

It's incredible how time can seem to pass so quickly. Here we are in the midst of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And we're going to continue today now with the sermon series entitled *Born to Be the First to Become God* (very specific on how I wanted to say that), and this is *Part 3*.

We're going to pick up at the end where we left off last week because I had forgotten the little portion here about what it says about the children of Rachel, or Rachel weeping, the children of Rachel, because of the children. Anyway, I want to read that again today. We'll start there because that was the very part where we ended anyway.

This is when Herod had sent out people to kill all the babies, actually two years old and younger, it says. And we'll just pick that up in Matthew 2:16. That's after the magi had been sent away, sent down to the area of Bethlehem after he had asked, Herod had asked about where the child was to be born according to Jewish teaching and so forth, and they told him it would be in Bethlehem. And so, the magi were sent away to that area, and we're picking up the story then in verse 16.

Matthew 2:16—Then Herod, when he saw that he had been mocked of the wise men... Because they didn't come back. Because he thought, in essence, that they would surely come back because he had requested it. He was trying to befriend them or act like he was friendly to them, and he wanted to go down and see the child as well. So, he wanted information about that. But the wise men, if you will, or the magi were warned not to go back. And anyway, then Herod wasn't a happy camper. He got mad. He got angry. And because of that, he sent forth soldiers to go out and slay the children that were in that area **from two years old and under, according to the time he had diligently inquired of the magi.**

Then **verse 17—Then was fulfilled that which was spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet. In Ramah there was a voice heard, lamentation and weeping and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not.** I've gone into and read a lot of stuff about this just out of curiosity, and I did before, but I'd forgotten part of the story here. There is no clear answer as to what this is all about, to be candid about it, and why it's mentioned this way. She was buried in that area very close to Bethlehem there, Rachel was, and of course, one of her children was Benjamin. So, when it speaks of some of that, because Ramah is an area that is north of the area of Jerusalem in the region of Benjamin, what was given to the Benjamites as an area north of Judah, and so speculation about a lot of this, of what it is or what it isn't.

So, candidly, I didn't come to anything of a conclusion of what it's really about. I can't help you. I really don't know. Because there is every kind of idea under the sun of what this is literally about and it doesn't say

specifically whether it was something because of the distance they heard or what, because obviously, there's a little bit to be desired here in how this is stated.

Anyway, going on then in **verse 19—But when Herod was dead, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead who did seek the young Child's life. So, he arose and took the young Child and His mother and came to the land of Israel.** So, they were going back to the area of Galilee because Galilee is north of Judah, a region in the north of Judah, and the city of Nazareth, where Joseph was from, that's where they were headed back to eventually, but they were going to go up through a different area, Jerusalem, to get there.

So, in **verse 22**, it says, **But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in the place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And therefore, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts/other parts of Galilee.** So, he's taking a different route, in other words, to get there, to bypass this area. **And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene,** speaking of Joshua. Because that's where Joseph was from, that was where they had lived before they left and went down into the area of Bethlehem for the count, as it was.

So, quite an incredible story here as you go through it. And you think about Joseph. I can't help but think about him and his thinking, and Mary as well, because it talks about these things that they held inside. And to be told, first of all, to take the young child and to go down into Egypt, told by an angel, and then this part here of coming back up, and again, being worked with, but not really understanding (because He's a child), what this is all about, how this had to do with the Messiah.

By reading these things, it doesn't look like they were able to put everything together right away at all in that regard, at least in Joseph's case. Whether Mary did and wondered about what was being said? But it'd be a weird kind of thing. You've heard these things from God; you've heard these things, in essence, being told by angels, and how do you deal with that, because these are so far out of the norm that it's hard to imagine.

Let's turn over to Luke, continue in the story, because now this is the age where, eight days later, He was going to be circumcised, and it brings this up. Luke 2:21. So, he's telling a part of the story now. So, we talked about the birth here and being told to go down into Egypt, and then it was time to come back later on. But now, going down here to the very beginning.

Luke 2:21—Now, when eight days had come for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Joshua, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. So again here, the time to a formal type of setting and a time of declaring it again here, "He is called Joshua."

Now, when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses had been completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present to the Lord. So, this is a part of the process as well. So they want to go up there to

fulfill what was recorded in the law, and he doesn't get specific about some of the timing here of when some of this took place, but it was something that they were to perform and do.

...as is written in the law of the Lord, Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Eternal/to the Lord. So, this is a part of the Old Testament, what was given. And again here, "every male," it says. So, this isn't a matter of something that was men or women or children, if you will, when it comes to male and female, that males were more special than females. That's not what this is all about. Sometimes people can read into things and come up with the wrong conclusion of what's being discussed here.

This had to do as a reminder of something, of something to see about a child and about birth and about something that was special to God. It goes back to Joshua. It's about Joshua more than anything else. But God gave that as a custom of something they were to do because it speaks of Joshua as being the only begotten Son of God, if you will, and how important it is then this whole process was to God and His purpose. So again, something given in the Old Testament that they were to do, not understanding what it was about, what it was to picture, or anything of that nature.

Verse 24. So, it says here, **They were to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.**

Now, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. So, what does that mean, "consolation of Israel"? It's a word that means "calling near," or "the exhortation," or "the comforting of" Israel. Well, again, it's about the Messiah. It's about the comfort that they're going to be able to receive through the prophesied Messiah that God had given in the Old Testament. And so, this is something that was very much a part of Simeon's desire in his life.

And so, the story goes on, as it says here, **he was just and devout, waiting, in essence, for the Messiah.** That's what his desire was in his heart, in his being, in his life. And he was a devout man in his service and worship of God. And so, it says here, **and the holy spirit was upon him.**

It goes on to say then, **Now, it had been revealed to him by the holy spirit...** So, the holy spirit communicates things to the mind. That's the power of God to communicate to the mind. When we're called, when we begin to be drawn, God begins to work with us, communicating things to our mind to be able to see things that we otherwise could not see, and we begin to understand things on a spiritual plane or whatever it is that God is communicating to us. But that's how God works.

So again here, that's how the revelation came to him, by God placing it in his mind, if you will, communicating to his mind. That's what it's talking about here. **...that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ,** until he had seen the Messiah. So, this was very much a part of his life, something he desired with all of his being, and then the holy spirit (God) revealed to him through that power that "You're not going to see death until you see Him." So, he lived for that, obviously.

So he came by the spirit into the temple. So, what does that mean, “He came by the spirit into the temple”? God again communicating to him. It’s by the holy spirit. “Go in the temple.” So, that’s what happens. There are things that happen by God’s holy spirit that has communicated to some to do certain things, and this came to him. God has worked with people through ages. To me, that’s an exciting thing, when you go through and realize God had to communicate this to different ones to do what they were doing, some that weren’t even being worked with by God. And He communicated, and they had this desire, urge, whatever it is, to follow through with it. Incredible.

So he came by the spirit into the temple. Then, when the parents brought the Child Joshua, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and praised God and said, Lord... Can you imagine? Here he comes in there to do this, picks Him up... ...Eternal/Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word. How did he know this was Him? Because it was communicated to him, “This is the Messiah. This is Him.” Incredible.

For my eyes have seen Your salvation. Again, Joshua’s name. That’s why His name was so important. Because that’s what it means, it’s the definition “the Eternal’s Salvation,” or “the salvation of the Eternal.” And so, he’s responding and saying, “My eyes have seen Your salvation.” He didn’t understand it all. But throughout Judaism for so long they had looked for the coming of the Messiah to save them, to help them. It doesn’t matter what wars that were fought even before, throughout time they had this belief that God is going to send a Messiah to save them. They saw it on a physical plane. They certainly did during this period of time. Incredible.

So, it says here, **For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all people.** So, here He is. **...a light of revelation to the gentiles.** So, he’s being inspired to say things here by the holy spirit. That doesn’t mean he understood by any measure. But now it wasn’t just about the “consolation of Israel,” it’s for the gentiles! Awesome! It’s much bigger. It doesn’t mean he understood it, but he said it because this was what was given to him.

...a light of revelation to the gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel. So, it took some time before you go through some of the things that happened in the beginning on the day of Pentecost and on until God began to work with Paul, and then God began to reveal this is to go out to all the gentiles. “This is for them as well. To bring both, to save both. The Messiah of all mankind,” if you will.

Verse 33—Then Joseph and His mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of Him. So, they’re hearing these different things. Mary had already heard different things, Joseph had heard different things at different times here from the angel and so forth, and now here is this Simeon coming along and saying what he is saying. So, these things, they heard them, they listened to them, they marvelled.

Then Simeon praised them, and said to Mary His mother, Behold, this is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own life also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. So again, all prophetic things here being spoken of and being

said. They didn't understand it all. It didn't mean that Simeon understood any of it at all either. He didn't. And yet it was spoken and recorded for a purpose.

Verse 39—So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee.

So, we already know the story here, that they'd already gone up into Galilee, to Nazareth, when they bypassed and went a different route. And then now, they came back to fulfill this portion of it, so they had to come down from Galilee. And so, they're returning now **to Galilee, to their city, Nazareth.**

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit. Something we really can't comprehend. Strong in God's spirit. The things He saw, the things He knew, the things He understood in His mind because He was the Word of God made flesh. We can't fully grasp and understand that to the magnitude it is. The Son of God. Awesome. That mind that was in Him. Not to the degree and level of the power and the might of Almighty God, but the knowledge, the understanding, the things that were there on a spiritual plane, they were there, and He grew in those things and greater understanding as time went along.

As it says here, **strong in spirit, filled with wisdom.** Well, we know what that is. It's from God. It's the mind of God. It's the word of God. He was filled with that. **...and the grace of God was upon Him.** You better believe it. Incredible favor, help that was given to Him as His own Son.

Then it goes on to say in **verse 41—His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.**

Now, when He was twelve years old, it says, **they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the Feast.**

So, they went up every year to the Feast. This happened to be the Passover season, the Days of Unleavened Bread, and He was twelve years old. And so it's saying here that this was their custom to do this every year.

And when they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Joshua had remained behind in Jerusalem.

And Joseph and His mother did not know it. Now, kind of hard to know what transpired here. Here is a twelve-year-old. Already, by this time, they had to be themselves in awe, if you will, in part, because it reveals things that He had done and said, and so forth, and there is wonderment, wondering, if you will, that was in their minds at different things that would happen and different things He would say. And yet here is a situation where they really weren't as concerned as most parents would be. Where is He? So, this question wasn't coming up.

And it goes on to say **...but supposing He was with others,** if you will, **other in the caravan, they went a day's journey and then looked for Him.** It took a whole day. Here they are a day's journey going back up to Nazareth with a string of people that are going out to different parts of the country after being in Jerusalem, as the custom was, and not knowing where He was. And then all of a sudden, "Where is He?" It blows my mind.

But anyway, **then a day's journey they looked for Him among relatives and others they knew. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him.** Can you imagine what that would do to a

parent, even if you had that kind of unique thinking toward a child that was growing up that you knew was special, being worked with in a special way, but not understanding it all?

Now, so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple. Can you imagine? Three days it took them to finally come to the temple, and there He was. He'd been there in that area that whole time. **...sitting in the midst of the teachers.** So, here are all the teachers around here. It's hard to comprehend. And here He is in the midst of them.

So, these teachers are all around. Teachers! Teachers of that way of life, about God, things of God and so forth. **...both listening to them and asking them questions.** So, He's in there talking to them, reasoning with them, and so forth, as it were. **Even all who heard Him were astonished** in the things He had to say, **and His understanding and His answers.** Incredible!

So when they saw Him, they were astonished, and His mother said to Him, Son, why have You done this to us? You know, "...to put that kind of worry on us? It's taken us three days to find You, and here You are in the temple." Now, a lot of parents would go a lot farther than that, but in this case here they were holding back because of all their history of who He was, of what's been said about Him already, and the maturity at His age of twelve anyway in the things that were coming out of Him, being spoken by Him even to His parents.

Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have been in anguish looking for you. Then He said to them, Why did you look for Me? Did you not know that I was about My Father's business? So, here is another saying, another expression. And how do you deal with that, how do you answer that knowing some of the things that are in your mind and then He's asking this of you? **But they did not understand the statement which He told them.** Surely they didn't. Absolutely, they didn't.

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them. It says a lot, doesn't it? In other words, these are His physical parents, in that respect, in the respect He was showing to them. And yet, He was far beyond anyone even at that age with the mind that He had. Incredible.

But His mother kept all these things in her heart. Everything that she'd experienced from the beginning to this point in time. **Then Joshua increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.** People were in awe when they came in contact with Him. Awesome!

Then the story jumps ahead to a monumental moment, if you will, in Joshua's life, that it starts talking about next, just before He started His ministry, the work that was going to be done. Let's turn over to Matthew 3. Now the story of John the Baptist.

Matthew 3:1—In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand! It's amazing what some of the world has done with some of these expressions and not understanding what it's all about. And "What do you mean 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'?" Well, it's all about God's Kingdom. It's all about God's Family. It's all about Elohim. And here is the first

one, the first one that's going to be recognized for who He is, in that respect, as the cornerstone of everything else that's going to be built upon Him. And indeed, Christ had come; He was there. He was getting ready to come out even to be before John.

And so, this is a part of His preaching because it's about the coming of the Messiah. It's about the need to be baptized. It's about the need to change your ways, to make straight the ways of Almighty God in your lives, get your act together, repent of your sins because the Messiah is coming.

For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Eternal; Make His paths straight. Everything in God's plan is upon Joshua. Everything ever created is on Him as the cornerstone of everything to be built. Awesome!

Now, John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then it says, Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan. In other words, this is where they came from, but all that did come, these are the regions from which they came, **acknowledging their sins.** So, they were repenting before God. They wanted to be forgiven of their sin. It's the start of a process of acknowledging their sin and wanting to change, recognizing they have problems, they have a need to change and turn to God.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, You den of vipers! It's interesting, amazing. Here they're coming out seeing what he's doing, and a lot of this wasn't because they were impressed with John. There are jealousies involved. There is human nature involved in the things that were taking place in that religion, if you will, or the religion at that time of Judaism.

And just by writing some of the things in the book, it was far, far worse than what we've ever imagined. The condemnation upon them is far, far greater because many, indeed even though not drawn by God's spirit, are without excuse for the things they did. Because they changed a lot in what was given to them to take care of, if you will, according to the ways of God and the truth of God. And if they even on a physical plane, if those things had been done truthfully, there are things they would have been able to at least admit and acknowledge. But they were so, so caught up in their own lives and the way they were doing things and what they made choices to reject outright, they, in very powerful ways, are truly without excuse in so many ways.

So, he called them **You den of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance.** So, "What is it? What can you show? What can you say, in essence, in order to be baptized? Why should I baptize you?" Now, we use this in the Church. Before anyone is baptized they're supposed to bring forth fruit meet for repentance. In other words, evidence of your repentance, that you are starting to change your life.

They weren't going to change their lives. They had no desire to change their lives to what John was preaching and so forth, and what was yet to come. Their whole history reflects that. They fought against it to the point of wanting to put Him, the Messiah, to death. Incredible!

So again here, to bring forth fruit. So, there's time given. Just because someone says, "I want to be baptized," or even to be part of or come into the fellowship of God's Church, there are things that have to be answered. There are things that have to be seen and understood, that at least you're putting forth effort and work that can be seen. There's a measurement of it. Some of the greatest of those have to do with tithing and Holy Day offerings. It becomes obvious that you're starting to change your life. You have a desire to keep the Sabbath. You are keeping the Sabbath. You are setting it aside and observing it with what you're able to see and know and understand. If you're not doing that, where is the fruit showing you're repenting, that you're changing your life, that you're responding to God's calling and what God is doing in your life by giving you understanding?

So, if a person isn't striving to apply some of those things to their life, they're no more ready than the man in the moon. There is no man in the moon...but anyway. Not right now. They're shooting up around it. Awesome. "Bring forth fruit meet for repentance."

And when someone is suspended or put out of God's Church they must bring forth more fruit, proof of their repentance, because to be suspended or disfellowshipped is so incredibly serious in life that if someone really wants God in their life, really wants to make changes in their life then you better get busy and prove that you are serious about this now and you have taken care of, you have addressed your problems in the past of what you did that are wrong and you're being truthful and honest about them.

Because I'm still waiting for some to respond back. And in some cases, they're not being truthful and honest about what they're supposed to be addressing in their life because of what they did to be disfellowshipped or suspended in the first place. And if somebody begins to tithe or give offerings to God's Church again, you know, candidly, if you're not changing your life, who wants it? We don't want it! We don't need it! It's not about your money. It's about your obedience to God Almighty. And if you're convicted of doing those things, then why not follow through with the rest? Do you really want to return?

I'm speaking to some out there that might be listening today or next week or whenever they listen to it. Because you can tithe and you can give offerings, but if you're not crying out and making it known, "I want to come back! I want to come back to what I left, to what I turned against!" then you have no business of even going through the motions of it, and you're just making harsher judgment for yourself. I hope people understand that. Because we have some of this going on.

You think, what a heinous thing! Do you really thirst and hunger after God and God's way of life? Do you really desire fellowship? So, why are you going through the motions of doing it? It's like somebody who leaves and they won't eat pork. Well, whoop-tee-do. That doesn't make you in a right relationship with God or religious in

any fashion or form. But tithes and offerings? Why do it if you're not going to do the rest, if you're not going to repent and be honest with yourself about what you've done in your life that brought this on in the first place?

Anyway. Sometimes I just want to pull my hair out because I think of all the people whom God has called over the past 2,000 years, and the majority have turned against Christ, have turned against the Messiah, have turned against the Passover, of the very reason He died and went through everything that He did. Mind-boggling what human beings can do. And then we think we're going to get a slap on the wrist, and this isn't a big thing, and "Well, later on in the Great White Throne I can...you know... if that's what really happens. Because I don't know if I really believe that. And then if I'm resurrected, then I'll address it then, and I'll repent." Bull. You've got the same mind, the same spirit.

That's why a lot of these Sadducees and Pharisees, when they're resurrected, even when offered God's spirit, you think they're going to embrace it immediately? Well, they rejected everything that was in front of them that they should not have rejected. It should have been a big tell-tale calling sign, "This is from God Almighty, and who am I to fight against it?" Incredible!

"You den of vipers!" So, he called them what they were, because they are. **Therefore, bring forth fruit meet for repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves...** In other words, to claim as a justification. So, usually, there is justification why people don't go and do everything they should. "Bringing forth fruit," meaning to start living what God says that you should, doing it the right way. **...we have Abraham as our father.** It's like they take solace in that and "I'm okay because of that." Whatever. Anyway. **Because I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.**

Verse 10—Even now the axe is being laid, if you will, to the root of the trees. Something is being chopped down. Judaism was the big thing that was being chopped down at that time. They were the vipers that were being chopped down, if you will. They were no longer going to have the ability to have charge of doing anything in a mockery sort of way in service to God. They would have about, well, not even seventy years. Less than that, and then the temple itself was going to be destroyed. But to go through the motions of various things and to think you're religious? Because that's what they did. They went through, "Well, we have the temple, and we have the temple service, and we have the Levitical system." And then that was taken away. So, the axe, in that respect, was laid to the tree in that analogy.

Then it goes on to say, **Therefore, every tree which doesn't bring forth fruit/good fruit, is cut down and thrown into the fire.** This pops up in different areas. Like the matter of baptism. You know, "There is one coming, He's going to baptize with water and with fire." And I think of some of the protestant world, they want that baptism of fire, especially those of Pentecostal. And they want the baptism of fire because it's better than a regular baptism of water. But anyway, they have no idea what they're talking about. They're talking about being destroyed. Incredible! To be immersed in fire. Who really wants that one? They just don't know what they're

asking for or what they're saying. But this pops up so often because it's about judgment. It's about judgment of not looking to God as the Great Creator.

I'll tell you what, Chapter 9, I think I'm finished with it. Well, I'm finished with it mostly. It's sent out to be edited as a whole. But as a whole, to me, it's one of the most inspiring things above and beyond, added to, all the truth that's been given up to this point in time. And for people not to acknowledge God Almighty, the Almighty God, that He is the Creator of everything, to recognize the vastness of everything He's created and why, people rob themselves and they don't realize what they're doing. We are so richly blessed, we truly are. But to turn against what God offers and what God says, well, judgment is going to come. And if people don't repent, as John the Baptist was sent out to say, "Repent, the Kingdom of God/the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," and if people won't do that, well, that's your choice. So be it. There is going to come an end.

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I am, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. What a humble attitude and spirit. So moved by what he knew, by what he understood, by what he was preaching, by what he was doing, that he knew when He came who He was, the Son of God, the Messiah that we've looked for for so long, a descendant of King David.

He will baptize with the holy spirit and fire. I think of what it says in the very beginning, "I set before you life and death. Choose life." Because that's what it boils down to. God sets before us life and death, to His way of life or our own. And if we want our own, we don't want His, so be it. It's a choice. But there's a payment for that. It's fire. It's an end to life forever, never to be resurrected from it again. And that's what this is about. So, people can either receive of the holy spirit in life, in time as God offers it to them, His truth, His way of life, or to choose the fire. That's what they're doing by their choices. What's astounding is people are going to be told this into the millions of people, and knowingly what their choice is, against God and what God says. Incredible.

His winnowing fan is in His hand. To separate, to separate the chaff from what is to be kept. **...and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor.** So, the earth is to mankind upon it, to mankind. It has to go through this process. **...and gather His wheat into the storehouse.** That which responds and chooses and wants God's way of life will be blessed in it. And those who don't? **But He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.** Meaning that it's going to be thoroughly burnt until it's gone. Nothing can put it out. It's a judgment. And when it's gone, it's gone.

Then Joshua came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized of him. Then John tried to prevent Him. Because he felt he wasn't worthy to even to loosen His sandals, if you will. How much less to take Him out and baptize Him. That's what was in his mind. So, he tried to dissuade Him.

This is what he's saying to Christ, **And he said, I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me? But Joshua answered him and said, Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.** So, what

does He mean by that? It means “We’ve got to do what God said we’re supposed to do. We have to fulfill all righteousness, to obey what God has placed before us. You’re to baptize Me. I am to be baptized. There is meaning in what I must go through.”

Then he allowed Him. So, John allowed it, was going to go ahead and do it then, and did it. **And when He had been baptized, Joshua came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him.** Special time. Special moment. Seeing something like that in that form, like a dove. **Then, suddenly, a voice from heaven said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** Awesome!

So again, Joshua was baptized by John, and then right after that God sent His holy spirit as a begettal to Joshua. He had been born, born the Word of God made flesh, had a unique mind from God, thinking from God, spirit that was helping Him from God, like being drawn. Because when we’re drawn, we have that spirit that God gives to us to let us see things, and Christ had it all for so long but He had to be begotten, a spirit essence to connect with that essence in His mind. Not just to be worked with by God’s spirit in the mind of God, if you will, but now begotten. He had to go through the same process that every other human has to go through, a spirit begettal.

And so, He was given that in His mind, in His being, spirit begotten life in human life. So, in one respect, I made comment in times past here that nowhere is mankind ever referred to as the sons of God until the moment they are begotten. Then scripture regards them as the sons of God because of being begotten, not yet born into God’s Family, but begotten. And that’s the first that a human being can begin to bear that kind of title, if you will, a son of God. Awesome!

And so, here, Joshua was the literal Son of God. He gave into Mary something we can’t comprehend, and she was begotten physically with Joshua until He was born, so in that respect, the son of God. But even more so now because now He is begotten with God’s spirit so that He can be born into the God Family. Without this step, it couldn’t be. Incredible.

So, “there is a need to fulfill the righteousness of God” because God has a way of working, a way of working in human life and nothing circumvents that. Incredible.

John 1:19—Now, this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you? So again, their reasons for going out there were not noble, were not good, were not true. They were a den of vipers just as he called them.

So, he acknowledged and did not refuse, in essence, to answer them, **even acknowledging I am not the Christ. So they asked him, Who then? Are you Elijah? He answered, I am not. Are you the Prophet? Then he**

answered, No. Therefore, they said to him, Who are you, that you may give an answer to those who sent us? “We have to go back with an answer, so who are you?” **What do you say about yourself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.** They couldn’t understand that. A spiritual wilderness. And this is just the beginning of a process, Joshua the Christ coming now finally to fulfill a great part of God’s purpose and plan of Passover. But people didn’t understand that.

So again **...one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord/the Eternal, as the prophet Isaiah said. Now, those who were sent were from the Pharisees.** So again here, it’s about a process of that which human beings are to respond to in their lives in making God’s way straight. God shows us the right way, the straight way to live life, and there comes a time then for people to respond to that message when it’s given to them. And this is so much of what the prophecy is about, that it’s up to us then. Because we have messed up, screwed up, twisted lives. Religion is so twisted up and distorted in everyone’s life. And this is the only way to begin making it agree with, coming into agreement, if you will, with God. Awesome. So, we have to respond by making our way straight and repenting of sin where we go off track. Awesome.

Then they asked him, saying, Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet? It’s like, “Who are you that you can come out here and baptize? By what authority do you do this?” **John answered them, saying, I baptize with water.** People that recognize the need for repentance, the need for change. **...but there stands One among you whom you do not know.** “One of the tribe of Judah, and you don’t know Him.” **It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loosen.** So again here, incredible spirit and attitude in things that he was telling them that they had no way of understanding.

But **verse 28—These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.**

The next day, John saw Joshua coming toward him and said, Behold! The Lamb of God. Incredible! By God’s spirit. It doesn’t say whether or not he knew Him before. They were related. But here he says, he cries out, undoubtedly with God’s spirit, **The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.** In other words, in God’s plan and purpose.

I did not know Him; but so that He would be revealed to Israel, I therefore came baptizing with water. Now John gave witness, saying... So, he’s telling more of the story here. **I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained upon Him.** So, I got this story a little screwed up and I got a little ahead of myself here. But here He is approaching him, has to be, again, obviously, because he’s already seen this, and so he’s telling the story here about Him.

And it goes on to say here, **Then I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained, or abode/dwelted, as the word is, upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, Upon whom you see the spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the**

holy spirit. So, it's a little bit of a strange way, of how some of the story here of how they are reported, in this case by John, and what is said here. But this is something that he was shown and given in saying, whoever you see that this happens to, He is the Messiah. Definitely, He is the one.

Now I have seen and testified this is the Son of God. So, again here, it's kind of awkward piecing all this story together like this and seeing how he's saying these things, because there is, obviously, a point here where this has already happened and he's talking back about it again. And candidly, it causes a little confusion. But the basis of the story is all there, that he was witness of what took place. He was told that this was going to take place and that He, then, when you see this, He is the Messiah, He is the Son of God. And so, this is what he's testifying to and the primary purpose of what John wrote here.

Let's turn over to Hebrews 1. So again, so obvious we see, we're blessed to understand very powerfully so that Christ did not exist before His birth to His mother, Mary. He was born (awesome, this title of this sermon) to become God. I think sometimes people have been afraid to say things that way in times past within the Church, but the reality is that's the whole purpose of it. He is the first. That's why He was born, to become the first to become God. It is the God Family. It isn't the angelic family. It is far beyond the angelic family. And everyone who enters that Family is in the God Family. They're called Gods.

Not as Almighty God. No one will ever be, can ever be like God the Father, that power and that might. But He sustains all, and He's going to sustain His Family forever. They are beings, separate beings that will be in God's Family, and they are referred to, again, above and beyond the angelic realm and as spirit beings. And they're not just called spirit beings that are greater than angels, they're called God.

So, it's kind of a humbling thing to recognize that, to think about what God has planned and prepared for His creation. And He is the first to become Elohim. It's all about Elohim, God's Family, the Family of God.

Hebrews 1:5—For unto which of the angels has He said at any time, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You? Now literally this was said at a very specific time and was recorded earlier here in some of the things that are said.

So again here. Duality? I don't know. "You are My beloved Son. This day have I begotten You." Well, to be referred to as His Son, but the day He was begotten it was said at a very specific time, that portion. So, he acknowledges in essence when the dove came down, the spirit was given to Him, and the sound that they heard.

So, he's saying here, "Unto which of the angels did He say at any time, 'You are My Son'?" No angels. No angels have ever been told. They're created spirit beings. They were created to help in the creation—Awesome!—of the power that God Almighty gave to them, and they did what God said and how God said it. They were there not to just watch things take place; they were a part of it. God shares. He's going to share with the God Family

later on in powerful ways. But He shared with the angelic realm in so much of what was done throughout the universe, obviously.

So here it's referring to something that was said. This was never said to any of the angels. They were just created spirit beings. Never true children. They were only children in the sense of being spirit beings, but never born from God, of God, in any fashion or form.

And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son? And again, when He brought the first begotten into the world, He said, And let the angels of God worship Him. Awesome! Making it very clear here who He was and who He was to become. Because this, the angelic realm was to worship Him.

Then a voice from heaven, This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. [Matthew 3:17]. So, I wanted to drive the point home this is what God said at this point here when John baptized Him and making it very clear He is the Son of God. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [Mark 1:11—Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."] I think every account says it that way. That's why it doesn't go on to talk about "This day I have begotten You." So, that's why I wanted that read.

Anyway, so in Hebrews here, it's just asking the question [Hebrews 1:5] "To which of the angels did God ever say..." And then it goes on to say, "You are My Son," and "This day have I begotten You." And so, it's just recording some certain things that are in scripture in the story flow. And he says, "When He brings the first begotten into the world, He said, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him.'"

And of the angels He said, Who made His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son... So, He made them spirit, powerful and everything, but not sons, not His children in that regard as begotten of God. That's the distinction being made here. **But unto His Son He said, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.** The first of the firstfruits became God. That's how He's referred to by God Almighty.

So, I think sometimes if we're not careful, we don't realize the calling that God has given and the purpose of that calling. Not just using the word "Elohim," but to understand that that means, God refers to Elohim as Gods. That's what they're made on a very special plane, begotten of God Almighty. Awesome!

But unto the Son He said, Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.

Now, Acts 13. We'll read the rest of the story, and especially the context here of what Paul said. **Acts 13:26—Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whoever among you fears God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor yet the voice of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day...** So, that's a condemnation to them in

essence. “Every Sabbath day these scriptures are read, and yet He is the one, in essence, you have turned against. These things were about Him, the Messiah.”

And so it says here, “You did not know Him, nor yet the voice of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day.” So, it’s like “What excuse do you have? Every Sabbath you hear some verses that are spoken that are referring back to Him.” **...they have fulfilled them in condemning Him.** Whew! Even took it further. Because now it says, “By condemning Him, you’ve also fulfilled scriptures.”

Verse 28—Even though they found no cause of death in Him, yet they desired of Pilate that He should be killed. Now, when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead. Now, He was seen many days of those who came with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses unto the people.

Verse 32—Now we declare to you good news—how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He has raised up again Joshua. As it is written in the second Psalm... This is about His resurrection. This is about what took place at His resurrection. **As it is written in the second Psalm, You are My Son. This day have I begotten You.** It means, “This day I brought You forth. You are born.”

So God brought Him through this entire process. He was put to death; the Jews, the Jewish leaders, put Him to death. It says His Father raised Him up and this was what was fulfilled, “You are My Son. This day I have begotten You.” Because He’s now God. He is now born into the God Family. He is the first to enter Elohim.

To me, that’s awesomely inspiring to understand what Paul was saying here, what He was inspired to say. It wasn’t about His baptism. It wasn’t about His begetting of the holy spirit. It was about when the story comes to its completion, when God has brought Him through this entire process, and now it’s like, “Now, finally, You are My Born Son,” ‘the one brought forth’ is how the word is actually used. And so, God said that of Christ.

So, incredible to recognize the process of being begotten and to understand the full story here: “Born to be the first to become God.” And there are many, many, many more to follow. Awesome!