



Basic Bible Course

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Christians are NOT Governed by the Preaching or the Baptism of John the Baptist



Lesson Six

INTRODUCTION: Thus far in this series of studies from the Word of God, we have learned (1) how **RIGHTLY TO DIVIDE THE WORD**, (2) **HOW ALL THINGS BEGAN**, and (3) have introduced the **THREE DISPENSATIONS OF GOD'S WILL TO MAN**—Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian.

Since God's will as expressed during the first 2,500 years belonged to the persons addressed, when they died that part of God's will died with them. Likewise the law which came from God through Moses to the children of Israel—the ten-commandment law in its entirety—ended at the cross.

But what shall we say of the preaching and the baptism of John the Baptist? It is clear from John 1:6 that "there was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John." Being "sent from God" it is also evident that He came to fulfill a definite purpose.

It shall be the burden of this lesson-study to show (1) what that purpose was, (2) that it was completely fulfilled before the cross, and that (3) when the Jewish dispensation ended, of which John's work was a part, that both his **PREACHING** and his **BAPTISM** also ended, clearing the way for Christ's **NEW** testament to become of force on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2...

I. JOHN'S COMING FORETOLD BY ISAIAH, THE PROPHET.

- A. Approximately eight centuries before Christ, there lived a prophet in Israel, named Isaiah.
 1. He was the son of Amoz.
 2. Prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.
- B. In the 40th chapter of his prophecy, verses 3 through 8, we find these words, "**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. 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: 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. 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: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.**"
 1. Based on these words, the children of Israel had a saying among them that Esaiiah (Isaiah) must first come before the Lord's Christ should appear (Also see Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6).
- C. That John the Baptist was the fulfillment of this prophecy is taught by several passages of Scripture; among them are the following:
 1. **MATTHEW 3:1-3: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."**

2. **MARK 1:1-4:** “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”
3. **LUKE 3:1-6:** “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.”
4. **JOHN 1:23:** “He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.”

II. JOHN’S COMING FORETOLD BY MALACHI, THE PROPHET.

- A. Another old testament prophet, Malachi, who wrote about 445-432 B.C., also referred to the coming of John, as follows:
 1. **MALACHI 3:1:** “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.”
 2. **MALACHI 4:5-6:** “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”
- B. That John was the fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy is established by the following references:
 1. **MATTHEW 11:7-15:** “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 kings’ 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.”
 2. **MATTHEW 17:10-13:** “And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.”
 3. **MARK 9:11-13:** “And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at

nought. 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.”

4. **LUKE 7:24-27:** “And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appavelled, and live delicately, are in kings’ courts. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.”

NOTE: Many, upon reading the apostle John’s account of what John the Baptist said of himself, have been puzzled by the seeming contradiction between John’s statements and those of Jesus Christ that we have just said. Here is the reading from John 1:19-23:

“And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.”

- C. If we limited our study just to the Scriptures already cited, no doubt we should conclude that an outright contradiction exists between what Jesus said of John and what John said of himself.
1. From Matthew 11 and 17, Mark 9 and Luke 7 Jesus taught that John was that “Elias [or Elijah] which was for to come.”
 2. Yet from the foregoing citation from John 1, to the direct question, “Art thou Elias?”, John answered, “I am not.”
- D. QUESTION: How can these two seemingly contradictory declarations be made to harmonize?
1. The answer seems to be in what the angel said to Zacharias before John was born. In Luke 1:13, 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.”
 2. Thus we see that John was not Elias IN PERSON; but he was “IN THE SPIRIT AND POWER OF ELIAS.”
 3. From the questions put to John by the priests and Levites, it is evident they were attempting to identify the PERSON of John; thus, when they asked, “Art thou Elias?” his answer was, “I am not.”
 4. Contrariwise, Jesus knowing that the “SPIRIT AND POWER” of John was like that of Elias, as the angel had said, thus referred to Him as “Elias which was for to come.”
 5. If these two distinct uses of the term “Elias” are kept clearly in mind, the SEEMING contradiction between Jesus and John turns out to be no contradiction at all: John must have been referring to His PERSON—Jesus to His SPIRIT AND POWER. John was NOT Elias IN PERSON; yet WAS Elias IN SPIRIT AND POWER.

III. THE CONCEPTION, PRENATAL EXPERIENCE & BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

A. THE ANGEL'S ANNOUNCEMENT—Luke 1:5-22:

“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 marvelled 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.”

B. ZACHARIAS' WIFE ELISABETH CONCEIVES—Luke 1:23-25:

“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.”

C. THE ANGEL GABRIEL LIKEWISE APPEARS TO MARY—Luke 1:26-38:

“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women. And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. 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. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.”

- D. JOHN LEAPS IN ELISABETH'S WOMB FOR JOY—Luke 1:39-56.
“And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. 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: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb. And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed *is* she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy *is* his name. And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy; As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.”
- E. THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—Luke 1:57-58:
“Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.”
- F. THE CIRCUMCISION AND NAMING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—Luke 1:59-64:
“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. And his mother answered and said, Not *so*; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, and praised God.”
- G. ZACHARIAS PROPHECIES CONCERNING HIS YOUNG SON, JOHN—Luke 1:65-80.
“And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. 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. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. 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; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.”

IV. THE RAIMENT AND FOOD OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

- A. **MATTHEW 3:4**—“And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.”
- B. **MARK 1:6**—“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.”

V. THE BAPTISM TAUGHT AND PREFORMED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST.

- A. **MATTHEW 3:5-6, 11**—“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... [John said] I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.”
- B. **MARK 1:4-5, 8**—“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 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...[John said] I indeed have baptized you with water.”
- C. **LUKE 3:3, 21**—“And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins...all the people were baptized.”
- D. **LUKE 7:29-30**—“And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.”
- E. **JOHN 1:26**—“John answered them, saying, I baptize with water.”
- F. **JOHN 3:23-24**—“And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison.”

VI. ADDITIONAL THINGS TAUGHT BY JOHN THE BAPTIST.

- A. Principles he taught his disciples to live by
 1. Repentance (Matthew 3:2, 8, 11; Luke 3:3, 8).
 2. Fasting (Matthew 9:14-15; Mark 2:18-20; Luke 5:33-35).
 3. Prayer (Luke 11:1).
 4. Adultery condemned (Matthew 14:3-4; Mark 6:17-18; Luke 3:19).
 5. Sharing (Luke 3:10-11).
 6. Financial honesty (Luke 3:12-13).
 7. Orderly conduct (Luke 3:14).
 8. Truthfulness (Luke 3:14).
 9. Contentment (Luke 3:14).
- B. Things generally which John taught his disciples to believe—
 1. That his baptism was for “remission of sins” (Luke 3:3).
 2. That a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27).
 3. That the kingdom of heaven was then “at hand” (Matthew 3:2).
 4. That there was a “wrath” to come (Matthew 3:7, 10-12; Luke 3:7, 9, 16-17; John 3:36).
 5. That God is able to raise up of stones children unto Abraham (Matthew 3:9; Luke 3:8).
 6. That some people would be saved (Matthew 3:12).
 7. That he that comes from heaven is above all (John 3:31).
 8. Many other things (Luke 3:18).
- C. What John taught by way of his own example.
 1. Temperance (Matthew 11:18; Luke 7:33).
 2. Humility (John 3:30).
 3. Performed no miracles (John 10:41).

- D. John's rebukes.
 - 1. Of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 3:7-12).
 - 2. Of the multitude (Luke 3:7-9).
 - 3. Of Herod (Matthew 14:3-4; Mark 6:17-18; Luke 3:19).
- E. What John taught concerning Jesus.
 - 1. John denied that he himself was the Christ (Luke 3:15-16; John 1:19-20; 3:28).
 - 2. John foretold the coming of Christ as one both mightier and superior to himself (Matthew 3:11, 13-14; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:16; John 1:15, 25-27, 29-30; 3:29-30).
 - 3. John called Jesus "the Son of God." (John 1:32-34).
 - 4. John called Jesus "the lamb of God" that taketh away the sins of the world (John 1:29, 36).
 - 5. John said Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16-17).
 - 6. John said what Jesus spoke came from God (John 3:34).
 - 7. John said that Jesus testified what he had seen and heard (John 3:32).
 - 8. John said that he who receives Jesus' testimony acknowledges God as true (John 3:33).
 - 9. John said that God gave the Spirit to Christ without measure (John 3:34).
 - 10. John said that God loved Jesus and gave all things unto Him (John 3:35).
 - 11. John said that believers on Jesus have everlasting life; others shall not see life (John 3:36).

VII. JESUS' BAPTISM BY JOHN THE BAPTIST (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22).

NOTE: John's baptism was "for remission of sins." John knew that Jesus had no sin, and would have prevented Jesus from being baptized at all. However Jesus constrained him, saying, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS." Then he suffered him.

VIII. JOHN'S IMPRISONMENT, INQUIRY AND DEATH.

- A. Through incurring the disfavor of Herod, whom he rebuked for adultery, John was cast into prison (Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14; 6:17; Luke 3:19-20).
- B. While in prison, John sent disciples to Jesus asking Him if He was the Messiah (Matthew 11:2-6; Luke 7:18-23).
 - 1. Jesus answered by having these disciples return to John telling him "those things which ye do hear and see;"
 - a. The blind receive their sight
 - b. The lame walk
 - c. The lepers are cleansed
 - d. The deaf hear
 - e. The dead are raised up
 - f. The poor have the gospel preached to them
 - g. Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.
- C. John's death by beheading (Matthew 14:3-12; Mark 6:17-29).

IX. ATTITUDE DIFFERENT PEOPLE HAD TOWARD JOHN.

- A. The multitude of the people counted John to be a prophet (Matthew 14:5; 21:26; Mark 11:32).
- B. Herod feared John (Matthew 14:9; Mark 6:20).
- C. Herodias hated John (Matthew 14:3-11; Mark 6:17-28).
- D. Jesus recognized John for what he was (Matthew 11:11; 21:32; Luke 7:24-30; John 5:32-35).

X. AFTER JOHN'S DEATH MANY MISTOOK JESUS AS JOHN RISEN FROM THE DEAD (Matthew 14:1-2; Matthew 16:13-14; Mark 6:14-16; 8:27-28; Luke 9:7-9; 9:18-20).

- XI. JESUS QUESTIONED CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS ABOUT JOHN'S BAPTISM (Matthew 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8).
- XII. THE PURPOSE FULFILLED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST.
- A. To prepare the way as the forerunner of Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23; 3:28).
 - B. To bear witness of Christ (John 1:6-8, 15; 5:32-33, 36; 10:41).
- XIII. JESUS CHRIST REPLACES JOHN THE BAPTIST.
- A. John said himself that he was NOT THE CHRIST (Luke 3:15-16; John 1:19-20; 3:28).
 - B. John recognized JESUS as the CHRIST.
 - C. John said, "He must INCREASE, but I *must* DECREASE" (John 3:30).
 - D. Jesus referred to John as "a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing FOR A SEASON to rejoice in his light. But I have GREATER WITNESS THAN *THAT* OF JOHN" (John 5:35-36).
- XIV. JESUS' BAPTISM REPLACES JOHN'S BAPTISM.
- NOTE: After Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead, He gave a commission to His disciples involving a baptism different from and superior to John's baptism in certain respects (See Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). That this NEW baptism replaces the OLD baptism of John is taught as follows:**
- A. When Aquilla and Priscilla heard Apollos preach, "KNOWING ONLY THE BAPTISM OF JOHN... they TOOK HIM UNTO *THEM*, and EXPOUNDED UNTO HIM the way of God MORE PERFECTLY" (Acts 18:24-28).
 - B. Paul, upon finding disciples having only "John's baptism" showed that John told the people they should believe on Jesus. This led them to be baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 19:1-5).