



This is the first course for all students at the
Dispensation of Grace Bible Institute
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Welcome to John the Baptist

Dispensationally Considered

Course 101

This is the first class that every student with Grace Bible Institute takes.

This course serves as an introduction to the practice of studying the Bible rightly divided.

2nd Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

What is Right Division, and what does it mean to “Righty Divide the word of truth?”

Let’s take a look at Jesus putting this principle of bible study into practice the very first time he ever preached a message.

Luke 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Jesus quit reading in the middle of Isaiah 61:2, and he closed the book up and said, “**This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.**”

Let us take a look at the verse as Isaiah quotes it and see if we can figure out why Jesus abruptly stops reading in the middle of Isaiah 61:2 and he begins to start teaching:

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the

LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Jesus does not quote the rest of Isaiah 61:2 and 61:3 because those things would not be fulfilled on that day, but in the future tribulation period, and in Israel's future kingdom which was yet to come. Jesus will come back and fulfill those verses at his second coming.

Jesus rightly divided the purpose of his first coming, from the purpose of his second coming, and that is right division 101. Now let's see why John the Baptist is so important to God that he puts his ministry at the beginning of each of the four gospels.

When you pile up all the scriptures about John the Baptist there is more written about him, and his short ministry, than what is contained in the books of Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Haggai, 2nd Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, 2nd and 3rd John, and Jude combined?

John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins to prepare Israel for their King and his coming kingdom. He preached about Israel's coming kingdom, which would be rejected by Israel at first. Israel's kingdom will come to pass, but only after the dispensation of grace has run its course.

The dispensation of grace is the "unsearchable riches of Christ" that Paul preached about, that he said was kept hidden in God from before the beginning of the world.

Ephesians 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

John the Baptist and his Message

There are numerous differences with John's message, and the message that we preach today. This study will take a look at many of those differences.

This study will also take a look at one of the most misunderstood teachings in scripture, and that is Israel's future kingdom, of which John was the first to announce as being **at hand** in Matthew 3:2.

Matthew 3:2 Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Luke 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Luke 16:16 says, The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

It is said by some, that John the Baptist is the hinge upon which the old, and the new testaments are connected. That is an interesting position, but it is doctrinally incorrect.

It is Christ, and his resurrection, that the two testaments hinge upon, for it is with the death of the Testator (Jesus Christ) that the law was fulfilled, and the kingdom could be offered to Israel.

Hebrews 9:16 says, For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

Then, and only then, could the new covenant be made with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jeremiah 31:31 says, Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

If you are a Gentile hearing this, you are not a member of the house of Israel, nor are you a member of the house of Judah, you are a member the body of Christ if you are saved today.

Ephesians 4:12 says, For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

To lay claim to any of Israel's eternal promises is be antisemitic, even if you start calling yourself “**A Spiritual Jew**” to justify your actions, which is taught in many churches and bible colleges.

The new covenant mentioned in Jeremiah 31 will be written on Israel's heart in their kingdom, and they will not need to be taught by anyone about the Lord for they will all know him from the least of them to the greatest.

God saw fit to place the life and teachings of John the Baptist at the front of each of the four gospels to help us have a good doctrinal understanding of the end of an era, and near the beginning of a new one.

Israel was still under the law of Moses at the time that John and Jesus came on the scene in Israel, and it is imperative to study these foundational scriptures to help us learn how to begin to rightly divide the word of truth.

Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

It behooves each of us to make a diligent study of every portion of the word of God to see what God's word has to say to us about a particular subject, person, or dispensation, and we will learn somethings that will change our life.

Chapter One

The significance of John's birth:

Sinful mankind had been waiting almost 3,600 years since God had created the world for its Saviour to come. Not until the angel Gabriel spoke to Daniel was there any clue as to when the Saviour would come and die (be cut off) for the sins of the world:

Daniel 9:24 says, Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of the abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

The reason for this timeline in the book of Daniel is that it serves as proof to anyone that Jesus is the only one who can be the Messiah.

That main argument is that the prophets say that Elijah (Elias) must come prior to the Messiah, so if you show them the timeline from the book of Daniel it points to only one period in history which occurred a little over 2,000 years ago.

If it points to only one time period then we need only examine who it was during that time in history that fulfilled what the scriptures said the Messiah would do, and we come up with the only possible conclusion, Jesus!

“Isn't Elijah supposed to come before the Messiah?” Yes, and No.

Matthew 17:10 says, And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. 11 But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed.

The name Elias here is the same person as Elijah, the difference is when the translation comes from Hebrew to English, as opposed to when it comes from Greek to English. Elias is Elijah when translated from Greek to English.

Elijah does come during the time of Jacob's trouble, just before the Messiah's return, and he restores all things as one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3, but John the Baptist came before the Messiah's first coming in the spirit and the power of Elijah.

Luke 1:17 says, And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Daniel's Seventy Weeks

Daniel 9:24-27 spoke of seventy weeks, and each week was exactly seven years, as recorded in the story of Jacob's betrayal by Laban:

Genesis 29:27 says, Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven others years.

450 BC-----The birth of Christ-----33 AD

483 years had passed from the commandment to build and to restore Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince was cut off (crucified), but seven years of great wrath still remained for God to make an end of Israel's sins (the 70th week of Daniel), and to usher in righteousness in their future kingdom. See Jeremiah 30:7.

As the years began to pass by the prophecies of Malachi and Isaiah about a forerunner who would prepare the way of the Lord must have seemed like a breath of fresh air to Israel:

Malachi 3:1 says, Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

There is no excuse for anyone to say that they do not believe in the divinity of the Messiah, and on that basis reject the Messianic claims of Jesus, because Malachi makes it very clear that God's messenger (John the Baptist) prepares the way for God himself to appear to Israel as recorded in Malachi 3:1:

Isaiah 40:3 says, The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: 5 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. 6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: 7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth

upon it: surely the people is grass. 8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

John the Baptist prepared in the desert a highway for Jesus Christ, whom Isaiah himself calls God in verse three. Many had thought that the Lord's forerunner might descend from heaven in a chariot of fire like Elijah's ascension into heaven. This was not to be the case.

Because of John's miraculous birth, it is imperative that a study be made concerning the circumstances surrounding that event. We must ask "What is the significance of John's birth, life, and his teachings, and how do they affect our beliefs today?"

Luke 1:5 says, There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they

perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

John the Baptist's birth was so miraculous that an angel was sent to announce it, so that Zacharias might have the faith he needed to raise this very special child. You will find that by studying the circumstances surrounding the birth of John the Baptist that the scriptures point to the "approximate" time of our Saviour's birth:

Luke 1:5 says, There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia.

Abia (or Abijah in Old Testament Hebrew) was a priest who ministered in the tabernacle during the days of king David, before the temple was built. He was the leader of a course of priests who were to burn incense unto God. In 1st Chronicles 24 king David appointed twenty-four courses of priests.

Each course was to minister in the tabernacle, and then later in the temple, for one half of a month (15 days) each year, at the same time every year. The Jewish calendar is four months off from our calendar. This calendar is still in use today in Israel by the Jews.

The months in the Jewish calendar:

(The Jewish year begins in mid-March)

1. March/April is the month of Nisan: Exodus 12:2
2. April/May is the month of Zif: 1st Kings 6:
3. May/June is the month of Sivan: Esther 8:9
4. June/July is the month of Tammuz:
5. July/August is the month of Ab: Ezra 7:8-9
6. August/September is the month of Elul: Zechariah 7:1
7. September/October is the month of Tishri: 1st Kings 8:2

8. October/November is the month of Bul: 1st Kings 6:38

9. November/December is the month of Chislue: Nehemiah 1:1

10. December/January is the month of Tebeth:

11. January/February is the month of Sebat: Zechariah 1:7

12. February/March is the month of Adar: Esther 3:7

* A Jewish year (a Biblical year) is based on twelve 30-day months for a total of a 360-day year.

Since we already know that John was six months older than Jesus by the accounts of their births in Luke 1:24-37, it is logical to conclude that if we can figure out when John the Baptist was born, that we can figure out "**roughly**" when Jesus was born.

Luke 1:36 says, And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

The course of Abia (Abijah) ministered in the eighth course of priests, which was during the second half of the fourth month on the Jewish calendar, which is the month of Tammuz, or mid-June through mid-July.

Zacharias would have ministered in the temple from July 1st - July 15th. We can also see from the account in Luke chapter one that Elisabeth conceived as soon as Zacharias had completed his course, which would have been "**about**" the 16th of July.

Luke 1:23 says, And it came to pass, that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. 24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived,

By adding nine months to the date given for the completion of Zacharias' ministration (ministry), we can place the birth of John the Baptist at "**approximately**" April the 16th on our calendar.

Jesus' "**approximate**" date of birth could then be determined by adding six months to John's birth date, which would bring us to "**around**" October the 16th. Does anything significant happen around that time each year?

It is the same time when Israel celebrates the feast of tabernacles. What a coincidence. This is a prophetic feast which celebrates when God will one day tabernacle among his people. Immanuel: God with us.

December 25th was given to us by pagans who worshiped the birth of the Sun god whose name was Ra, on that very day. We need to remember that it is not the date of Christ's birth that we as Christians are to place an emphasis on.

We are to emphasize the facts that Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross for us, was buried, and that he rose from the dead on the third day, just as he said he would. See 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

We should emphasize resurrection day (more commonly referred to as Easter, which is English for Ishtar) above all other days, and not dilute it with her fertility bunnies, and Easter (Ishtar) eggs. We should ask ourselves, "What do Christian children think of more on this day?" Is it Jesus, or is it the Easter (Ishtar) Bunny?

Elisabeth gets her name from Aaron's wife Elisheba (See Exodus 6:23), she is the daughter of Amminadab and sister of Naashon his son, who are all from the tribe of Judah (Numbers 1:7), and both of them appear in the lineage of Christ found in Luke 3:31-34.

Elisheba and Elisabeth were both married to priests from the tribe of Levi, they both lost a son at the age of 30 soon after they had begun their ministry (Elisheba lost 2 Nadab and Abihu).

Elisabeth was of the daughters of Aaron, not of the sons of Aaron (Leviticus 10:14), so they were at least 50 percent from the tribe of Judah and 50 percent from the tribe of Levi, thus linking the two tribes together that would make up Israel's priests and kings.

Aaron and Elisheba's daughters could marry any Jew from any tribe and probably married either other Jews from the tribe of Judah, or from the tribe of Levi. I believe it was probably from the tribe of Judah.

We also know that Zacharias and Elisabeth lived in the hill country of Judah (Luke 1:39). The Levites had no land inheritance, as the LORD was their inheritance (Numbers 18:20). Cities were given unto the Levites to dwell in among the other tribes (Numbers 35:2).

The birth and childhood of John the Baptist:

Mary went to visit her cousin Elisabeth, after she had heard the news from the angel that the Christ child would come from her womb, and that her cousin would also bear a son who would prepare the way for the Messiah, Elisabeth was excited at the news:

Luke 1:39 says, And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; 40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. 41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: 42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. 43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

This verse, and verse fifteen of the same chapter, are two of the most misinterpreted verses in the Bible, verse fifteen says:

Luke 1:15 says, For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

Does this mean that John the Baptist was saved inside his mother's womb? No, it does not! Could John's mother Elisabeth have been saved at the same moment also, seeing how she too was filled with the Holy Ghost? No!

There are numerous times in the Bible where God filled people with his Spirit to perform certain tasks that they could not have done without His help, but this didn't constitute salvation.

Exodus 31:2 says, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: 3 And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom. and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,

God certainly could save someone from inside their mother's womb if He wanted to, but this was not the case. The holy Spirit did not start to seal or indwell (take up a permanent residence) believers before the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Ephesians 4:30 says, And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

* Luke's gospel records that Mary stayed for the birth of John.

Luke 1:56 says, And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house. 57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered: and brought forth a son. 58 And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

And her cousins: This was probably Mary's family as she is the only cousin of Elisabeth that we know by name.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. 61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. 62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. 63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. 64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. 65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. 66 And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him. 67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, 68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. 76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, 78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, 79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. 80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in the spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

Note that these verses also state that Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost. This does not mean that Zacharias was saved at that moment either. There is a

difference between being filled with the Holy Ghost and being indwelt (or sealed) by Him.

Zacharias' entrance into the kingdom rested in his acceptance of the gospel of the kingdom. When someone today places their faith in the resurrected Christ, and His work on the cross alone for their salvation, the holy Spirit seals their eternal destiny from that moment on. That is the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:24

These verses we are dealing with also deal with the very important issue of the name of Christ's forerunner. Names were very important to the people of Israel, and to God also.

John the Baptist was not sent by a man, nor an institution, or even by his father who was a Levitical priest, but rather, he was sent by God himself, and only God had the right to choose John's name.

Not only was the name of John important to God, but his "title" identifying him as "the Baptist" was as well. We should also note that Jesus was "the Christ," Paul was "the apostle of the Gentiles," and Peter was identified as "the stone". These others were not singled out as John was with the title of "the Baptist."

John 1:6 says, There was a man sent from God, whose name was John, 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him (Christ Jesus) might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

God gave John his title (the Baptist), and his message (repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand) i.e., also called the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23), which was the same message that Jesus, and all the twelve apostles preached to Israel.

The gospel of the kingdom did not emphasize faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as the gospel of the grace does today, it emphasized the believing that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, and it had with it the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Churches today should preach the gospel of the grace of God as Paul preached it in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. See Acts 20:24 as well.

The apostle Peter, as we shall see, was also a disciple of John the Baptist briefly before Jesus came on the scene. There are two verses of scripture which lead us to this conclusion, and they are:

Mark 1:5 says, And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

Peter was a part of this "all" spoken about in verse five for the following reasons: First, we know that Andrew was definitely a disciple of John the Baptist. The other reason that points to this conclusion is Peter's own statement in Acts 1:22 when choosing a replacement for Judas who betrayed Jesus:

The two requirements to be an apostle to Israel:

Acts 1:21 says, Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

The First Requirement:

Peter said that the first requirement to be one of the twelve apostles was that the person must have companied with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John the Baptist.

This requirement rules out all of the modern-day self-proclaimed apostles that we see on television. They were not there companying with Jesus since the baptism of John.

The Second Requirement:

The must have remained with them all the time until the time he was taken up from them, to be a witness of his resurrection. These requirements also rule out Paul as being the twelfth apostle to Israel. Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles.

Romans 11:13.

The twelve apostles were to the Jews only, and only those twelve apostles shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, See Matthew 19:28 & Luke 22:30. Paul's own words prove that he was not one of the twelve apostles to Israel:

1st Corinthians 15:5 says, And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Jesus had only briefly mentioned the word church to the twelve apostles on two occasions, because he wanted them to know about the kingdom that was soon going to be offered to Israel after the death of Christ. See Matthew 16:18 and 18:17.

The church that Jesus mentioned in Matthew 16:18 & 18:17 was not the body of Christ that we are a part of today, it was the kingdom church (assembly) that was started by Jesus.

Jesus spent all of his earthly ministry teaching his disciples all about a future kingdom, and not about the dispensation of grace that Paul teaches about in his epistles.

Peter's names of Cephas, and Simon, are emphasized in Matthew 16:18 and John 1:42 to differentiate him from Jesus who is the rock upon whom the kingdom church was built, not Peter, whose name means a stone.

Something new would come on the scene once Israel would reject the offer of her kingdom. A new dispensation of grace where the gospel of the grace of God would be preached. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached once again during the tribulation period:

Matthew 24:14 says, And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

There will be no need for the gospel of the kingdom to be preached to Jews during the kingdom for all of Israel shall know the Lord according to Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 31:34 says, And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Chapter Two

The kingdom of heaven

John the Baptist remained in the wilderness until his 30th birthday because prophets and priests were not allowed to minister in the temple until they had reached the age of 30:

Numbers 4:1 And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying..., 3 From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

The people would have never accepted John's message if he had appeared on the scene even one year earlier. John was the son of a priest named Zacharias from the tribe of Levi, but he would not follow in his father's footsteps and minister in the synagogues, or the temple.

John was to usher in the gospel of the kingdom message to Israel. God had a special task for this prophet, and God introduced John in a very unique way:

Matthew 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, 2 Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias (Isaiah), saying, 4 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. 6 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. Matthew 3:1-6

Notice that John said the kingdom of heaven is at hand here. The kingdom was at hand while the king was with them, but soon after Jesus rose from the dead the kingdom could now be offered to the nation.

Israel soon rejected the offer of the kingdom in the early Acts period (Acts 1-8) and the dispensation of grace began. More on this in our Acts studies.

The kingdom will once again be at hand during the tribulation period, just prior to Jesus' return to set up that kingdom which will mean that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached during that time (the time of Jacob's trouble).

The Jews knew the Messiah's forerunner would come and preach these very things, which is why they questioned him as to who he was, and why was he baptizing. Every Pharisee knew the words of Isaiah well:

Isaiah 40:3 The voice of him that cryeth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. 5 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

John's seclusion in the wilderness sheltered him from the evils of his day which made it a lot easier for him to call evil sin, even when he was confronted with the religious leaders of his day:

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

There is a difference in John the Baptist's message that he preached prior to Jesus' baptism, as compared with the messages that Jesus, and the apostles preached to the Jews later on.

The difference is that John preached early on that Israel should believe on him that should come after him. Jesus preached a complete kingdom message that said whosoever hath the Son hath the Father. John also began preaching this in John 3:36 after the baptism of Jesus.

Today however we should be preaching Christ crucified, buried, and risen again. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 i.e. The preaching of the cross also called the gospel of the grace of God. Just prior to this dispensation of grace the gospel of the kingdom was preached to the Jews only.

Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Notice that the twelve were commanded to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the Jews only, and not to the Gentiles. They were being offered the opportunity to either accept or reject their King.

God knew in advance that they would as a nation reject their king, but he still afforded them the opportunity to accept him. That offer officially occurred in the early part of the book of Acts as it was necessary for Christ to die before the offer could be made. Acts 3:19-21

Another difference is that John preached about the coming king (the gospel of the kingdom) early on, and we today preach about the one who has already come, suffered, and risen (the gospel of the grace of God, also called the preaching of the cross).

Below are some examples of the messages preached by four different preachers at four different times during the first century, and while there are many similarities (repentance and belief), there is a big change that occurs with Paul's preaching.

John's preaching before Jesus began his public ministry:

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; 2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the (baptism of repentance for the remission of sins). 5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; 7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. 8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

John's preaching after Jesus' baptism:

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

It is important to note here that as John learned more his message began to become more complete. The king was not identified in the early months of John's preaching because John had not yet baptized Jesus, nor had he seen the sign promised to him from God confirming that Jesus was indeed the King.

Remember, that it was at the baptism of Jesus, that John heard for the first time that Jesus was God's beloved son from God himself.

Jesus preaching prior to the resurrection:

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Jesus commands the twelve apostles to preach:

Luke 9:1 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. 2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

At the beginning the gospel of the kingdom is preached and there is no mention of a Saviour that is to die, be buried, and rise again the third day, because they were all still ignorant of that.

Jesus later informs his Apostles of his crucifixion and resurrection:

Luke 18:31 Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. 32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: 33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. 34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

* Notice that they didn't understand these things because they were intentionally hid from them by God. They were also kept hid from Satan and his princes (demons):

1 Corinthians 2:8 ..., for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Jesus' directing his apostles preaching after his resurrection:

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And he said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The key to understanding why there was a difference in the messages is found in verse forty-five. They didn't understand the death, burial, and resurrection until after the cross because according to Luke 18:34 God was intentionally hiding it from them.

Here however, Jesus opens up their understanding of this truth, and yet it still isn't preached for a while after. Below we see Peter obeying Jesus' command from Luke 24:47 by preaching to the Jews after Christ's resurrection, but he leaves out the death, burial, and resurrection found in Luke 24:46.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle Paul's preaching to the Gentiles in Ephesus:

Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

The gospel of the grace of God that Paul preached, and that we are to preach today consists of basically two things:

I. Repentance toward God

II. Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ

Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Gentiles, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

This differed from the earlier kingdom message preached by John, Jesus, and His disciples prior to Christ resurrection. The gospel of the grace of God emphasizes the cross, and the resurrection, whereas the gospel of the kingdom emphasized the King and getting ready for his kingdom.

Paul's message pointed people to the only person who could give them the forgiveness of their sins, and that was Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians chapter fifteen has the best description of the gospel that Christians should be preaching in this present dispensation:

The gospel of the grace of God:

1 Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless

ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Notice what the apostle Paul had to say about John the Baptist as he addressed the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia:

Acts 13:24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.

The baptism of repentance was for Israel as a nation. Once John fulfilled his course the baptism of repentance was no longer preached. Let's take a look at John's message as it's recorded in Matthew:

Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

John preached about the King, and his soon coming kingdom, and he also preached about Israel's need to repent (the gospel of the kingdom). We get saved today in the dispensation of grace looking back to his death, burial, and resurrection, which is the gospel of the grace of God.

The disciples of John were baptized, and their baptism was for the remission of sins, and it expressed their faith in the king who was soon coming and his coming kingdom that would occur after the time of Jacob's trouble.

Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.

John was simply stating that he was baptizing them unto repentance, or as a public profession of their repentance towards God, and their faith towards the coming king, and His kingdom.

The word "unto" is the key word in understanding what is meant in this verse. The prefix "un" simply means "the opposite of", and the root word "to" means "something in the future", so the meaning of the word "unto" is:

"Because of something that happened in their past" i.e., their past repentance towards God, and their faith towards their coming king. They were unaware however that he would have to shed his innocent blood for their sins:

Hebrews 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

John the Baptist said earlier in Mathew 3:11 that Jesus would not only baptize with the Holy Ghost, but that He would also baptize with fire. This baptism has nothing to do with martyrdom.

The baptism of fire is a baptism of judgment at the great white throne judgment where all those who will receive it will be cast into the lake of fire. This is not a baptism that anyone should desire. If you do not believe me just look at verse twelve as it clearly tells you what I have just said about it being a judgment of literal fire.

Matthew 3:12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Those believers were all baptized with the Holy Ghost, and they will all be gathered into his garner (the kingdom) as the farmer does his wheat, but the lost who reject him are as the chaff that he will burn up with unquenchable fire. There is no baptism of martyrdom even hinted at here.

The witness of John's and the works of Jesus:

John the Baptist was a witness to Israel of the kingship of Jesus Christ, and he was accepted by most of the Jews as a prophet, but John's testimony about Jesus paled in comparison to the testimony of the actual works that Jesus did:

John 5:31 If I bare witness of myself, my witness is not true. 32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. 33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. 35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. 36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

In the book of Acts we find the last piece of a message that John the Baptist preached that adds another piece to a beautiful puzzle surrounding the life and teachings of John the Baptist:

Acts 10:37 That word, I say, ye know which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

It would be easy for God to tell us everything we needed to know about John the Baptist by placing it all together in one book, but if he did many people would not spend the time searching it out.

Another reason God spaces out different doctrines is because Satan's job would be easier if the doctrine of salvation were in one book. He would only have to discredit one book instead of many.

God covets the time that we spend with him in his word, so he has spread these subjects throughout scripture to get you to study all of it.

Chapter Three

The Baptism of Repentance:

Just what exactly is the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins which has caused so much confusion among Protestants, Catholics, and Baptists? To understand baptism better you should study the baptism of Jesus, performed by John the Baptist, which was the most unique baptism ever.

Matthew 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

Jesus traveled over 60 miles to be baptized by a specific person who alone had the authority from God to baptize, and that was John the Baptist.

Mark 1:9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: 11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

In the gospels, John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. This has caused a great deal of confusion among denominations as to why Jesus submitted to a baptism that pictured the repentance of the individual being baptized.

The Bible declares that Jesus was the sinless Son of God who didn't need to repent of anything because he was without sin:

Hebrews 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Why then did Jesus go to John to be baptized if he was without sin? I believe that if we will examine both the baptism of Jesus, and the mission of John the Baptist together, the answer will become very clear to us. The first reason that Jesus went to John to be baptized is found in the book of Matthew:

Matthew 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

The righteousness that Jesus was talking about here is found in John's testimony to the nation of Israel the day after Jesus returned from the wilderness temptation 40 days after his baptism:

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. 30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy ghost. 34 And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God.

Jesus was not the lamb of man, that was to be brought as a sacrifice to the high priest on a continual basis year after year, which could never wash away their sins:

Hebrews 10:3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

He was rather the Lamb of God, which offered himself once as a sacrifice for sins forever and sat down on the right hand of God.

Hebrews 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

John was told by God to go preach in the wilderness, and to baptize with water those of Israel who had professed repentance of their sinfulness to the covenant they had made with God at Sinai. Upon whom he saw the holy Spirit descending, he would be the one that Israel, and John had been waiting for.

Why then did John say that he didn't know Jesus when he recognized Jesus as he was coming to be baptized by him, and he temporarily forbade Jesus to be baptized? Because John did know him before that day, in the way God had spoken to him about the coming Messiah.

John was simply meant that, "he did not have as of yet anyone identifying themselves as the Saviour by fulfilling the sign that God had given unto him", which is found in the book of John:

John 1:33 Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

John knew Jesus because they were cousins. He also knew that Jesus was the one his mother Elisabeth said would save the world from their sins. He wanted to skip baptizing Jesus and move right on to the baptism that God said that Jesus would perform, which was spoken of in the book of Matthew:

Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

John wanted to take a short cut, but Jesus being God in the flesh, knew better, and he made sure that everything was done according to the prophecies that were given to John earlier:

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

John didn't want to be just the friend of the bridegroom at this point, he wanted to be a part of the bride, the remnant of Jewish believers, that made up the little flock of kingdom believers.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

This was not to be, as we shall see later. Another reason that Jesus was baptized by John was that Jesus had to remain the obedient Lamb of God, thereby fulfilling the prophecy that God had given to John. Jesus had to fulfill every prophecy concerning himself.

If Jesus would have listened to John and baptized him instead of the other way around, Jesus would have been disobedient to his Father, and to his own word. Jesus would have rendered himself unable to be our sacrifice, because of his own disobedience.

John the Baptist would not have been so bold later on either if Jesus hadn't fulfilled the prophecy given to him by God. John would have proclaimed that Jesus was a false Christ instead of the true Messiah.

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist for four reasons:

- 1. Because both John and Jesus needed to fulfill all righteousness (For Christ's sake). Matthew 3:15**
- 2. To show that Jesus was the Saviour to John (For John's sake). John 1:33**
- 3. To remain the obedient Lamb of God (For our sake). John 1:29**
- 4. To be made known unto Israel (For Israel's sake John 1:31**

The Friend of the Bridegroom

Later on, in John chapter three the Jews cornered some of the disciples of John the Baptist about Jesus baptizing the masses that came out unto Him:

John 3:25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. 26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi,

he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. 27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease. 31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. 32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. 33 He that receiveth his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. 34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. 35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. 36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Here we see the gospel of the kingdom developing with more information being supplied to John as time went on. Now John was telling the people that the King's name was Jesus, and that he is the Son of God, and that by believing on him they would have everlasting life.

John's the Baptist's joy was fulfilled, because he was the "friend" of the bridegroom (or an old testament saint), and he was glad to hear the message of the "bridegroom" (Who is Jesus Christ).

Even among some of John's disciples' questions arose about the issue of baptism, and John's relationship to Christ. Some thought that John was the Christ, but he immediately dispelled those rumors:

John 1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. 16 And of his fullness have all we received, 17 and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. 19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? 20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. 21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. 22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? 23 He said, I

am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. 24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizeth thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. 28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The Pharisees wanted to know why John was baptizing if he was not the Christ, nor Elias (Elijah), because only those two had the authority from God to baptize anyone.

John let them know that he was not Christ, nor Elias, and Jesus let everyone know that John the Baptist came only in the spirit and power of Elias! Elias himself will come again during the great tribulation period as one of the two witnesses spoken of in Revelation 11:3-12, and he will restore all things.

John said that he was only the friend of the bridegroom, he was unique in that there is no record of John ever being baptized, since he would have been the last of the old testament saints, and its last prophet as well. This also would explain what the Lord meant when describing John the Baptist's place in history:

Matthew 11:11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

John was the last of the prophets, who was to go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias (Elijah). John was not Elijah reincarnated as new agers teach:

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Elijah escaped death the first time around, but when he returns during the great tribulation period, he will suffer the same fate of all men at the hands of the anti-Christ. Three days later however, he will rise along with the other witness (Moses) and shock the world.

Luke 1:17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias,

Mark 9:11 And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? **12** And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how is it written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. **13** But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

Elijah (Elias) will restore the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, and together with Moses, will call Israel to repentance. Matthew adds these words to this account in his gospel:

Matthew 17:12 Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. **13** Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

Jesus said when speaking about John, that all of the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets) and the law (the five books of Moses) prophesied until John. What he was referring to, were the prophecies in the old testament concerning the coming of the Messiah.

The old testament prophets are still speaking to us today about the second coming of the Saviour, as did the apostles prior to the completion of the canon of scripture (there is no need for prophets today because the canon of scripture is complete!).

Luke 3:1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him,

saying, What shall we do then? He that answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John; whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison. Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

John preached that regardless of what family you were from, or what tribe, or even what country you were a citizen of, that there must be a change in your heart towards the things of God if you are to be saved. John was no respecter of persons as far as his preaching goes, he preached harder than most preachers today do.

The nation of Israel often took pride in the fact that God had given them the word of God through Abraham, Moses, and the prophets, but instead of it humbling them, they became despisers towards the other nations. They turned inward and became self-righteous, and legalistic.

John had a lot to do in order to prepare this self-righteous nation, so he started on the very problems that separated them from God the most. John told them that it didn't matter whether they were the direct descendants of Abraham, if their hearts were contrary to God's, and that a true child of God would produce good works (fruit) meet for repentance because of his faith in God.

Another misunderstood subject concerning baptism is, why did John the Baptist baptize people with water and Jesus did not? Since Jesus never baptized anyone, is there a need for us to be baptized?

John 4:1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2 Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples, 3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

The Pharisees, and the nation of Israel had turned inward, and became legalistic. Why was it, that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John the Baptist, and yet, Jesus never baptized anyone, but rather he let his disciples do all the baptizing?

Thousands were born again under the preaching of Jesus, but not one person was ever baptized by Jesus, not even John the Baptist, who asked to be, nor were any of the disciples baptized by Jesus.

An important thing to remember concerning the timing of the salvation of John's disciples is that they were saved under the preaching of John, who gave them the knowledge of salvation according to his father in Luke 1:77.

These men were unique in that they were alive through two different dispensations, so be careful when comparing your salvation experience in the dispensation of grace with theirs because they are nothing alike. Notice that the apostles were never re-baptized as were some of John's disciples in the book of Acts chapters 18 & 19.

Matthew 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

While John the Baptist was baptizing others, he forbad Jesus to be baptized by him, because he said that he needed to be baptized by Jesus instead of the other way around. Jesus needed to be baptized by John, and John wanted to be baptized by Jesus, but neither in the same way, or for the same reason.

The statement about Jesus actually performing baptisms, and the one found in the book of John, seem to be contradicting one another at first, but after a closer examination it becomes very clear that there are no contradictions in scripture.

John 4:2 Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,

It is true that Jesus needed to be baptized by John the Baptist in order to fulfill all righteousness (as was discussed earlier in the chapter), but the misunderstanding is in the kinds of baptisms being administered, and who it is that is doing the baptizing.

There is one kind of baptism that Jesus performed, which began on the day of Pentecost, which is the baptism with the Holy Ghost. That baptism, only Jesus Christ could do. There is also the baptism that John, and the apostles all performed while the kingdom was being offered to the nation of Israel in early Acts.

Mark 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; 7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. 8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

John's baptism was water baptism, administered to all those in Israel alone who had repented of their sins:

Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear:

The baptism that Jesus performed was with the Holy Ghost that began 2,000 years ago on the day of Pentecost. At the moment that we are saved in this age, our salvation is sealed forever when we are baptized by the Holy Spirit and placed into the body of Christ.

It is sort of like an inheritance that is yours from the moment that it is sealed in your account, but you cannot receive it until you reach a certain age. We receive the Holy Spirit today immediately at salvation and do not have to wait for some Jewish feast day. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke Jesus verified John's baptism as one that was from heaven and not from men:

Matthew 21:23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did

ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and tell said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

The baptism that John the Baptist performed along with the disciples of Jesus pictured their repentance towards God.

John 3:22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. 24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

Why were they baptizing in Aenon?

Because there was much water there. If they practiced sprinkling as a form of baptism, then there was no need for them to go to a large body of water to baptize, plus in Leviticus it required future priest to be washed with water from a living stream of water, not a dead pool.

They could have just poured some water over their head from their goat's bladder, or they could have pulled up to a well and baptized a few thousand people with just a little bucket of water.

Chapter Four

John's significance in history:

John had been waiting since his childhood for the day when he would have the honor to announce the beginning of the Messiah's earthly ministry. The day had finally come for John the Baptist to fulfill his destiny:

Mark 1:9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. **10** And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: **11** And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

The day after Jesus was baptized by John, he returned to John to be introduced to all as the Lamb of God. John couldn't have made that statement two days ago because, he had not as of yet seen the holy Spirit descend from heaven and abide upon anyone.

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 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 baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. **34** And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

John testified that the Saviour which would come after him, would be preferred before him, because he was before him. That is, because Jesus is God in the flesh, and he has always existed. Jesus' birth six months after John's birth was not the beginning of the Son of God's life. There never was a time, nor ever will be a time, when God hasn't existed.

Immediately after John baptized Jesus, and he was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, John began to step out of the limelight. It was not John's mission to keep disciples unto himself. John knew the nature of man. He knew that for him to remain on the scene would keep some of his converts from following Jesus completely.

So, John went about his business of pointing people to Jesus Christ, and he was eventually sent to jail for crying out against the sins of Herod. John the Baptist had this to say concerning his relationship to the Lord after Jesus arrived to begin his public ministry:

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease. **31** He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

John's following decreased, and Jesus' increased in the days following Jesus' baptism, because John pointed his disciples to Jesus as he was supposed to, but not all of his disciples left to follow Jesus right away, some who were converted under John's preaching before Jesus was baptized had traveled far away to spread the good news that the Saviour was about to appear.

Apollos was one of them found in Acts 18:24-28, and the disciples mentioned in Acts 19:1-7 were also John's disciples. Some of John's disciples needed more than one calling to follow Jesus completely. When John was cast into prison, many of his converts began to follow Christ, but not all:

Matthew 4:12 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

Mark 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, **15** And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

The three separate callings of John's disciples:

In the book of John God records the shift of allegiance from the disciples of John unto Jesus:

John 3:26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A 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 that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.

There are actually three separate callings of John the Baptist's disciples unto Christ. The first of these is found in John's gospel:

John 1:35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard

John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

This occurred forty-two days after the baptism of Jesus, or just two days after he returned from being tempted in the wilderness. Notice from the verses that Jesus and his two new disciples were on land. Matthew, and Mark each record this as the second calling of John's disciples:

Mark 1:16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

This occurred after the arrest of John the Baptist by king Herod. Notice that this time the brothers were together fishing, and that John the Baptist was not present as he was for the first time that Christ called John's disciples unto himself. Luke records the final calling of John's disciples unto Jesus almost one full year after Jesus began his public ministry in Cana of Galilee:

Luke 5:10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. 11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

The converts of John spoken of here were still fisherman, even after hearing the preaching of John the Baptist, and the two previous callings of Jesus to come and follow him.

There are some very interesting things that can be learned from studying the life of John the Baptist, and his disciples, and comparing it with the life of Christ, and the churches relationship with Jesus in heaven:

Luke 5:33 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. 39 No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

John's disciples fasted because they were not with the bridegroom (which is Jesus Christ). Jesus' disciples did not need to fast yet because the bridegroom (Christ) was still with them.

When Christ (the bridegroom) is ascended up into heaven, the children of the bridechamber (the apostles and their new disciples) fasted in those days. Notice in this parable that there is no mention of the bride.

Jesus used everyday items in parables to teach everyday people truths about John's place in history, his relationship to the church age, and our present-day relationship with Jesus.

Matthew 11:2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples. 3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

I want you for a moment to place yourself in John's sandals and try to imagine what he must have been going through at that particular time in his life. John had been in prison for close to a year, and he grew very anxious for the promised King of Israel to ascend to his throne, and to release him from Herod's prison.

Even though among all the men that were born of women, there had not risen a greater than John the Baptist, John was still just a man, and with time, John grew more impatient each day, and he finally sent two of his remaining converts to Jesus.

They were to ask Jesus whether he was the Saviour who would make Israel a great nation again or not. John had failed to realize that Jesus came to save them from a much greater enemy than that of the Romans. He came to save them from paying the wages of their sin in hell:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I want you to notice Jesus' response to the converts of John the Baptist concerning their questions about whether Jesus was the Christ or not:

Matthew 11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Jesus wanted John to know that he was fulfilling the prophecy concerning the Messiah, he didn't want John to just take his word for it. Compare this with the prophecy given by Isaiah concerning the ministry of the coming Saviour some seven hundred years before his appearing:

Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

John was looking for a king first, and a Saviour second, just as many are doing today. The world needs to start looking for a Saviour from their sinful condition instead of someone, or some program to rescue them from their financial and emotional mess. Once John received his answer from Jesus, he no longer had any doubts as to whether he was the Christ or not.

The most important way of determining whether something is right or not, is to see what God has to say about it in his word rather than take this author's word, let's see what Jesus had to say about the greatest man ever to be born of a woman, with the exception of himself:

Matthew 11:7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in king's houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. 19 But wisdom is justified of her children.

Jesus made the statement in verse eleven that John the Baptist was the greatest born of women. Then he turned around and said that the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than John.

This has caused a great deal of confusion as to what it was that Jesus meant by his comment concerning John. Jesus was simply stating that those in Israel who have died before his resurrection do not have the same standing as those who will die after it, when the kingdom was actually offered to Israel, and not when it was just at hand.

John was not a part of the kingdom church, so he would have been an old testament saint. John was only a friend of the bridegroom. The best man or friend of the groom doesn't get the privilege of going on the honeymoon, only the bride does.

Jesus knew the heart of man, and he knew that many of the religious leaders of the day would not accept his message because it would threaten their very way of making a living.

While Jesus was ministering across the countryside, John remained in prison for preaching against the wickedness of the king, and his adulterous relationship with his brother's wife:

Matthew 14:1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John had said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being

before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was very sorry: nevertheless for the oaths sake, and them which sat with them at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus. 13 When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

John was now leaving this world to go to Abraham's bosom to await the resurrection into the kingdom.

Luke 9:7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead; 8 And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. 9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

John the Baptist was so well known among the people as a man of prayer that even some of Jesus' disciples had asked Jesus to teach them to pray like John taught his disciples:

Luke 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. 2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us. 4 And lead us not into temptation: but deliver us from evil.

John was the last of the old testament prophets. He began the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus, and the twelve apostles all preached (not Paul).

We are now in a new dispensation of grace, the church age, which is reaching out around the world to Jew (blinded in part), and Gentiles alike with the gospel of the grace of God:

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

No one today presses into the body of Christ (the church)! John the Baptist began the preaching about the kingdom of heaven being at hand to the Jews. Jesus, and his

disciples preached about the coming kingdom, the kingdom message however, is not to be confused with the gospel of the grace of God that is preached today.

When Jesus said, since that time the kingdom of God is preached, he didn't mean up until now, he meant up until that time that he had made that statement, and of course it went on a few years more until their kingdom was finally rejected by the nation.

The kingdom message which John preached, was to prepare the hearts of the Jews for their King. The message for us today is Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, or as it is often called, the preaching of the cross. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached once again during the tribulation period:

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Chapter Five

Jesus' other sheep:

John 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: 16 them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Just exactly who were these other sheep that Jesus spoke about, and who was the other shepherd implied in verse sixteen? If you listen to the cults you might be persuaded that it is them, or some other religious order. If you search the scriptures however, you can come up with only one possible solution to this question.

John the Baptist was the other shepherd mentioned here, and his disciples are the other fold of sheep spoken of in verse fifteen. We can know this by simply looking at these verses in context.

Jesus was speaking in the present tense and in the future tense in these verses, as possessing other sheep that were temporarily under the care of another shepherd. These other sheep were both the ones that responded under the preaching of John the Baptist prior to his death in prison, or through one of his disciples later on.

It was especially speaking prophetically of the flock that will be gathered in the time of Jacob's Trouble also known as the tribulation period, when both houses will

become one stick/nation again. The house of Israel and the house of Judah. Ezekiel 37:16-19.

Some of these men remained disciples of John during Jesus' earthly ministry, like the two that John sent to question Jesus while he was in prison. Some even remained loyal to John the Baptist until the apostle Paul caught up with them in Acts chapters eighteen and nineteen many years later:

Acts 18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. 26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquilla and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Apollos was a disciple of John the Baptist prior to John's death, because he received the baptism of John which pointed to the coming kingdom. Then for some reason he left the area to return to his home in Alexandria prior to learning that Jesus was the Messiah for whom John was preparing the way.

Once Aquilla and Priscilla explained the way of God more perfectly to him, he believed that Jesus was the Christ, because he was one of those other sheep that Jesus had from the other fold which he spoke about in John 10. No mention is made of Apollos' baptism or rebaptism which has confused many.

All Apollos needed was the way of God explained more perfectly, and that was supplied by Aquilla and Priscilla. Now Apollos would place himself under the authority of the one Great Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Acts chapter nineteen we run across twelve of Apollos' disciples (kingdom disciples) who didn't have the way of God explained unto them yet like Apollos did, so Paul quickly rectified that situation:

Acts 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were

baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 7 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.

Once he told them the rest of the story, they gladly received it. Paul had to lay hands on these Jews to receive the Holy Ghost because of their being the "other sheep" spoken about earlier. This is discussed in greater detail in our Acts study.

Today, the laying on of hands is not necessary because we are not in a transitional stage between the old and new testaments. Today we receive the Holy Ghost at the moment of salvation.

Acts 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

After the resurrection Jesus was teaching the apostles for forty days about the kingdom, and not about the church. Jesus had explained earlier that the Holy Ghost would come after him and teach them all truth.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

The baptism with the Holy Ghost, was for one purpose only, to empower them to be bold witnesses, and no one was "ever" smacked on the forehead to receive the Holy Ghost anywhere in scripture!

The only two people who were ever "slain in the spirit" in scripture were Ananias and Sapphira, and they didn't roll around on the floor in some spiritual state of ecstasy either, they were killed by the Holy Ghost for lying.

The final verses about John the Baptist in scripture:

Peter commented on John the Baptist when defending his taking the gospel to the Gentile Cornelius:

Acts 11:16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

The book of John later recalls how that Jesus went to hide from the religious leaders in the place where John began to baptize:

John 10:39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, 40 And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. 41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. 42 And many believed on him there:

In this book I have attempted to cover every verse in scripture concerning the life of John the Baptist, as well as to give you an introductory lesson on the gospel of the kingdom which he preached. Jesus' disciples continued preaching the gospel of the kingdom well after the resurrection of Christ.

The End

John the Baptist Tests

1.25 Credit hours

Introduction Test

1. Why did Jesus stop reading in the middle of Isaiah 61:2?
2. What baptism did John the Baptist preach?
3. What was the purpose of his baptism?

4. What was the message that John the Baptist preached?
5. What is the “dispensation of grace”? Give NT book, chapter, verse.
6. What was the fulfillment of the Law?
7. With whom could the new covenant be made, based upon question 6? Give OT book, chapter, verse(s).
8. Where will the new covenant be written?

Chapter One Test

1. How many weeks were determined upon Jerusalem by God, to anoint the most Holy? Give OT book, chapter, verse.
2. How long was the time period between the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah?
3. How long are the weeks that God was referring to in Daniel 9:25?
4. What is the reason for the timeline in the book of Daniel?
5. Who is one of the two witnesses that come during the time of Jacob’s trouble and what will he do?
6. Who did John the Baptist come in the spirit and power of? Give NT book, chapter, verse.
7. How long is a Biblical week?
8. How many years had passed from the commandment to build and to restore Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince was cut off (crucified)?
9. How many years remain to be fulfilled for God to make an end of Israel’s sins and usher in righteousness in the future kingdom? What is this week called?
10. Give the chapter and verse in Malachi and Isaiah which foretell of a forerunner who would prepare the way of the Lord? Who is this forerunner?
11. What was Zacharias doing when the angel of the Lord appeared to him?
12. What did the angel tell Zacharias to name his son?
13. What happened to Zacharias when he doubted the angel?

14. Was the birth of John the Baptist a miraculous birth?
15. Who was the course of Abia, and what was their job?
16. How many courses of priests did King David appoint?
17. How long were they to minister and where?
18. What month does the Jewish year begin?
19. A Jewish year (Biblical year) is based on 12 months. How many days are in each month?
20. How much older was John the Baptist than his cousin, Jesus?
21. Which course of priests did the Abia minister and when was this on the Jewish calendar?
22. When is the approximate birth of John the Baptist?
23. Based on the approximate birth date of John the Baptist, when is the approximate date Jesus was born in that same year?
24. What significant event does Israel celebrate at that time of year?
25. Who does Elisabeth get her name from?
26. What is Aaron's wife name? Exodus 6:23
27. Who is she the daughter of?
28. Who is her brother?
29. What tribe were they all from? Numbers 1:7
30. What two wives of priests had some or all of their offspring die soon after they had begun their ministry
31. What two tribes were united in the days of Moses and what was the significance of the marriage that brought them together?
32. Where did Zacharias and Elisabeth live in Israel?
33. What was the priest's inheritance? Give verse.
34. Was John the Baptist saved inside his mother's womb?

35. Did the holy Spirit seal or indwell (take up permanent residence) in believers before the resurrection of Jesus Christ?
36. Is being “filled with the Holy Ghost” the same as being saved?
37. Prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, what determined a Jewish person’s entrance into the kingdom?
38. In the dispensation of grace today, what determines salvation?
39. Was John the Baptist sent by a man, an institution, his father (who was a Levitical priest), or God? Give NT book, chapter, verse.
40. Who, alone, had the right to choose John’s name?
41. What was John the Baptist’s message? What is it called?
42. Was it the same message of Jesus and all the twelve apostles?
43. Did the gospel of the kingdom emphasize faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ?
44. What message should churches today be preaching?
45. What are the two requirements to be an apostle to Israel?
46. Did these two requirements apply to the apostle Paul as the twelfth apostle to Israel?
47. Who was Paul an apostle to?
48. Who will sit on the twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel? Give two NT books, chapters, verses.
40. Give NT book, chapter, verse that prove Paul is not one of the twelve apostles to Israel.
49. Is the church that Jesus mentioned in Matthew 16:18 and 18:17 the body of Christ that we are a part of today or was it the kingdom church that was started by Jesus?
50. Did Jesus spend his earthly ministry teaching his disciples all about the future kingdom or the dispensation of grace?
51. Who is the rock in Matthew 16:18?

52. When did the dispensation of grace happen and what gospel is preached during that time?

53. When will the gospel of the kingdom be preached again? Give NT book, chapter, verse.

Chapter Two Test

1. Why did John the Baptist remain in the wilderness until his 30th birthday? Give OT book, chapter, verse.

2. Did John the Baptist follow in his father's footsteps?

3. Why did John the Baptist say "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" in Matthew 3:2?

4. When did Israel reject the offer of the kingdom? Give NT book, chapters.

5. What dispensation was ushered in at that time?

6. What are the differences between the messages that John the Baptist and Jesus preached, and what is preached today?

7. What is the preaching of the cross also called?

8. Who was the gospel of the kingdom preached to?

9. When did God's offer to officially accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour occur?

10. Describe the difference in John the Baptist's message after he knew Jesus was God's beloved Son compared to the message prior to him knowing.

11. Describe the difference in Jesus' message from the beginning to when he called his twelve disciples. (Hint: one key thing after He called the twelve).

12. What key NT book, chapter, and verse describes what Jesus did to the disciples to help them.

13. What did Peter preach in Luke 24:46? What did he leave out?

14. The gospel of the grace of God that Paul preached and that we are to preach today, consists of what two things?

15. What is the emphasis of the following two gospels - the gospel of the grace of God and the gospel of the kingdom?

16. Name the NT book chapter and verse(s) that best describe the gospel that Christians should be preaching in this present dispensation of grace.
17. Who was John the Baptist's message of the baptism of repentance for?
18. When did this message end, or did it?
19. What was John the Baptist's baptism for?
20. What is the baptism of fire that John the Baptist said Jesus would baptize with?

Chapter Three Test

1. Why did Jesus go to John the Baptist to be baptized? Give four reasons and back up with NT book(s), chapter(s), verse(s).
2. Who is the bridegroom?
3. Who is the friend of the bridegroom?
4. Was John the Baptist reincarnated as Elijah? Give NT book, chapter, verse.
5. Who were the only two who had authority from God to baptize?
6. Was John the Baptist ever baptized? Why or why not?
7. What are two ways Jesus described John the Baptist in Matthew 11:11?
8. Why do we have no "true" prophets today?
9. What was the one thing that needed to happen in John the Baptist's day for a person to be saved?
10. Did Jesus baptize anyone? Give NT book, chapter, verse.
11. Were the disciples saved under the preaching of John the Baptist or Jesus?
12. What was it that John the Baptist gave them according to Luke 1:77?
13. What is one kind of baptism that Jesus performed that began on the day of Pentecost.
14. Was John the Baptist's baptism from heaven or of man?
15. What did the baptism of John the Baptist and the disciples of Jesus, picture?

Chapter Four Test

1. Why did John the Baptist have to wait til the next day to announce that Jesus was the Lamb of God instead of the day when He came to be baptized?
2. What was the sign that signified that Jesus was the Lamb of God?
3. What did John the Baptist mean when he said "...After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me."?
4. After Jesus was baptized, what significant event took place?
5. How did John the Baptist's role change at this point?
6. What were the three separate callings of John the Baptist's disciples unto Christ? Give the NT book, chapter(s), and verse(s), and when did they occur?
7. Did John the Baptist's disciples fast? Why or why not?
8. Did Jesus' disciples fast? Why or why not?
9. What did Jesus use in parables to teach everyday people truths about John the Baptist's place in history, his relationship to the church age, and our present-day relationship with Jesus?
10. How did Jesus reassure John the Baptist that He was who He said He was when John began to question if He was truly the Messiah? Give NT book, chapter, verse(s)?
11. What OT book, chapter and verse(s) prophesy exactly what Jesus told John's two remaining converts when John the Baptist sent them to Jesus?
12. Was John the Baptist looking for a king first or a Saviour?
13. What is meant by Jesus' comment in Matthew 11:11?
14. Who was the last of the OT prophets?
15. What was the kingdom message that John the Baptist preached supposed to do?

Chapter Five Test

1. Who are the other sheep that Jesus spoke about in John 10:15?
2. Who was the shepherd in John 10:16?
3. Does John 10:15-16 have a fulfillment that is yet in the future? Give verses

4. Were there some disciples that remained disciples of John during Jesus' earthly ministry?
5. List the NT book, chapter(s), verse(s) that show two different times that people became disciples of John the Baptist, and left Israel before they had heard the rest of the message about who the Messiah was.
6. Why did Paul have to lay hands on the disciples of John the Baptist in Acts 19 for them to receive the Holy Ghost?
7. Is the laying on of hands by an apostle necessary today to receive the Holy Ghost?
8. When do we receive the Holy Ghost today?
9. What did Jesus teach the apostles for 40 days after the resurrection?
10. What was the purpose of the baptism with the Holy Ghost?
11. Who were the only two people "slain in the spirit" in scripture and why?
12. Where did Jesus escape to from the religious leaders? Give NT book, chapter, verse(s).
13. Did Jesus' disciples continue to preach the gospel of the kingdom after the resurrection of Christ?