

# *The Pastor's Bible Study*

## An interactive study of the Gospel of Matthew

### Week 4 ~ Exploring Chapter 3

#### Personal Study Time:

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(Use the following suggestions in your personal Bible study time this week to prepare for our class discussion next Saturday.)

- Start a new section in your Matthew notebook with the title: Chapter 3
- Read Matthew Chapter 3 through at least twice
- After two times through the chapter record your answers to the following questions in your Matthew Notebook.
  - Twenty-eight years elapse in Jesus life between chapter 2 and 3 in Matthew's Gospel, read Luke 2 to discover the only story we have of Jesus' childhood.
  - Why do you think Matthew skipped over twenty-eight years of Jesus life?
  - What does this tell you about his purpose?
  - What does this tell you about the differences between a biographical story like the ones authors write today and the Gospel presentations we find in the New Testament?
- Re-read chapter 3 and as you read list John the Baptist's personal characteristics in your notebook.
  - How would you characterize him as a person?
- If your Bible has marginal references use the ones associated with Matthew 3:4 to discover the symbolic significance of John's clothing.
  - If you have a Bible Concordance, look up the references to Elijah in the books of Malachi and Matthew for additional implications relating to John's clothing.
- Re-read chapter 3:2-12 and list the major characteristics of John's message.
  - What do you consider to be his two most important focal points?
  - Why do you think these are more significant than the others?
- Use a Bible dictionary to look up some of the key words in chapter 3. For example, repent, kingdom of heaven, baptism, Pharisee, and Sadducee.
  - How does an understanding of these words help you better understand the message of chapter 3?
- Why do you think Jesus needed to be baptized? In a paragraph or two, describe how His baptism differs from ours.
- List the major events that took place at Jesus' baptism as Matthew details it in verses 16 and 17. In a few sentences, explain the significance of those events for the Gospel story and the plan of salvation.