

Who Do You Say That I Am?
Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**
10- The Baptism of the Incarnate God- Part 1

Church May 1, 2022

Matthew 3:13-17

13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him.

14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"

15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.

16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,

17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Now I personally believe that Baptism is a very sweet and precious Sacrament. And I use the word, "*Sacrament*" most frequently to describe Baptism, because that is what it is. Many other Protestants *refuse* to use the word, "*Sacrament*" because of the misuse of that word by those deceived by the Roman religious system. So, they use the word, "*Ordinance*" instead. But to me that is a "*distinction without a difference*", so I use the word, "*Sacrament*".

A "*Sacrament*" is most commonly defined as: *A visible Sign of the inward Grace of God, which was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, to which all believers are required to participate.*¹

The *Elder Affirmation of Faith of the Covenant of Peace Church*² says this:
WE BELIEVE AND TEACH that Baptism is a Sacrament of the Lord by which those, who have already repented and trusted in Jesus Christ and in His finished Work by Faith- express their "*Union with Christ*" in His Death

¹ Dictionary.com

² This Document is still in progress and should be available later in 2022.

and Resurrection, by being fully immersed in water, in the Name of God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a visible Sign of belonging to the Church that Jesus is building, and over which Jesus is Head; the new people of God; and the true Israel. Baptism is also a Sign of Burial and Cleansing- signifying two things that are already true: 1) The Death of the “old Life” of Sin and Unbelief and 2) a Purification from the Pollution of Sin.

We further Believe and Teach that Baptism is one of several “*Means*” by which God imputes His Grace to us- which is why Baptism is a Requirement for all who have received the Miracle of the New Birth.

... so, I pray that you see that we take Baptism very seriously here.

Now this would be a great time for me to mention that anyone, who has already received the Miracle of the New Birth; and has already been justified; and has already been adopted; but who has NOT yet been baptized- that you NEED to be baptized. And one of our Elders will be happy to speak with you after Service about this great NEED.

Now the *fullest* description of the Baptism of Jesus is given right here in **Matthew 3**. So, let’s allow the Apostle Matthew to guide us in answering the very important Question:

Why did Jesus insist that John baptize Him?

... I mean in verse 6- Matthew wrote

... they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

... and in verse 11, John the Baptist said,

... I baptize you with water for repentance,

... so, was Jesus a sinner? Did He need to confess His Sins like everybody else? In other words, was Jesus being baptized for the very SAME reason as the others? Most of the Cults and false Religions teach *exactly* that.

But I would say to you that there are at least two things that Matthew makes plain about John’s Baptism which are relevant for why Jesus would *insist* on submitting to it:

1. John's "*Baptism of Repentance*" created a new "*people of God*" for the coming Messiah
2. This new "*people of God*" have an Identity that does NOT coincide with their *Jewishness*- but with their *Repentance of Sin and their joyful Faith in Jesus*.

... and by being baptized- Jesus was saying, "*I'm part of that!*"

Now we need to remember that "*Matthew*" was actually a man named, "*Levi*", who was born a Jew and who lived his entire Life until his Conversion as a Jew. Now it is true that Levi or Matthew had *betrayed* his people by becoming a tax collector for Rome. But Matthew was still a Jew. Now he was certainly a *wayward* Jew and a *despised* Jew- but he was a Jew, who was *intimately* familiar with all of the Requirements and Commands of the Old Covenant.

And as I told you as we began this "journey" through Matthew's Gospel Record, there is evidence to suggest that Matthew wrote his Record *first* and that he wrote it in Hebrew and NOT Greek. And he did that to reach his fellow-Jews. Matthew even designed the entire Book as a symbolic *representation* of the first five Books of Moses- called the "*Pentateuch*."

But Matthew knew what so many today seem NOT to know- that in order for the Jews to be saved- they must come to Jesus. There is NO Salvation outside of Jesus for anyone. None. And once Jesus came and lived and died and rose again- there is also NO Salvation in the Old Covenant either. So, each person- Jew or Gentile- must now fully embrace the New Covenant that was made into Reality by the Life and the Death and the Resurrection of Jesus, the Christ- or he will die in his Sins. But in order for anyone to fully embrace Jesus and the New Covenant- he must also abandon the Old Covenant.

And that is what John is doing in these baptismal waters. He is preparing people to meet with the King of the Universe- by calling them OUT of the Signs; Symbols; Types; and Shadows of the Old Covenant and into the Reality of the New. And to do that- every Jew (and every Gentile) MUST *abandon* the Old Covenant and *embrace* the New that John was helping to make Real.

So, Matthew began his Gospel Record of Jesus, the "*long awaited*" King of the Jews (the *Mashiach*; the *Messiah*; the "*Anointed One*")- with a genealogy of Jesus' *Jewish* pedigree; and the fact that, from his *legal* father (Joseph)- Jesus was a full- blooded descendant of both King David and Father Abraham. And that is why in **The Revelation 4:7**- the Apostle John saw the Symbol for the "*Evangelist*" Matthew to be a "*Man*" in the last Book of the Bible.

So, Matthew has a white- hot Passion to reach the Jew with the "*Good News*" (Gospel) that Jesus will come. And as we go through this Gospel record- Matthew

will teach us that Jesus will live a perfectly sinless Life- so that He alone may fulfill the Law. And that qualifies Jesus alone to be able to forgive Sin and to grant Righteousness to sinners by Faith.

But Matthew knows that, in the Jewish mind, it is the Old Covenant itself that will hinder his countrymen from *abandoning* the Signs and Symbols and Types and Shadows of the First Covenant and to fully *embrace* the Reality of the New Covenant through Faith in Jesus Christ.

So, here in this real-life Drama with John the Baptist- Matthew wants his people- the Jews- to understand these two things. So, let's examine them closely:

1. John's "*Baptism of Repentance*" created a new "*people of God*" for the coming Messiah

Matthew 3:6

and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

Matthew 3:11

"As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Now notice that in verse 6- The Apostle writes that people were coming to be baptized- confessing their Sins. And then Matthew quotes John the Baptist in verse 11, "**I baptize you with water for Repentance.**"

So, Matthew was making plain that the Purpose of John's Baptism was to provide an Occasion for Jewish people to confess their Sins. But also that they would turn away from Sin and turn toward God (as a result of having a "*change of mind*")- so they could "*get right*" or "*be Righteous*" with God.

And this would create a "*New Distinction*" on the earth that had not existed before. You see, the Old Covenant had divided the peoples of the world between "*Jew and Gentile*" (where the "*people of God*" were those who were born as Jews). But, because of John's Baptism, there was now a Division between the people who have confessed Sin and turned from it- and those who have not. So, now the "*people of God*" were those who have been gifted by God with both the Ability and Desire to confess Sin and turn from it- NOT those who were merely born as Jews!

And what is amazing about this "*New Distinction*" is that the "*have nots*"- those who *refuse* to repent- might even be Jews! While the "*haves*"- those, who by

the Grace of God have been made willing and able to Confess and Repent- they might even be Gentiles!

Now notice something else that is curious about this. In verse 7 Matthew wrote,

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

... and then John rebukes them- *precisely* because they have NOT repented or confessed their Sins.

But look and see that these religious Leaders were coming to be baptized by John! Matthew said they were, "**coming for baptism**"! So, these religious hypocrites had no problem with John's water Baptism. They were perfectly willing to let John baptize them. So, what stopped them? It wasn't the water. And it also wasn't because they found fault with John or with what he was doing. There is only one thing that stopped these men from being baptized: There was NO confession of Sin and NO Repentance from them and so John refused to baptize them!

Now keep in mind these men had memorized many portions of the Old Testament. These men studied the Old Testament 12 hours every day (except on the Sabbath). So, this was the "*cream of the crop*" as it pertained to the Old Testament. They were fastidious as it pertained to the Temple in Jerusalem; and animal sacrifices; and the dietary and ceremonial aspects of the Law. And they had actually authored volume after volume of what people *could* and *could not do* on the Sabbath. They had all been circumcised in the foreskin of their flesh; and they all had the right pedigree and the correct ethnicity and the proper nationality. And yet John would NOT baptize them. Yet he was baptizing prostitutes and farmers and everybody in between- but NOT these guys!

So, these men came to the Jordan to be baptized. They *wanted* to be seen going through the motions of getting wet. They saw the crowds that John had there and with a politician's instinct- they knew it would look real good if they went along with John. Yet John rejected them. Categorically rejected them. Why? It wasn't their Jewishness. It wasn't their failure to lead the people according to the Old Testament (even though they themselves weren't obeying it). Over in **Matthew 23:2- 7**, Jesus said,

2 ..."The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses;

3 therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them.

4 They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.

5 But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments.

6 They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men.

So, *why* did John reject them? Because they *refused* to confess Sin and turn from it! And that means they were NOT a part of this NEW “*people of God*” that God was beginning to gather together with the Baptism of John. In fact, John told them that in **Matthew 3:9**:

and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

... now why did John say that? Keep in mind John was a Jew himself and he knew *exactly* what the Jewish mindset was about Salvation. You see, the Jews had been taught from birth that they were the chosen people of God and Abraham's seed (and thus were saved)- by birth! And so, many of them had reasoned in themselves that they had no need to confess Sin and repent.

So, what does John's Statement mean? It means there is no Salvation and no Security in claiming a genealogical Lineage from Abraham. God is absolutely “free” to choose who will be His people. And He can make saints of His own, out of rocks if He wants to.

So, this NEW “people of God” that are being gathered by this Baptism and being prepared for the coming Messiah, Jesus- are marked by Repentance and the godly Fruit that comes from that true Repentance. They are not, like the Pharisees, depending on their Ethnicity or their religious Pedigree by saying, “*We have Abraham as our father.*”

And because John knew the Old Covenant “*Plan of Salvation*”- he said to them next:

The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

But what was the “**Good Fruit**” that John was talking about here? The God-given Gift of Humility that would promote a Confession of Sin and genuine Repentance.

And so, John tells them that their time is up. They are now “*dead meat*”. The axe has ALREADY been laid at their Root of their Self-righteous Arrogance and God is going to move past them and their Position and their Ministry. God is already moving past the Shadows and Types of the Old Covenant. And they will either move with God- or they will die in their Sins. Because God is now going to create a brand NEW “*people of God*” whom God Himself has “made” willing and able to Confess and Repent!

So, John has now publicly shamed these men and all while he is refusing to baptize them- yet he is *continually* baptizing people, who have been made Humble by a sovereign Act of God and are so willing to confess their Sins and are so willing to turn from it. Yet instead of falling on their face and confessing their Sins- these religious Leaders are now furious with John.

2. This new “people of God” have an Identity that does NOT coincide with their Jewishness- but with their Repentance of Sin and their joyful Faith in Jesus.

Now I have been faithful to teach you about just how amazing and troubling and powerful it was when the First or the Old Covenant came to an End and the New Covenant (that had been promised all through the Old) began to be a Reality. This really shook things up! But it is hard for us today, who have never known anything else BUT the glorious New Covenant in Jesus- to realize that what God began doing in the 1st Century with John’s Baptism and his Condemnation of the religious Leaders of that day- was the *fulfillment* of the inspired and infallible Prophecy of **Haggai 2:6-9** that said,

6 ... Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land.

7 ‘I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord of hosts.

8 ‘The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,’ declares the Lord of hosts.

9 ‘The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the Lord of hosts.”

Now how do I know this? And how do you know that I didn’t just make this up? I can know that this is true and you can know that I am NOT teaching you falsely because of what the writer *infallibly* wrote in **Hebrews 12:25-28**. There,

God the Holy Spirit inerrantly “moved” this man to first quote the Prophecy of **Haggai** (that was hundreds of years old) and then link that Prophecy to the fulfillment of the Old Covenant and the bringing in of the New. Now why did the writer of **Hebrews** take this much time to do this? Precisely because he personally loved the Jews and he wanted the believing Jews of his day to understand just how important it was for them to move *past* the Old Covenant and embrace the New:

25 See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.

26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN."

27 This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

So, I beg you to hear me when I say that for believing Jews to *abandon* the Old Covenant and press on into the New was NOT a neat and tidy Transition. It was hard and confusing and sloppy. And many people, who had labored hard to understand what God was doing through the Old Covenant simply could not find it within themselves to make that Transition.

And this is why the Transition from the Old to the New Covenant was also not something that was done quickly. A very popular Jewish itinerate Teacher, Who seemingly had the ability to heal the sick; cast out demons; and open blind eyes- lived; and was crucified; and rose from the dead three days later. That’s it! That’s all most Jews knew. Now, yes, there was also a great earthquake in Jerusalem; and the sky was unusually darkened; and the Veil in Herod’s Temple was torn from top to bottom on the day Jesus died- but many people, even those who would have told you they were looking diligently for the New Covenant to come- simply missed it.

And that is why several New Testament Epistles were written. For example, the **Book of Hebrews** was written around 68AD. And the **Book of Galatians** was written sometime after 49AD while **Romans** was written around 56AD. And these three Books, more than the others, teach believing Jews *how* to make the Transition from the Old to the New Covenant. But if Jesus died and rose again in

29AD, then that means that **Galatians** was written some 20 years later; **Romans** was written 29 years later; while **Hebrews** was written some 39 years after Jesus rose from the dead.

And the reason that matters is that it shows us that believing Jews were still sacrificing animals; circumcising their Males; keeping the Jewish Sabbath; and adhering to the Dietary and Ceremonial aspects of the Law- almost 40 years after Jesus rose from the dead! This shows us just how confusing this Transition really was- *especially* for those who had lived under the Old Covenant their entire lives.

Now to expedite things, in addition to those New Testament Epistles being written- God sovereignly equipped several Old Testament characters to simply “know” that Jesus was, in fact, the long-awaited Messiah. So, Dr. Luke was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to include the Testimony of Zacharias and Elizabeth; Anna and Simeon; Joseph and Mary; the Shepherds; and the Magi in his Gospel Record. And the good doctor did that- to show the Jews (and his Gentile audience) that Jesus was, in fact, the long-awaited Messiah!

Now how did Dr. Luke do this? By showing that these people totally and immediately *abandoned* their faithful adherence to the Old Covenant upon seeing (or even just hearing about) Jesus. Many of them never saw Jesus perform a single Miracle; they never heard Jesus teach a single thing. They didn’t witness either the Crucifixion or the Resurrection- yet they fully embraced Jesus as being the *fulfillment* of the Old Covenant and the One, Who would bring in the New! For example, the old man, named Simeon- upon seeing the eight- day old Jesus- rushed over; took Him out of Mary’s arms; held Him up to Heaven; and said this in **Luke 2:29-32**:

Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation, Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel.”³

Now this went way further than any Old Testament character imagined because, more than correctly identifying Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, Who had been foretold all through the 39 Books of the Old Testament- the New Testament Apostles and writers were unapologetic in teaching that Jesus was literally God Almighty in human flesh! And as God- Jesus should NOT be merely followed; obeyed; and admired- but Jesus should actually be *worshipped* as God! And this was a *radical* but very *common* Feature of every single Testimony of the Apostles and every single Epistle in the New Testament!

³ Simeon was quoting Isaiah’s concept of Salvation from **Isaiah 52:10**; and also calling Jesus, “God’s [Your] Salvation” from **Isaiah 9:2**.

Now those of you who know me- know that I greatly fear God and I am very cautious about Hell. I think that people today are way too casual about Hell. We must understand that Hell is a horrible Place that is both Real and Certain and Eternal for those who refuse to repent and believe in Jesus. So, I am cautious about Hell precisely because I believe what the Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches about it. And my Response to what the Bible teaches about Hell is- that I don't want my worst enemy to be in Hell. I don't want a stray dog to go to Hell.

So, it is precisely because I DO believe in Hell that I don't relax and rest on some Prayer I prayed 50 years ago. I rehearse the biblical Gospel to myself- almost every day. And the more I understand the Gospel- the more I value the Grace of God; and the more I tremble about Hell. And so, because Hell is real- I teach and preach and testify and warn and plead and beg and confront as many people as possible; every single day to the Gospel- using every available tool at my disposal.

But I do NOT personally condemn anyone to Hell- because I don't know their heart. I don't preach anyone into Hell at a funeral- because I have no idea who has repented at the last minute or who hasn't. I don't know who is truly saved and is genuine spiritual Wheat; and who is simply *pretending* to be saved and is actually a Tare. Maybe you have that Gift- but I don't.

But what I CAN do and what I DO every day- is to teach and preach and say that if a person does NOT hear the Gospel; if they do NOT believe the Gospel; if they do NOT repent of Sin; and if they do NOT put ALL their Hope of spending Eternity with God- in Jesus personally and in His finished Work- they WILL go to Hell. And they will burn in Agony- forever! But as to how many are saved or who is Lost- I have no clue- other than to examine their Fruit and draw a fairly accurate Conclusion from that.

Now I said all of that to say this. Salvation is NOT determined by Bloodline; or Ethnicity; or Nationality. It NEVER has been and NEVER will be. And so, NOBODY can say, "*Because my father is a Christian, then I am okay.*" NOBODY can say, "*Because my Wife is saved- then I am covered by her Salvation.*" And NOBODY can say, "*Because I was born as a Jew- I am automatically right with God.*" That is false. It is a lie. And it is Heresy. The Bible does NOT teach that. But the Bible has NEVER taught that. The Old Testament does NOT teach that.

Salvation is BY Grace ALONE; and it is THROUGH the Gift of Saving Faith ALONE; and it is a sovereign Act of God- to the Glory of God ALONE. Even in the Old Testament; and while the Old Covenant was in force- Salvation was BY Grace and THROUGH Faith. Salvation has NEVER been a result of humanly engineered Works- not even good religious Works. And that means that NOBODY can go to Heaven based on what they have done for themselves or what

they have NOT done. Lost sinners go to Heaven because of what God ALONE has done for them. And after Jesus came and lived and died and rose again- Salvation is now in Christ ALONE!

And we are NOT helping Jews to be saved and escape the Damnation of Hell by encouraging them to remain in their Jewishness and to hold on to the Old Covenant that the New made obsolete. We MUST preach the very SAME Gospel to the Jew that we preach to the Gentile. Each individual has either been chosen for Salvation by God [from before the Foundation of the world] or they haven't. And if they are chosen by God for Salvation- they WILL hear the Gospel; they WILL believe the Gospel; and they WILL repent and they WILL trust in Jesus and in His finished Work. And if they are not chosen- they won't.

Now as the Apostle Paul was articulating true Salvation in his literary masterpiece called, **Romans**, he was careful to teach that Salvation has ALWAYS been "by Grace and through Faith"- absent any and all Works. And Paul also was faithful to include the Jews in this Truth.

So, back in the 1st Century, the huge Theological Issue that troubled people was NOT about Race; or Sexual Perversions; or Abortion; or Marriage; or the unfairness of Wealth; or the unequal status of every human; or any of the other "hot-button" Issues that people wring their hands about today. The one single Issue back then was: "*If the Jews were chosen by God (above ALL the people of the earth)- why didn't they come to Jesus?*" "*If it is true that God 'set His Love' exclusively upon the Jewish people to call them His own people- why did they reject Jesus?*" If the Jew had been given their Land; and their Language; and their Culture; and their Religion sovereignly by God- why were they hostile toward Jesus? How could a group of people that God did so much for- reject the incarnate God? In other words, if ANYBODY *should* have been saved; if ANYBODY *should* have run straight into the Arms of Jesus- it was the Jew. And yet, for the most part, in the 1st Century- Jesus had been categorically rejected by the overwhelming majority of Jews.

Aside from the few men in Jesus' immediate Company; 3,000 Jews were saved at one point and 5,000 at another. Other references say that the "Word of God prevailed" indicating that many others were saved.

And that sounds like a lot. But there were literally millions of Jews alive at that time. So, these numbers don't hardly approach even 1%. So, what about the other 99%? Well, those Jews called Jesus, "*Beelzebul*" (**Matthew 10:25**). And they said He was an imposter; And they tried to trap Him; And eventually they teamed up with the Romans and they nailed the Prince of Life to a tree and watched Him die. But they didn't love Jesus; they didn't respect Him; and they weren't saved. And yet they were Jews. And this really mattered.

Now you really can't get more ironic than this. The one group of

people that God did the *most* for- rejected the One that God loved the most- Jesus. And people in the 1st Century wanted to know why.

Now most people today have no idea just how serious and how important and how difficult that Question was to the believers of the 1st Century. And this one Question brought about several other Questions such as: “*Is Predestination only temporary?*” and “*Is God’s Choosing a people for His Glory- limited?*” *Is God still alive?*

But in the 9th Chapter of the Apostle’s literary masterpiece called, “**Romans**” Paul began to answer this Question with this amazing Statement:

Romans 9:6a

But it is not as though the word of God has failed...

... and I’m so glad he began to answer the Question with this Statement- because that is *exactly* how it looked. Back in verses 1-5- the Apostle articulated the Problem as well as anyone could when he said,

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

... in other words, Paul was saying if ANYONE *should* have come to Jesus and been saved- it was the Jews. Why? Because God had done MORE for them than anyone else!

And so, he then makes this powerful Statement that, even though it certainly looks like the Word of God has failed- it really hasn’t. But how could Paul say that? I mean, obviously, when the Word of God says that God made a Covenant with the Jews- He clearly didn’t mean it. Why? Because the majority of them are NOT saved. But then Paul drew a Conclusion to his Statement that literally shook the world in the *last* part of verse 6 and the *first* part of verse 7:

... For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants...

Now as I have taught you- the word, “**For**” in the New Testament usually means: “**Because**”. So, Paul is re-assuring the Church that the Word of God is absolutely trustworthy and has NOT failed. But how could Paul make a statement like that in the face of what happened with the Jews from the time of the Resurrection to the time he wrote Romans? He begins his Answer with:

For or Because.

So, the Word of God has NOT failed... BECAUSE something is true now; that has ALWAYS been true; and that explains *why* the overwhelming majority of Jews rejected Jesus and had no love or concern for the New Covenant. Why?

... For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants...

So, Paul taught that people, who *thought* they were Jews; and people, who laid claim to be Jews; and people who lived their lives as though they were Jews- actually were NOT Jews. They did NOT belong to Israel; and neither were they the descendants of Abraham! Now this is literally earthshaking! Because this changes EVERYTHING!

And I just want you to do one thing for me- before you cast stones at me: I want you to realize that the Apostle Paul said this- not Blair. And I want you to know that Paul wrote this as God the Holy Spirit “moved” on him. And I also want you to believe that what Paul says here is inspired; inerrant; and infallible. It is the Truth of God’s Word.

Now I don’t believe that people liked this anymore back then than they do now. I believe that what Paul says here was actually the Cause of many of his Persecutions. Yet it is still true. NOT all Israel is actually Israel. NOT all who say they are Jews are actually Jews.

Okay but who is a Jew and who isn’t? What is the criteria by which we can know who is a true Jew and who isn’t? Thankfully Paul tells us:

Romans 9:6b-8

6 ... they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;

7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but:

"THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."

8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

So, it is true that God has chosen the Jew ALONE for Salvation. And it is also true that ALL Jews will be saved. But it is also true that not all Jews are

actually Jews. There are *true* Jews and there are *false* Jews. There is *genuine* Israel and there is a *false* Israel. There are *natural* Jews and there are *spiritual* Jews. And the criteria behind just who is a “real” and “true” and “genuine” and “spiritual” Jew and who isn’t- is that real and genuine Jews are:

... children of the Promise ...

... NOT Bloodline; or Ethnicity; or Nationality- but Promise.

Now to try to understand this better- let’s look at what Jesus Himself taught about this from **John 8:37-59**:

37 I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."

39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.

40 But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do.

41 You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

43 Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word.

44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

45 But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

47 He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

48 The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.

50 But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death."

52 The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.'

53 Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?"

54 Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God';

55 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

57 So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Now this is some of the deepest water in the entire Bible. And I could preach many Sermons from this one Passage. But in context to what we are discussing today (why Jesus was baptized)- I want you to look at several profound and radical Statements in this Passage including:

- **If you are Abraham's children, [you will] do the deeds of Abraham.**
- **If God were your Father, you would love Me (Jesus).**
- **He who is of God hears the words of God**
- **Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad**

... and according to **Romans 4:3b-5-** the "Deeds of Abraham" is...

... ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, John the Baptist told the religious Leaders, who wanted John to baptize them:

So, true Jews are those who have a joyful Faith in Jesus- as their ONLY Righteousness.

Now keep in mind that John did NOT know what was in the heart of these religious Leaders. And yet- he *categorically* damns them. And that tells us that this Condemnation went way beyond them as individuals. John was, in effect, telling these men-

“The time of the Old Covenant is coming to a close. And your foundational Teaching (that Jews were Abraham’s seed by birth) was NEVER true and will also NOT be true inside the Covenant that the Messiah is bringing with Him. It is time to become part of the NEW “people of God” for the coming Messiah, who have an Identity that does NOT coincide with their *Jewishness*- but rather with their *Repentance and Faith*.”

So, this is MORE than simply condemning them *individually*. John is saying that their entire Purpose and Position and Ministry is going to radically change. And so, in the New “people of God” there won’t be a Levitical Priesthood anymore. And there won’t be the Need for Pharisees. And there won’t be a Need for animals to be sacrificed; or men to be circumcised; or Sabbaths to keep; or Temples to be worshipped in.

The NEW “people of God” will no longer be identified through their Jewishness- but by the fact that the Sovereign God has chosen them to be saved and has granted them with both the Desire and the Ability to humble themselves and repent- so they may no longer look to the Temple- but look joyfully to Jesus and put their Hope and Trust in Jesus and in His finished Work.

So, you Leaders MUST bring forth the SAME Fruit of Zacharias and Elizabeth; the very SAME Fruit of Simeon and Anna; the SAME Fruit of Joseph and Mary; the SAME Fruit of the shepherds; and the SAME fruit of the Magi and you MUST see Jesus as your Salvation and NOT your Bloodline or your Ethnicity or your Nationality. You MUST rejoice in Jesus- and THAT will prove that you are, in fact, “My people” and the “Seed of Abraham”!

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.