

# To Be a Disciple

## Lesson 601: The Preparatory Ministry of John the Baptizer

Matthew 3:1-17

### CONTINUITY FROM LAST WEEK

#### John the Baptizer under the microscope

1. Second most significant theological figure in the four Gospels.
2. Meticulous recording of his conception and birth.
3. Formative years and ministry in the WILDERNESS
4. Ended 400 year drought of no prophets of prophetic utterance.
5. Suspected reincarnation of the prophet Elijah (Malachi 4:5).
6. Fulfilled Isaiah prophecy of "voice crying in the wilderness (Isaiah 40:3)
7. Preached repentance and breaking-in of the Kingdom of God.
8. Confronted hypocrisy of religious establishment (Herod).
9. Ascetic and Attractional lifestyle and ministry.
10. Offered a Baptism of REPENTANCE (no mention of Holy Spirit)

## II. JOHN PREPARES THE WAY FOR JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY (Matthew 3:1-12)

### A. In those days John the Baptist came preaching ...

1. No input on Jesus age 1-30!
2. WILDERNESS: a special to Jewish people (See Isaiah 40:3)
3. REPENTANCE: Hebrew שׁוּב [SHUV] suggests a 'turning around'
4. See Malachi 4:6
5. John and Jesus has similar preaching content (See Matthew 4:17)
6. John identified as the NEW ELIJAH (See 2 Kings 1-8)
7. Water "baptism" was not a new thing.
8. Wrath and Judgment warning (axe, fire, winnowing fork)

### B. John the Baptizer performs Inaugural Baptism for Jesus the Messiah (3:13-17)

1. Precise location of Jesus' baptism is disputed.
2. Possible hint: See John 1:26-28
3. Jesus come to identify with sinful humanity
4. Holy Spirit empowers the *human nature of Jesus* to complete the task of our redemption.
5. Holy Spirit now transcends the 'repentance baptism' of John
6. Voice from Heaven (God) draws on Psalm 2:6-8 and Isaiah 42: 1, 6

## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean that Jesus is the *True Israel*?
2. In what way does Jesus' life differ from the *Old Israel*?
3. What was the main emphasis of Jesus' preaching according to Matthew 3:2?
4. Why would John preaching *in the wilderness* and his *clothing* stir up such excitement in Israel?
5. What prophecy does John's appearance fulfill according to Matthew?
6. What are some of the *word pictures* that John uses to describe the coming judgment?
7. What is the term John uses to describe the Messiah who would follow him?
8. John said that the Messiah would *baptize people with the Holy Spirit and with fire*. What does that mean?
9. In what way was John's baptism *different* from previous water baptism used by Israel?
10. Why do you think God sent John to prepare the way for Jesus?
11. What do you think our response to this section of Matthew's gospel should be?