

# Matthew, Week 6

## Chapter 3: The “John the Baptist Experience,” Part 1

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### TYING UP LOOSE ENDS FROM LAST WEEK:

**Chrematizo** (χρηματίζω cray-mah-TEED-zo) – to impart a revelation, injunction, or warning. To “oracle”; communication from God; oracular communication of some sort:

- 1) **Dreams:** Matthew 2:12, 23 – “warned *by God* in a dream” -- the magi, Joseph (the latter after an angelic visitation in vv. 19-21)
- 2) **Angels:** Acts 10:22 – “...Cornelius... was *oracled* by a holy angel to send for you...”
- 3) **Prophecy:** Acts 11:26 – “the disciples were first *called* Christians in Antioch.” The name “Christian” was given *oracularly*. See also context of vv. 27-28, where prophets come for a visit. Note, too, that the leadership of the Antioch church was made up of “prophets and teachers,” 13:1.
- 4) **God speaking directly to a conscious listener:** Hebrews 8:5 – Moses “warned *by God*”; Hebrews 11:7 – Noah “warned *by God* about things not yet seen”
- 5) **Preachers, providence, and calamities:** Hebrews 12:25 – God’s people in the wilderness were also “warned”
- 6) **Scripture:** Romans 7:3 – “she shall be *called* an adulteress” – The “oracle” in the case is the Law of God, the Scriptures.
- 7) **The “still, small voice”:** Noun form (chrematismos, χρηματισμός) – Romans 11:4 – “the divine response” (NASB) -- the word to Elijah.

### THIS WEEK’S POINTS FOR DISCIPLESHIP:

- 1) God communicates in various ways, some less distinct than others. It is normal that this should start soon after New Birth, but it takes experience (and, usually, discipling input) to sort out and understand.
- 2) A “John the Baptist Experience” is the prerequisite for the coming of Jesus – to an individual in salvation or “reclamation,” to the Church, and to the world.

### LOOKING AT MATTHEW 3 AND JOHN THE IMMERSER

- 1) *Who* and *why* was John “the Baptist”? Why does God treat him as so important? Consider:
  - a. There are three separate prophecies about him in the OT (Isaiah 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6) as well as two (one from Gabriel and one from his father) in the NT (Luke 1:14-17; 1:76-79).

- b. His miraculous conception and birth gets a lengthy treatment in Luke 1, a narrative that leads us to speculate that he may have been filled with the Holy Spirit *pre-natally* (Luke 1:41,44). In fact, so special was his birth, that the Apostle John specifically says that “there was *a man sent from God* whose name was John” (John 1:6).
  - c. His ministry is one of the few events covered in all *four* Gospels, which is to say that no one, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, can tell Jesus’ story without telling John’s story.
    - i. John’s ministry is covered in the events leading up to Jesus’ water baptism (Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3); but also...
    - ii. Immediately *after* Jesus’ 40 days in the wilderness and beyond (John 1:29-36).
    - iii. Contemporaneous ministry with John’s (John 4:2)
    - iv. Interaction with Jesus while John is imprisoned (Matthew 11:1-6ff).
    - v. Even John’s martyrdom is important enough to include in the Divine Record.
  - d. His ministry is equated with that of Elijah (e.g., Malachi 4:5 → Matthew 11:14) and declared by Jesus to be even *greater* than that of Elijah – or any other prophet (Matthew 11:11).
  - e. Involvement in John’s ministry was a requirement to become the Twelfth Apostle (replacing Judas Iscariot) – Acts 1:21-22.
  - f. His influence continued on for many years; see Acts 18:25 (Apollos) and Acts 19:3-4 (John’s disciples in Ephesus, about 1000 miles overland).
- 2) Without John’s ministry, Jesus’ disciples – both the Apostles and His other followers and the people – would not have been prepared ground for His ministry.
- a. Compare the preparation of “fallow ground” (Jeremiah 4:3; Hosea 10:12) to the parable of the soils (Matthew 13:2-23).
  - b. The initial “core group” of Apostles were originally John’s disciples (cf. John 1).
  - c. The Apostle Matthew is probably another example of John’s “plowing.” After reading Luke 3:8,10,12, contrast Matthew 9:9ff with Luke 19:1-10.

### 3) John confronted the anti-God poison – SIN.