then he said this he said go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature he that believeth he that believeth what? he that believeth in the Christ that you have presented now the moment that he believeth he is a believer isn't he? well he that believeth and is baptized tell me is that a bogey or a believer? because I would think you are intelligent enough to know who gets baptized bishops or believers?

I don't think I need to shout about that you ought to be able to gather that up from my book now believers get baptized and they get baptized by immersion they get buried yes they do you know there is one or two things about believers baptism I think you should remember have a look at 1 Peter here 1 Peter and it's chapter 3 1 Peter chapter 3 and the way down the chapter is verse 21 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 21 the right figure where unto even baptism doth also now say thus not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the answer of a good conscience towards God you know that's what believers baptism is it's the answer of a good conscience towards God you wouldn't think that the wee baby held in it's mother's arms while the minister dipped his finger in water and dropped it on it's brow you wouldn't think that it's conscience was answering God would you? because if you do come round and have a go with me and I'll tell you a part mine would be a right stool wouldn't it how will a baby's conscience answer God?

I can tell you that only a believer can do that a believer hears the gospel and knows what Christ has done and he gives himself to Christ and now in baptism his conscience answers God answers God like this by getting baptised now do you see what believers baptism really means? have a look at Romans and we're at Romans chapter 6 I think you can never understand Romans 6 unless you take one verse out of chapter 5 and it's verse 20 chapter 5 verse 20 moreover the law entered that the offence might abound but where sin abounded grace did much more abound you know that's a wonderful thing that no matter how far sin goes grace goes further you know grace saves murderers men who have blood on their conscience can get saved well David murdered the man and so did Moses Moses buried him in the sand

and they'll both be in heaven of course there are some folks in this world when they hear a statement like this that where sin abounded grace did much more abound they're so twisted that they argue like this then let sin more that there might be more room for more grace there's a bit of a twist isn't it so Paul knew that

thought of mine and he begins Romans 6 like this what shall we say then shall we continue in sin that grace may abound that's exactly what some people say let's continue in sin that grace may abound now here's the answer God forbid then he says how shall we that is we believers that are dead to sin live any longer than him why shall we do that no you're not that so many apostles were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death you know he's talking about

believers baptism now some of you wanted to argue with me once you said you know I think that's spirit baptism and I said somehow it keeps you that the spirit baptises into life not into death I would think that he's the spirit of life isn't he and I would think that every believer on the face of God's earth no matter where you come from tonight you've all been baptized by some spirit into one body or you wouldn't be in the body at all therefore if all the believers had had the baptism of the spirit as they're put into the body you couldn't talk like this how knew you not that as many of us as were baptised oh you can't say as many of us as were if you're talking about the spirit baptism I can't look across this congregation and say as many of us as were oh no we're all baptised into the

one body but when I talk about believers baptism I can talk as many of us as were because we're not all baptised by a mercy now he goes further with this he says therefore therefore therefore we are buried oh that's the word we are buried with him by baptism into death the spirit never did that for you we are buried with him by baptism that's like ours that's the bit I wanted to get it's just like us like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father this is what believers baptism is all about you know I hear the gospel I know Christ died for me I know that the moment I put the arms of my faith around him I can get saved so I become a believer and my conscience is answering God like this I'm prepared to be publicly baptised by mercy because when I come to this deep

water I'm saying Lord as Christ went into death I went in with him when he was buried I was buried with him when he rose again I rose with him and I'm just giving the figure of a great fact ah he went through the fact of the figure I've only to go through the figure of the fact that's what believers baptism is all about it's just me testifying to all and sundry that when Christ died I died when he was buried I was buried when he rose again so did I and I'm walking in newness as life to life now John's baptism was different I think that sometimes we don't even see this it's come back again from Matthew's gospel Matthew's gospel and we're at this third chapter now let's get it quite clear because sometimes I think we read things into the verses verse one in those days just when Christ was

about thirty and John was about six months old in those days John the Baptist King John the Baptist preaching you know he's preaching in the wilderness of Judea saying repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand for this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah saying the voice of one crying in the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord make his path straight you know he was preaching through Judah preaching to the Jews I hope you know that it wasn't a campaign you know he was having them put down or anything like that he had come to the nation into the wilderness of Judea and this nation had got away from God and he's the forerunner of the Messiah and he's got to get it right with God so he's crying repent ye this nation needs to repent and the baptism that John had is called

the baptism of repentance I want you to get the hold of this watch this verse seven verse four the same John had his raiment of camel's hair and a leathering gaggie about his loins why did Matthew say that? because he was dressed like one of the Old Testament prophets you see in case we forget this this evening John was the last of the Old Testament prophets now he's not the last prophet in the Old Testament Malachi is the last prophet in the Old Testament but he's the last of the Old Testament

prophets you know that day of grace is about to begin for grace came by Jesus Christ but John belongs to the Old Testament prophets and he was dressed like one and he's preaching to the nation then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan and the baptised of him

in Jordan confessing their sins but when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism he said unto them O generation of vipers who have warned you to flee from the wrath to come bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance you see he was calling the nation and as they came to this baptism they were publicly confessing now as John put them down into the river of Jordan that they were going to die for these sins that they were committing there was a true repentance and a true confession that's a far cry from believers baptism I hope you know that because when we get baptised we're neither confessing nor repenting no we're just testifying it's the answer to the good conscience we're just testifying that we're already dead with Christ and buried with Christ and risen in

newness of life and the two things are pulled apart now we've got to come through Christ's baptism and that's the crux of the matter isn't it verse 13 then come of Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized with him but John forbade him now I know John knew so much and the more he was sold greater witness he's having an argument now I think he was standing in the river when Christ came into it and stood before him but John said no John forbade him saying I have need to be baptized of thee and comest thou to me now what was Christ's baptism all about well it certainly couldn't be the confession of sins could it because he knew no sin and it certainly wasn't repentance for he had never turned away one step from the centre of the Father's will at any time and it's certainly not a

believer who is looking to the cross and saying when Christ died I died he can't say that about himself what was his baptism all about then there must be a vast difference yes there was a vast difference what's exactly what he said to John but John forbade him saying I have need to be baptized of thee and comest thou to me and Jesus answering said unto him suffer it to be so now for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness and that's a tremendous statement you see first of all we've got to see John here you see John is representing both the law and the prophets because he belonged to the age of law and he was one of the Old Testament prophets now if you take the law and remember when we talk about the law we're not always talking about the ten commandments when we talk about the

law sometimes we're talking about the ceremonial law that is all the ceremonies all the sacrifices in Israel and you know John was representing all this calling the nation to repentance you know all those sacrifices back there they were all coping to the death of Christ make no mistakes about that you know make no mistakes about that because he's the antitype of all the prophets and remember all the prophets all the prophets had witnessed with him to him give all the prophets witness and John was one of the best witnesses and John said he would be the lamb you see Christ has come and he's putting himself into the hands of both the law and the prophets and he says I have come to fulfil you know everything that was written about me was right I have come to fulfil it and in death I shall

fulfil the promise and I'll make sure the prophets were talking right and so you see that Christ was placing himself into the hands of the law and the prophets he has come to fulfil and now he was accepting his destiny for his destiny was death and it was death that went on in the depths we were talking on Sunday morning about the depths of the cross it was deeper than anybody here ever knows about you see I'm sure the hymn writer was right when he said none of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed in fact when Christ looked at the cross he said I have a baptism to be baptised he had to go down into the depths where there was no standing and every wave and billow of God's wrath had to go over his

holy head you see he had come to be the sacrifice and he had come to fulfil

all that the prophets had spoken of him and this was a type of all that he was going to accomplish at the place called Calvary ah that's different from believers baptism and that's different from John's baptism now I want you to get the hold of this you can see the unity about the baptism and you can see the maturity of Christ and the decency now because he must fulfil all that was righteously spoken of him I want you to see the Trinity it says verse 16 Matthew 3 verse 16 and Jesus when he was baptised went up straightway out of the water which would teach you it wasn't sprinkling went up straightway out of the water and all the heavens were opened onto him and I think the hymn there is John the Baptist the heavens were opened onto him, onto John the Baptist and he John the Baptist saw

the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Christ I hope you are getting it properly because that's just what he has testified to over a little bit in John's gospel you know don't come round and ask me this evening when the meeting is over what does it mean the heavens were opened because I wouldn't know it wasn't that the clouds started because there are no clouds it's a very odd sign you never see a cloud in Palestine it's a big star oh no the heavens were opened don't ask me what it means I don't know I just know the heavens were opened that's all I accept it in my own mind in my own way but it says the heavens were opened and John saw the spirit of God capital S spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Christ and at that psychological second a voice from

heaven spoke this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased no wonder the father said that for the Lord Jesus in baptism had just said you know I accept my destiny I accept all this I accept dying for the people and the father said this is my beloved son to whom I am well pleased no wonder but you get this in your mind now you get these crooks at the door with a good fellow around with nothing in their hands they're always wanting to see the Trinity alright here it is the father is in heaven speaking is that right there's a voice from heaven speaking this is my beloved son so it must have been the father tell the father in heaven for the Holy Ghost is in between heaven and earth descending like a dove is that right there's a one in between heaven and earth is the son on earth dripping

with water he's just over the Jordan the father, son and Holy Ghost are all at the baptism the Trinity was there now next week we're going into the wilderness with Christ let's sing one or two of these verses where are we? oh yes 529 only three short verses we'll sing them all 529 down in the valley with my saviour I would go 529 529 down in the valley with my saviour I would go down in the valley with my saviour I would go I would never, ever, Everything's worth, everything's worth, I'm the father of all of them.

And the world's a better place, I'm the father of the future. This thing's for everything, It's all I've got.

I will follow you to the end of the world. I will follow you. I will follow you to the end of the world.

I will follow you. I will follow you to the end of the world. I will follow you.

I will follow you to the end of the world. I will follow you. I will follow you to the end of the world.

Dear Lord, part us in thy fear, and with thy blessing, take us to our homes and safety, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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