

### Matthew: Chapter 3

**Mat 3:1** In those days **John** the Baptist (*Gk.910- a baptizer, as an epithet of Christ's forerunner*) (*"the Immerser"- Living Oracles New Testament*) came preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

*"Passages dealing with baptism are given a fair treatment in this version [ESV] (although, as with most others, the verb baptizo is anglicized, rather than being strictly translated as "immerse," and that for commercial purposes). This is a problem that goes all the way back to the King James Version, and has been almost uniformly followed since then. One can only imagine how few editions would be sold among denominationalists if "immersion" was the common rendition of baptizo." [mine]*

Jackson, Wayne. "The English Standard Version." *ChristianCourier.com*.

Access date: September 15, 2017.

<https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/591-english-standard-version-the>

**John**, being the son of "a certain priest named **Zacharias**" (*Lk 1:5, 13*), a descendant of **Levi** (*from which the priesthood came- Jos 18:7*), with **Elizabeth** his "wife from the daughters of **Aaron**" (*also a descendant of Levi*) and **Jesus**, as "the **Lion of the tribe of Judah**, the **Root of David**" (*Rev 5:5*), Whose lineage both legal (*via Joseph His 'legal' [step] father*) and genealogically (*via Mary His mother by blood*) would have been descendants of two brothers (*Judah and Levi*), sons sired by **Jacob**, who was **Israel**. In *Lk 1:36* **Mary** was told that her "relative" (*Gk.4773- a relative [by blood]- "cousin"- KJV*) **Elizabeth** had "also conceived a son" making them descendants of the same clan as their husbands since, if they were not, women who married outside their tribe would take their inheritance with them to become members of their husband's tribe (*Num 36*). Therefore, as descendants of two of the twelve patriarchs, **John** and **Jesus** would have been considered 'cousins' and would have known of each other, but here in person by revelation. (*Jn 1:31*)

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**Mat 3:2** "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand (*Gk.1448- Thayer, "has come nigh, is at hand"*). (*Which it did come on the day of Pentecost after Jesus ascended 10 days earlier.*)

If **God** says something will take place, **His** prophetic word was written as though it had already been fulfilled according to **His** omnipotence; **He is God!** But there are those misguided souls of the denominational world (*and possibly some even in the church*) who attempt to bring **God** down to our finite carnal level of thinking, by falsely claiming that since the **Jews** (*allegedly*) thwarted **God's** plan to set up a (*what they believe is an earthly*) kingdom via the crucifixion, **He** substituted the church to take its place until after some erroneous doctrine of a rapture occurs and **God** literally sets a physical New Jerusalem in Palestine. This same group does something similar with *Rev 1:1* where **John** was told to warn the churches of things that were "soon (*Gk.5034- a brief space [of time]*) [to] take place". If what happened under the Roman government took place shortly after **John's** revealing, why can't such nullify these false millennial doctrines

*(unless of course they believe “soon” means thousands of years into the future and God’s thoughts are their thoughts- Isa 55:8)?*

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**Mat 3:3** 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. *(Isa 40:3)* **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 **Judaea** and all the region about **Jordan** were going out to him, **6** and were baptized *(Gk.907- to make whelmed [that is, fully wet])* by him in the river **Jordan**, (“because water was plentiful there”- *Jn 3:23*) confessing their sins.

Immersion was a common practice for the Jews under the Old Covenant since every Aaronic priest had to perform such for initiation into the priesthood before entering the Holy Place or when attending the altar of burnt sacrifice. Before a Levite could even don his priestly attire he had to put “away the filth of the flesh” *(cleanse his body of the physical filth)* but under the New Covenant, this washing promotes “the answer of a good conscience toward God” *(1 Pet 3:21)* in answer to our “calling on the name of the Lord” *(Act 22:16)*.

**Exo 29:4** You shall bring **Aaron** and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and **wash them with water.** *(emp. added)*

**Lev 16:4** He shall put on the holy linen coat and shall have the linen undergarment on his body, and he shall tie the linen sash around his waist and wear the linen turban; these are the holy garments. He shall **bathe his body** in water and **then** put them on. *(As for us in Gal 3:27 to enter the N.T. priesthood.) (emp. added)*

**Exo 30:18** "You shall also make a basin of bronze, with its stand of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, **19** with which **Aaron** and his sons shall **wash their hands and their feet.** **20** **When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister,** to burn a food offering to the **LORD**, they shall wash with water, **so that they may not die.** **21** They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations." *(emp. added)*

**1Ti 2:8** I desire then that in every place the men should **pray, lifting holy hands** without anger or quarreling; *(Here, exposing hands that aren't defiled by sin but concerning the O.T. priesthood, hands that were washed in order to minister in the sacrifice as an O.T. shadow of the N.T. act of worship.) (emp. added)*

Full immersion may have been an ‘initiation’ **into** the priesthood with only the washing of “hands and feet” after that to attend to their worship duties, but either way the Jews understood that **John** the Immerser practiced immersion as a ‘form’ of cleansing, thus later to understand it as an initiation *(if you will)* into a different priesthood.

**Heb 7:12** For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the **Law** as well.

1Pe 2:5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house (*the church*), to be a **holy priesthood**, to offer **spiritual** sacrifices acceptable to **God through Jesus Christ**. (*emp. added*)

Rom 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your **spiritual worship**. (*emp. added*)

In **Judaism**, **ritual washing**, or ablution, takes two main forms. A *tevilah* (טבילה) is a full body immersion in a *mikveh*, and a *netilat yadayim* which is the washing of the hands with a cup (see [Handwashing in Judaism](#)).

**Mikveh** or **mikvah** (Hebrew: / מקוה / מקווה, Modern *mikve*, Tiberian *miqwe*, pl. *mikva'ot*, *mikvoth*, *mikvot*, or (Yiddish) *mikves*,<sup>[1][2]</sup> lit. "a collection") is a bath used for the purpose of **ritual immersion** in Judaism<sup>[3]</sup> to achieve **ritual purity**.

Wikipedia

Thus, showing that immersion was a commonly understood practice in Israel, but in this case it took on a whole new meaning, under a whole new priesthood with an entirely new **High Priest**. **Jesus** came from the tribe of **Judah** of which “**Moses** said nothing about priests” (*Heb 7:14*). Our baptism into **Christ** via the “washing of regeneration” (*Titus 3:5*) is our garment of invitation to “the wedding supper of the **Lamb**” (*Rev 19:9*). And anyone without such an invitation wearing that garment, **Jesus** said will be thrown “**into outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**” (*Mat 22:13*).

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**Mat 3:7** 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. **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. **10** Even now the axe 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.

- \*These ‘elites’ among the Jewish nation felt that their lineage going all the way back to **Abraham** secured their favor with **God**. Having such records gave them all the proof they needed. They resented **John’s** baptism because he didn’t, according to their thinking, have the authority to baptize since his baptism was for every tribe in Israel, not just for the Levitical tribe of priests. Through **God’s** providence, though, when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed (*70 AD*) those records were destroyed along with them. A spiritual **Jew** only needs to trace his lineage back to the seed of **God’s** pure word to prove his initiation into the family of **God** (*the ‘incorruptible’ seed- 1 Pet 1:23*). Only repentance concerning the kingdom would have been a sign of these Pharisees’ and Sadducees’ true relationship to **God**.

**Ezra 2:62** These sought their registration among those **enrolled in the genealogies**, but they were not found there, and so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. *(They had no proof that they were descendants of Levi.) (emp. added)*

**1Ti 1:3** As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, **4** nor to devote themselves to myths and **endless genealogies**, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith *(Gk.4102- especially reliance upon Christ for salvation. [not on one's Jewish lineage]). (emp. added)*

- The axe being laid to the root of the trees refers to a severing of physical Israel from the "Israel of God" (*Gal 6:16*). Their claim to be rooted in Abraham as their father through a physical lineage was cut off since it wasn't rooted in faith (*Gal 3:7*).

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**Mat 3:11** "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 *(Thayer: "to imbue richly with the Holy Spirit [just as its large bestowment is called an outpouring])"* 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."

**John** employed water as the means through which obedience was achieved "for repentance".

**Act 19:4** And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the One Who was to come **after** him, that is, Jesus." **5** On hearing this, they were baptized in the name *(Gk.3686- authority)* of the **Lord Jesus**.

The sins remitted before the cross *(all the way back to Adam)* retroactively were done so, with a view toward **Christ's** imminent sacrifice *(see Zec 14:8; Jn 4:10)*. Again, when something was prophesied via **Holy Spirit** inspiration, it was as though it had already happened *(known as "prophetic perfect")*. But when Pentecost came *(after Christ's sacrifice)* baptism focused on repentance and immersion in water **for** the remission of sin. Water, in and of itself, cannot save. Neither can **Christ's** blood, in and of **itself**, save without obedience "from the heart to the standard of teaching *(emulating Christ's death, burial and resurrection through baptism)* to which you were committed" (*Rom 6:17*).

**John** then focused on **Christ's** baptism "with the Holy Spirit and fire".

Stating "you" when John spoke to the recipients of these two baptisms was in general and not in specific as to who would receive the one or the other. **Holy Spirit** is only recorded to have miraculously fallen on, first **Christ** after His baptism and the apostles on the day of Pentecost (*Act 2:4*). Cornelius with his household in Acts 10 only received

the miraculous gift of tongues as proof (*1 Cor 14:22*) to Peter that Gentiles were accepted into the church (*Act 11:14-17*). In their case to be immersed by the Holy Spirit they would have received the same measure of gifts that the apostles did (*2 Cor 11:5*) and thus would not have needed for Peter to tell them what he came there for. This is why in Acts 11:17 Peter referred to how the Spirit fell on Cornelius' household as "the like gift" since both originated from Heaven. (*Obviously we can infer that Paul was immersed in the Holy Spirit at some point as per Ananias' statement in Acts 9:17.*)

The baptism of fire is further explained in Luke 3:17. John, in this parallel passage, refers to those Jews who accepted Christ as the "wheat" which would be gathered "into His (*Holy Spirit's*) garner" representing their acceptance into the spiritual benefits of the New Testament dispensation. But those Jews who rejected Christ's Messiahship were referred to as "chaff" being burned "with fire unquenchable" thus representing their being rejected along with the final end of the Jewish economy under the Mosaic dispensation.

But, Christ's own baptism seems to create a problem for some (*as it did John*) since He "in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (*Heb 4:15*).

**Mat 3:13** 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?"

**Mat 3:15** But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." (*Gk.3956/1343*-*"every righteous ordinance"* Adam Clarke- see *Lk 1:6*) Then he consented.

Since Aaron, as O.T. high priest (*along with his sons and those who replaced them*), was commanded by Moses to be initiated into the priesthood to serve in that office via the immersion process (*ordinance- Lev 16:4*), it was necessary for Christ to obey such (*He lived under the O.T. Law which He had not yet 'fulfilled'- Lk 24:44*) in order to become our High Priest (*Heb 2:17; 5:5*) under the New Covenant, which He did "to fulfill all every righteous ordinance" (*Thayer: "to perform completely whatever is right"- see Heb 7:27; 9:12; 10:10*); as the 'example', per se, that we are to follow via baptism into the N.T. priesthood (*Heb 7:12*). Our baptism is to remove sin and thus "qualify" us (*Col 1:12*) to enter into the priesthood (*Col 1:13*), whereas His (*Who "knew no sin"- 2 Cor 5:21, as the "Lamb without spot"- 1 Pet 1:19*) was as an initiation into the office as our High Priest **whereby that process could be completed** (*Him becoming our Mediator as the O.T. high priest was to Israel*) via His fulfilling "every righteous ordinance".

**Mat 3:16** And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and he (*John*) saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him (*Notice how Holy Spirit is always involved after obedience to the ordinance of baptism; for Christ miraculously, for us as a 'bestowment'- Act 2:38. In Acts 10, only Cornelius and company received it miraculously before since it was necessary to convince Peter of the Gentiles being*

qualified to enter the kingdom. That was a miraculous event but did not save them or Peter wouldn't have asked "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people" [v. 47] since he understood that only obedience to the 'ordinance' of baptism for the remission of sin can anyone be saved. They had yet to receive the seal of their inheritance [Eph 1:13-14.]; 17 and behold, a voice from Heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased."

*Mar 9:7 And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son; listen to Him."*

Jesus was "transfigured" (Mat 17:2; Mk 9:2) among God's "two witnesses" (Rev 11:3) who represented the Law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah) but since His purpose was to "fulfill them" (Mat 5:17) God's instruction to Peter, James and John at that time was to honor that fulfillment (of following Jesus rather than the Law and prophets since He is greater than they were- Mat 12:6) even though they "did not know what to say, for they were terrified" (Mk 9:6). Now, as He did with Israel, through Jesus (and thus His church through the New Covenant), God dwells among mankind, His will being done on earth, as it is in Heaven, according to the disciples' prayer (Lk 11:2-4).

Exo 29:44 I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar. Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate to serve Me as priests. 45 I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God.

The church is New Testament Israel! Since the kingdom came on Pentecost (in the form of the church) we can now conclude God's will on earth is (via the church and the Great Commission) being done. Righteousness dwells on earth through God's people (N.T. Christians) i.e., spiritual Israel- "...that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Pet 2:24). God has always dwelt among His people, whether via the priesthood of O.T. Israel (specifically spiritual Israel as their "Husband"- Jer 31:32) or N.T. spiritual Israel (the church, as the bride of Christ- 2 Cor 11:2; Rev 21:9) the New Covenant priesthood (as we [devote ourselves] to the apostles' teaching [found in the epistles] and the fellowship, to breaking of bread and prayers"- Act 2:41 Denominationalism does not do that! ).

Mat 1:22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet (Isa 7:14):  
23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" (which means, **God with us**). (emp. added) (God, through Jesus, is now dwelling on earth through Christ's bride. -1 Cor 3:16; Php 2:13; 1 Jn 4:4)

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...Deity "cannot be tempted with evil" (Jas 1:13) so how then could Christ have "been tempted as are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15)? He first had to become "the Son of Man" (Mat 9:6) via the "body [that God] prepared for [Him]" (Heb 10:5) since, as God, the devil could not tempt Him, but as man he could. In Mat 3:17, Jesus was here 'introduced' as God's Son once He was immersed into the New Covenant office of High Priest, at which point He could be "able to sympathize with our weaknesses" as the Son of Man. He was always God's Son, but in order to "fulfill all righteousness" in bringing man into a covenant relationship with His Father as His

brethren (*Heb 2:11*), a “propitiation” (*Gk.2435- an atoning victim*) had to become the final substitute (*Heb 7:27*) since “in burnt offerings and sin offerings [God had] taken no pleasure” (*Heb 10:6*) through the sacrificial system which was “weakened by the flesh” (*Rom 8:3*). Since God expected Israel to choose the best of their flocks to be their Passover lamb (*Ex 12:5*), He also gave of His best to become our Passover (*1 Cor 5:7*). Jesus, then, as the Son of God became the Son of Man in order for “all who did receive Him, who believed in His name”, from among the children of man, to be given “the right to become children of God” (*Jn 1:12*).

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**Luk 4:1** And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness... (*emp. added*)

There is absolutely no evidence whatsoever, even as God in the flesh since His birth, of Jesus ever performing one miracle before (*John*) “saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him”. His first one, as recorded in scripture, was at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee where He “manifested His glory (*changed water into wine*). And His disciples believed in Him” (*Jn 2:11*). Thus, showing here among other passages, that Holy Spirit at that time was the part of the Godhead responsible for such events that occurred outside the natural realm. Apart from being immersed in the Holy Spirit, not even Jesus performed miracles. John knew Jesus to be the Messiah (*Jn 1:29*) but His ability to perform miracles **after** His baptism and immersion of the Holy Spirit evidenced it (*Mat 11:3-6, 1 Cor 14:22*).

**Mat 4:1** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

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 March 9, 2021  
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