

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 6 December 2015..... Matthew 03The Preaching of John the Baptist
- 2) 13 December..... Matthew 01 The Genealogy of Christ
- 3) 20 December..... Matthew 02 The Magi
- 4) 27 December..... Matthew 04 The Temptation of Jesus
- 5) 03 January 2016..... Matthew 05a..... The Sermon on the Mount
- 6) 10 January..... Matthew 06..... Benevolence Giving
- 7) 17 January..... Matthew 05b..... Personal Relationships
- 8) 24 January..... Matthew 07 Judging Others
- 9) 31 January..... Matthew 08..... More Miracles
- 10) 07 February..... Matthew 09-10 More Miracles
- 11) 14 February..... Matthew 11..... Tough Questions
- 12) 21 February..... Matthew 12..... Time to Pick a Fight
- 13) 28 February..... Matthew 13..... More Parables

INTRODUCTION

- Matthew (aka Levi) wrote his Gospel to Jews living in Palestine some 20-30 years after Christ's death and resurrection
- Matthew's and Luke's Gospels seemed to use Mark's Gospel to develop some of their story lines (These 3 Gospels are known as the "synoptic" Gospels for their obvious similarities)
- **Reason to compile a Gospel.** It is 20-30 years after the Lord's crucifixion and resurrection, the church is being persecuted to extinction, the Apostles and other eye witnesses are dying off, and believers need confirmed evidence to base their faith on
- **Unique Features of Matthew's Gospel:**
 - Matthew focuses on the kingship of Christ more than the others
 - Matthew is the most systematic of the Gospels grouping similar things together such as parables, discourses, and miracles
 - Matthew emphasizes final rewards and punishment
 - Matthew records 10 large groups or multitudes of people being healed of any and all ailments instantaneously and completely (If Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, as many claim, why don't we see 100% healings of anyone and everyone of anything and everything, anytime and anywhere, instantaneously & completely today? We'll have to wait till Chapter 4)
- In Chapter 3 we fast forward more than 25 years from Chaps 1 & 2
- The people, wearied from good traditions-gone-bad in mindless and meaningless repetitive religious practices and cold heartlessness of their religious leaders, were drawn to John's down to earth approach to God – Let's go back to the basics – REPENT and get right with God, then God can start blessing us again

Passage	Comments
Matthew 3:1-12	<p>John The Baptist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v2. "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ "Kingdom of Heaven" is only found in Matthew, and he used it 32x. Mark & Luke use "Kingdom of God" ♦ John is conveying that God's Kingdom is stretching down to earth with the introduction of Jesus Christ • v4. What is with John's attire of Camel skins and a diet of locusts (the only clean insect Jews could eat)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Some say it was to protest self-indulgence ♦ More than likely, it was to signal that a prophet like Elijah had come to herald the coming of the Messiah • vv5-6. Notice that large crowds of people were coming to hear John's message and to get their lives straight • vv7. Why jump all over the Pharisees & Sadducees & call them "vipers" if they were coming to truly repent? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Possibly, the Pharisees and Sadducees were seeking to identify with the people, and not with God • v8. How do you tell if someone is truly born again? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If they recited the sinner's prayer? <input type="checkbox"/> If they are members of a church? <input type="checkbox"/> If they got baptized? <input type="checkbox"/> If they have fruit in their lives (love, joy, peace, etc) • v9. Notice that God can raise up stones to be the children of Abraham. This is a powerful claim that we don't need to be blood descendants of Abraham to get to Heaven, but spiritual descendants through faith • vv10-12. "I am not fit to remove His sandals" – Slaves had the menial task to wash someone's feet when they came into

Passage	Comments
	<p>a house, BUT John said he wasn't even worthy to take Jesus' sandals off. If John was deemed to be the "Greatest in the Kingdom of God" by Jesus, how much more unworthy are we? Yet, we too are deemed worthy to be called "friends" of Jesus Christ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ What does the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Fire convey? ♦ Consider this. Since the gift of tongues was only evident in 3 out of 4 recorded baptisms in Acts, Baptism of the Holy Spirit conveys much more than receiving a notable but temporary gift – It conveyed the initiation of someone into the Body of Christ ♦ ...and Fire conveyed the judgment aspect of this special baptism – Our judgment is taken care of. Others will be consumed by Fire
3:13-17	<p>The Baptism of Jesus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was Jesus baptized if He was not a sinner? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ To fully identify with all sinners ♦ To show John that He was in fact the Messiah ♦ To signal the beginning of His messianic ministry ♦ To identify Himself as a priest of Israel (Lev 8:6) ♦ To provide an example for believers to follow ♦ To demonstrate the involvement and approval of the other persons of the Trinity in His ministry • vv16-17. God provides a rare visual and auditory confirmation of this momentous event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Why doesn't God provide more demonstrative proofs of His existence? Such proofs would force people to believe against their will, and faith would not be needed.
Distinctions Between John's Baptism of Repentance & Jesus' Great Commission Baptism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Great Commission baptism does not make ready a people prepared for the establishment of the Kingdom or church; 2) John's baptism did not carry with it the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit; 3) John's baptism was not in the name of Jesus (or in Matthew's account of the Great Commission, "in the name of the Father, & of the Son, & of the Holy Spirit); 4) Great Commission baptism brings one into Christ, into the One Church Body, and into the Kingdom. 5) Both types of baptisms accomplished their objectives – They were an outward sign of an inward change of heart and commitment, & they got their devotees wet

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS

- John took his faith seriously. Do we?
- Are we politically correct or do we boldly proclaim the truth?
- John's faith was based on humility. What is our faith based on?

NEXT WEEK: Matthew 01. We backtrack to Chapter 1 for the genealogy of Christ from Abraham and the unique selection of Jesus' parents

