

W @ e K L J P r a J @ r J O u r n a l

**DAILY BIBLE STUDIES**

***“Two Men & Two Baptisms”***

***Mark 1:4-8***

***May 24 – May 30, 2009***

**THE LORD'S DAY** –This week we want to look at **verses 4-8** of **Mark chapter 1** where we read about John the Baptist, Jesus , and Baptism. *Two Men & Two Baptisms* are described for us in this text and we will see the differences of the Baptisms of John and Jesus. Read **Mark 1:4-8**.

*Suggestion for prayer: Father, open my ears to hear and open the eyes of my heart to receive Your Word this week.*

**MONDAY** –Verse 4 begins, “John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Some people get into trouble here thinking that John was somehow the one who could “dispense forgiveness” through his baptism. We must remember the preceding verse which contains the prophecy outlining to us that John was to “*Prepare the way of the Lord*”. John the Baptist was out preaching a message of repentance to the people and was then baptizing those who had a profession of repentance. He was “*preparing*” the way for the coming Messiah who alone could provide “*remission*” (forgiveness) of sins. John preached that men should repent of their sins, and believe in Christ, who was to come; and upon their repentance and faith, be baptized. We will discuss this issue of repentance further in the coming days but remember the truth which is clear in Sacred Scripture, that Christ alone is the One who provides and made possible true forgiveness of sin. Read **Isaiah 42:1, 6-7, Acts 4:12**.

*Suggestion for prayer: Father, thank You for sending Christ to pay my penalty for breaking Your law and sinning against You. Help me praise and honor Christ as the only One who could save me from my sin.*

**TUESDAY** –Continuing on this matter of “*repentance*” and John administering a “*baptism of repentance*” we must remember that Scripture teaches that repentance itself is a gift from God (**Acts 11:18**). We do not on our own, “manufacture” genuine repentance. God works this Divine act in the human heart but He also calls us and commands us to repent (**Acts 17:30**). The Greek word used here is the common word metanoia translated 24 times in the New Testament as “*repentance*” and 34 times as “*repent*”. The word metanoia means “a change of mind, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one’s past sins”. God alone works true repentance in the

Lord's Day	Praise & Prayer	ADORATION Hallowed be Your name. (6:9)	AUTHORITY Your Kingdom come... (6:10)	APPEAL Give us this day... (6:11)	AQUITTAL Forgive us our debts... (6:12)	ASSISTANCE Deliver us from evil. (6:13a)	ADMIRATION For Yours is the Kingdom... (6:13)
Sat							
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human heart but as John the Baptist preached, we are to repent, change our mind away from our sin to Christ. We are to be led to a fresh view of the free and full forgiveness of our sins through Christ; whose blood was to be shed for many, to obtain it. Repentance signifies, not only sorrow for sin, but the resolve to sin no more. The object of repentance and baptism here was the forgiveness of sins. The sum of John's doctrine, or rather Christ's, is remission of sins and amendment of life. He called them to repent of their sins, so that they might receive pardon through believing in Christ who was to come. Unless a person is brought to repentance, they will not seek for pardon and forgiveness. John's baptism therefore served as a preparation for belief in Christ. Read **2 Corinthians 7:9-11**.

*Suggestion for prayer:* Father, Thank You for giving me the gift of repentance at salvation, now help me live my life characterized by a repentant spirit.

**WEDNESDAY** – We get a little of the geography of John's preaching and baptizing from these verses as well as the other gospel accounts we read of the wilderness (between Jerusalem and the dead sea), Judea, Jerusalem, and the Jordan river. But more than mere geography, **verse 5** explains to us and underscores the fact that those who were baptized by John were people, who as the text says, were “*confessing their sins*”. If you notice the text says “*Then all the land of Judea...went out to him and were all baptized...*” Here is an example when we need to look at the context of Holy Scripture to help us define “*all*”. Did every living soul in these areas come and be baptized? These are questions that we must look at and be diligent students of Scripture when we face them. Not “*all*” (every single person living there) the people were baptized for we see clearly from the record in **Matthew 3:1-12**, especially **verse 7**, that there were many of the Pharisees and Sadducees who came, whom John rejected. The Scripture defines by the context for us that “*all*” who were baptized in the Jordan River were those who were confessing their sins; that is, as many of them who were brought to a recognition, a sight, and a sense of their sins and need for forgiveness, and made confession of them. The Greek word translated here “*confessing*” is taken from two Greek words, the one being the word Homologeō which means among other things, “to say the same thing as another, to agree with, assent, to confess, to admit or declare one's self guilty of what one is accused of.” This is the word used by John in his first epistle. Read and meditate on **1 John 1:8-10**.

*Suggestion for prayer:* Father, thank You that You promise to forgive those who “*confess*” their sin to You”. Help me be one who confesses.

**THURSDAY** – In **verse 6** we get some details pertaining to the life, and also a verbal picture is painted for us of the man, John the Baptist. John the Baptist's parents (Zacharias & Elizabeth) were both from the priestly tribe (**Luke 1:5**). Zacharias was a priest and John laid aside the priestly garments for camel's hair. For this man was the precursor of a “Higher Priesthood”.

So much could be said about the man of whom Jesus said, “...among those born of woman there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist”. “The blessed John disdained hair obtained from flocks of sheep as smelling of luxury. Instead he chose camel's hair, making his life's pattern one of simplicity and frugality. For he also “ate locusts and wild honey,” sweet and spiritual food, preparing for the humble and self-controlled ways of the Lord. How could John have possibly worn a purple robe? He was one who avoided all false pretenses of the city and lived a calm existence in the desert apart from all frivolous pursuits, from anything ignoble or mean” (Clement). May we desire Christ as John did. Read **John 3:25-36**.

*Suggestion for prayer:* Teach me Christ to have the humble and Christ exalting attitude of John: That You might increase and I might decrease.

**FRIDAY** –John further exalted Christ in **verse 7** where he speaks of not being worthy to stoop down and loose the sandal strap of Jesus. This most menial task that a slave would perform and John saying he was unworthy to do it vividly portrays the heart of a humble servant of Christ. Many commentators point out the seeming similarities between Elijah and John the Baptist. An interesting point is that Jesus identified John as the Elijah prophesied by Malachi who was to come before the Messiah (**Malachi 4:5-6, Matthew 11:13-15**). Even though there are many who mention the comparisons of Elijah and John, we must be sure to understand that there is no comparison of the ministries of John and Jesus, for John himself says that they are not comparable. John was clothed in the hair of a camel, for he could not wear the mantle of the lamb of whom he announced, “Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”; and also as Isaiah said, “He (Christ) is led like a lamb to the slaughter.”

*Suggestion for prayer:* Thank You Lamb of God for taking away my sin.

**SATURDAY** –**Verse 8** explicitly tells us the difference in the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus. One is a water baptism while the other is a spiritual baptism into Christ Jesus and His body when a person comes to faith in Him (**1 Corinthians 12:13**). John's baptism was one which testified that a person looked for the forgiveness that comes from the Messiah and expresses its desire through repentance. Jesus' baptism graciously brings real forgiveness through faith which He grants us. We see here the difference between the law and the gospel. John, the last of the prophets of the law brought a water baptism to signify a repentant heart and a looking toward the promise of Jesus to come in the power of the gospel of grace which meets the demands of the law by granting forgiveness of sin and offers a righteous standing to those who experience it by faith. This New Covenant relationship is made possible through the work of The Holy Spirit. Read **Jeremiah 31:33-34, Ezekiel 37:14**.

*Suggestion for prayer:* Father, Son, and Spirit, Glory be to You Holy Trinity!