

# Matthew 3

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] But back in Matthew's Gospel, and we're starting chapter 3, and if you just think back to the previous two chapters to begin with, we've discovered that Jesus was born of the right genealogy, that Messiah had to come through the line of David, had to be related by ancestry to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, to be born.

In Bethlehem, had to be born to a virgin. We looked at the visit of the Magi and how that related to the prophecies of Daniel, and therefore the Magi turned up knowing that they were looking for a king, and also knowing it was shown by their gifts that they understood the purpose of Messiah's birth, what he had come to achieve, and that it involved his death, among other things. In all of these things, what we realised is that the Jews themselves were clueless about all of this.

They completely missed it, and yet people came from hundreds of miles away, journeyed for months from the east to quote back to them effectively God's word that had already been given to them, but they'd overlooked this event that was going to happen where Messiah was going to turn up.

And then we looked at the slaughter of the innocents, where Herod decided to slaughter all the babies to try and get rid of Messiah, and how God protected Messiah by taking him off into Egypt.

And then once Herod had died, and then once Herod had died, and they returned to Israel, but not to Jerusalem, because there was yet another vicious king on the throne, but they returned to Nazareth.

[ 1 : 5 6 ] And that in itself was a very humble beginning for the king of kings. And that Nazareth was a town that nobody ever wanted to admit to coming from or living in. It was a bit... I think I likened it to Grimsby, which is the one place I've been in this country where I wouldn't want to live, because it's very, very mucky and smoke-covered and full of oil refineries and stuff like that.

And so now we're going to get to chapter 3, and we're going to be looking at another figure in Jesus' ministry. And what I want us to keep in our minds as we study this is that the purpose of Matthew, we said right back in chapter 1, the purpose of Matthew is to show the Jews how the word of God that they had been given was being fulfilled.

I'm not quite sure what the people who listen to this later will make of that, but hey. Matthew was trying to show that God's word was true and that Jesus was fulfilling God's word.

And when we look at John, John the Baptist, which is the subject of the first part of chapter 3, we are going to unravel another miraculous fulfillment of scripture, not about Jesus himself, but about the prophecy surrounding the coming of Jesus.

And when I first studied this, my eyes were opened because I didn't realize just to what extent God not only showed his word was true, but gathered witnesses to show that his word was true.

[ 3 : 4 8 ] And with John the Baptist, what we will come to realize is that he was someone who conducted things before, not only he conducted things before witnesses, but he also, his very, very birth was something that was witnessed by multitudes in one way or another.

And the things surrounding his birth would have been etched on the memories of the people who lived during this period of time for reasons that we will come to. So, chapter 3, which in my Bible is entitled The Preaching of John the Baptist.

And it says this, Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem was going out to him and all Judea and all the district around Jordan.

[ 5 : 03 ] And they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, and they confessed their sins. 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?

Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance. 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.

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. 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. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor, and he will gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

And because it's not really, I haven't put it in at the end of this study, I'll just explain that verse 12 for those that you don't understand it. The grain used to be on the granary floor, and they would drag the threshing sledge over the grain, and it would separate the grain that you actually eat from the chaff that surrounded the grain.

[ 6 : 30 ] So you'd have this mixture on the floor of grain that you'd want to eat, and an awful lot of stuff that you wouldn't want to eat. And so the winnowing fork and the winnowing fan were two items where they used to lift the grain up and throw it into the air, and the wind would blow away all the chaff.

We've got budgies at home, and what we do with their seeds is when they've eaten the top off, we take it out and you go, and you blow away the chaff, and then the budgie can get to the seed underneath. And it's the same principle.

So the winnowing fan would fan the grain, and it would blow it into the air, and the wind would take away the chaff, which would then just be burnt, but it would leave the grain, which was the good stuff.

And so this describes what Jesus does when he is sorting out the saved from the unsaved, and using that analogy, I really wouldn't want to be among the unsaved, but that goes without saying.

So coming back to the study then. So John, I want us to turn, keeping everything that we've just read in mind, I want us to turn to Luke's Gospel. And the first chapter.

[ 7 : 44 ] Now what I'm deliberately doing here is we're going to look at John, and how he was born, and how he came to fulfil the Scriptures, by being able to say, as he did, he said, I am the forerunner, really.

I'm the one who was prophesied by Isaiah the prophet as the forerunner of Jesus, the one who goes ahead of him saying, make straight paths in the wilderness for the Lord.

Now, really this is, as I thought about this session, I thought this is a great session for just lifting our confidence in the Bible as God's word, and what we're about to read about could not have been conducted unless God had control of it.

So we're looking at the beginning of the chapter. Well, we're actually going to look at verse 5 onwards. In the days of Herod, the king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, and lots of versions will say Zechariah, Zechariah, it's spelt differently in many versions, of the division of Abijah, or Abiyah.

And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. So Zechariah and Elizabeth were both born of priestly lines.

[ 9 : 12 ] They both understood priesthood, and they were a family of priesthood, or they would have been. They were just a family of two, but she was barren, as we'll find when we read on.

So they hadn't got any kids at this point. And one way the Bible kind of outwits the gainsayers of the Bible is it does remarkable and miraculous things in front of many witnesses so that whilst things might not actually be understood, they cannot either be denied.

It becomes clear that we don't get it, but it happened. We've been talking about that when we were talking about the resurrection at Christianity Explored. We don't get it, but so much evidence to say that it happened.

So Zechariah was a Levite. Now what they would do is they would draw lots. Let me read on in case I get too far ahead of myself.

Verse 6, They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord, and they had no child because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.

[ 10 : 25 ] And that statement means too old to have babies. Advanced in years is a bit like whoever your grandparents were having babies now.

There comes a point when you're too old to have babies. And so if they were going to have babies, this was going to be a miraculous intervention. Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

And I'll just add verse 10 before I stop for a moment. And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of incense offering.

So what we're about to read, a whole multitude of people were gathered outside. They witnessed him go in. And this whole multitude of people would testify to the fact that this was John's day.

Now that's important because they would draw lots. And once you had drawn the lot, and once you had ministered in the temple, that was your turn for the whole of your life.

[ 11 : 38 ] Zechariah had waited decades for this. He's probably now in his 80s. We can't say that precisely. He was a very old man. But he finally picked the right straw.

And he'd been told, today's the day you're going to go to the table of incense. And the table of incense was where the smoke from the burning of the incense raised up to the Lord, representing the prayers of the saints.

Now, he had been praying. He'd been praying for a child. So, if we read on, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.

Zechariah was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. But the angel said to him, Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.

Now, normally you wouldn't give him the name John. You would give him your own name. So, that in itself would have been strange.

[ 12 : 53 ] So, those of us who know the Lord will know that there are almost never coincidences in the Lord. Things happen because they were planned.

Well, what are the chances that this priest, with his wife of priestly stock, who'd been praying for a baby for decades, would have an angel turn up on the one day in his life when he's picked the right straw to go and minister at the table of incense, the table that represents the prayers of the saints, to have an angelic visitation to say, Today, your prayer is going to be answered.

These things are beyond coincidence. So, as he's dealing with the prayers of the saints going up, his own prayers, he gets an angel turn up and say, Your prayers too have been heard, and your wife Elizabeth is going to bear you a son.

Now, we don't know from this passage of scripture how long it took Elizabeth to conceive. We just know that this was when the promise was made. But it goes on and it says of John, so you'll give him the name John, You will have joy and gladness and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord and he will drink no wine or liquor and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit whilst yet in his mother's womb.

So, we know from our previous studies this makes him what's called a Nazarite, a man whose life is entirely devoted to God, but a different Nazarite from most because most men decided to take a Nazarite vow during their walk of the earth, whereas what it was said here is that this one will be filled with the Holy Spirit whilst in the womb and will be a Nazarite before he's even born.

[ 14 : 45 ] Made him exceptional. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. It is he who will go as a forerunner before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, which is speaking of the fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah.

Zacharias, this is just great. Zacharias said to the angel, how will I know this for certain? For I am an old man and my wife has advanced in years. The angel said to him, I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of God and I've been sent to speak to you and bring you this good news.

And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak till the day when these things take place because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in the proper time. So picture this.

You've got a multitude outside and they've seen John go in and they've all been praying and John's going in to take their prayers and to metaphorically send them up in the cloud of incense.

Sorry? To metaphorically send these prayers up with the incense. And he comes out and they say, hey Zach, you've been in there a long time, what went wrong?

[ 16 : 17 ] Sorry? When he came out and was unable to speak, you have a multitude of witnesses. And he goes home.

And I think I'd probably have done the same because it's all a bit embarrassing really when you're a priest and you suddenly can't say a word. Verse 21. The people were waiting for Zacharias and were wondering at his delay in the temple.

And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple and he kept making signs to them and remained mute. I mean, this must have been quite dramatic.

When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home. After these days, Elizabeth, his wife, became pregnant and she kept herself in seclusion for five months saying, this is the way the Lord God has dealt with me in the days when he looked with favor upon me to take away my disgrace among men.

And it was considered quite cruelly really to be a disgrace if you couldn't have children. But now she was having a baby.

[ 17 : 38 ] I can't think of many 80-odd-year-olds that would welcome that, but there we go. When he is born, if we go to verse 57 of the same chapter, now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth and she gave birth to a son.

Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed his great mercy towards her and they were rejoicing with her. So once again, you've got witnesses. She's having a child.

She's managed to carry it to term and it's a boy and there's great rejoicing. 59. And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child and they were going to call him Zacharias after his father.

Now that was the tradition. But Zacharias has been told, call him John. And it's the man's job to name the child.

But John can't speak. So you've got this crazy scenario once again. The mother answered, verse 60, no indeed, he shall be called John.

[ 18 : 53 ] And they said to her, there is no one among your relatives who's called by that name. And they made signs to his father. You've got it all again, haven't you? You go, and he's signing to get a slate to write on so he can write, call him John.

which went completely against the tradition. Now, the word of God here is being fulfilled and by using John's mute condition, lots of attention is being drawn to the fact that it's happening.

It's not something that Matthew could write in his gospel if it wasn't true. Because there would be a horde of people who would say, that didn't happen. But all the relatives of John, all the crowd that were gathered outside the temple when he was, when Zacharias was struck dumb, they were all there to witness it.

And all of those people knew that this lady was far too old to have babies and she had a baby. So reading on, and he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, his name is John and they were all astonished.

And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed and he began to speak in praise of God. Now, I would have thought, because I just don't get it and I'm slow, but I would have thought he would have opened Zacharias' mouth before all this so that he could say to the guy, calling John.

[ 20 : 35 ] But no, this drama that unfolded was part of the plan of God to keep a solid witness to the events that happened. So, so John is then born.

Now, what we read is that Zacharias was, I need to switch that on.

I just want to quickly show you something. Hopefully it will come in a moment. It'll come up in a moment.

It says, John, what we read in Matthew was that John was, that Zacharias, John's dad, was of the course of Abijah.

And what happened, and you can read about it in 1 Chronicles 24, verse 10, David divided all the priests into courses.

[ 21 : 48 ] And there were 24 courses of priests. So, on this day when they were drawing lots as to which course of priests would be on duty and which priest drawing lots even more as to say which priest would do which job, you can see the odds of Zacharias finishing up at the table of incense on that particular day are very, very small.

And yet, it was so appropriate that it was him. But division 8, is Abijah or Abiyah or as many of American preachers say Abijah which I don't think is entirely correct but we know what they mean.

So, he was of that course and this happened to be the time that that course did their ministering at the table of incense.

so I don't want all the print up there because it distracts both me and you.

so what we've got is John the Baptist in the womb as a Nazarite. When we still in Luke's gospel when we read verse 39 at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country to a city of Judah and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth and when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting the baby leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she cried out with a loud voice and said blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb and how has it happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me for behold when the sound of your greeting reached my ears the baby leapt in my womb!

[ 23 : 57 ] for joy and blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord the prophecy we read earlier was that he would be filled with the Spirit from the mother's womb and this was the occasion when that happened so you can see how the Bible is joined up in its explanation of these things and we've been through the whole story of Zacharias' incredulity at all this and how he was then silenced for a while a few points I want to make before we move on Zacharias being a priest of the course of Abijah was a matter of record people who dismissed the Bible as legend or fantasy this was a matter of record a record that went back and back and back at least to the time of

David when these courses were introduced that Zacharias in order to minister as a priest would have been able to prove his genealogy back to Abijah the fact that he was on the table of incense on that day was also a matter of record not something you could make up because it was very easy to check they kept records of these things no one can get away with lying about that when he came out and he couldn't speak they had a mute priest for at least the next nine months and we don't know how long it took them to actually conceive so it was nine months plus so you've got something that again you wouldn't get away with lying about you know go and see the priest there's no point he can't talk to me this was a community thing that would have been understood then you've got

John's circumcision which would have been a public event a bit like we have for baptism where anybody's invited and there would have been loads of people there it was a big thing in the Jewish community when a child was circumcised on the eighth day there'd been loads of family and loads of others around that were interested and they were all witness to what happened that suddenly at this point Zacharias could speak and that the child wasn't named Zacharias but was named John a very very public fiasco is what I'm trying to sort of put in your heads Jesus did this quite a lot through his ministry and the effect on everybody was they became fearful and wondered what kind of person this child would grow into so if we go I don't know why I shut my Bible Luke's gospel again what we then read is that Zacharias himself prophesied over this child oh come on verse 67 and his father

Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied saying blessed be the Lord God of Israel for he has visited us and accomplished redemption for his people so something about John the Baptist has got to do with redemption yet he's not Messiah and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David his servant as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from old salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us to show mercy towards our fathers and to remember his holy covenant the oath which he swore to Abraham our father to grant us that we being rescued from the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days and you child will be called the prophet of the most high for you will go on before the lord to prepare his ways to give to his people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins because of the tender mercy of

God with which the sunrise from on high will visit us to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace and the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit and he lived in the desert until the day of his public appearance to Israel so this child that we've just talked about the birth of is what we're now reading about in Matthew chapter 3 as a grown up and that was his that was the root of his credibility if you like he was a child about whom it was prophesied that he would minister in the strength and power of Elijah and that he would be the forerunner prophesied by Isaiah and all of that had been prophesied and he had actually come into the world through this miraculous process to achieve this thing what

[ 29 : 34 ] Matthew tells us what I want to introduce here is when you get the notes they're at the end of the notes but I've come to it now so I'll deal with it now one of the things Matthew is doing by introducing John the Baptist is that he is setting a seal on the principle that everything is confirmed out of the mouths of two or more witnesses John the Baptist himself said I am just a voice crying in the wilderness when asked if he was Messiah and if any of you managed to do the reading that I sent out you'll note if you conflate all the stories from all of the gospels about John the Baptist it says that he he says I'm just a voice and when they when the religious people came around him and said well who are you are you Elijah no are you the Messiah no just a voice that is a principle that you should always see in ministry and unfortunately often do not see in ministry you see men trying to put themselves on pedestals saying well yeah I'm the anointed one me

John didn't mention his own anointing and yet Jesus pegs him as the greatest prophet that ever lived there aren't any signs attributed to John's ministry he's not recorded as healing the sick or doing anything like that yet it almost seems and I say this as my contribution not from the Bible it almost seems certain that he must have because he was the greatest prophet that ever lived and all the other prophets moved in some sort of supernatural power or other but none of that is recorded in scripture if it happened but Jesus spoke so highly of him and yet he all the time he just said I'm just a voice I'm just a voice don't look at me there's one coming after me and I'm not even fit to pick up his shoes but I'm just a voice and it's so important that we do not take on ourselves heirs and graces we are just a voice there is nothing to recommend me to you other than

I'm just a voice and not even my own voice if I'm doing my job I'm his voice and if I stop being his voice you need to reprimand me and tell me to stop doing this because this is not for the glory of men it is only for the glory of God and John the Baptist saw that interestingly in chapter 4 we go back to Matthew's gospel now chapter 3 it was said that he would be in the spirit and power of Elijah and in Matthew 3 verse 4 he's described as John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt round his waist and his food was locusts and wild honey if you turn to 2

Kings chapter 1 2 Kings chapter 1 and verses 7 and 8 and said to them what kind of man this is describing Elijah in verse 6 a man came up to meet us and said go return to the king who sent you and say to him thus says the Lord it is because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Beelzebub and it goes on verse 7 he said to them what kind of man was he who came up to meet you and spoke these words to you they answered him he was a hairy man with a leather girdle bound around his loins and he said it's Elijah the Tishbite

John the Baptist even looked like Elijah which is one of the reasons they said who are you are you Elijah come back you've got this prophet that's ministering in power and he looks just like this description in 2 Kings of Elijah himself and he must have had remarkable power because the Jews wondered if he was the Messiah which of course he denied that's in verse 15 of the chapter we've just read in 1 Kings where we read in 1 Kings 17 verse 18 so one book to the left 1 Kings 17 verse 18 we read start with verse 17 because that's where the sentence starts now it came about after these things that the son of the woman the mistress of the house became sick and his sickness was so severe that there was no breath left in him so she said to

[ 35 : 17 ] Elijah what do I have to do with you oh man of God you have come you have come to bring my iniquity to remembrance and put my son to death Elijah's job was to bring to remembrance the sins of Israel and to bring them to repentance that was exactly the same ministry that John the Baptist had so when we later on get to the passage where Jesus says when they said was John the Baptist Elijah he says well he could have been if he would have received it he came with the same ministry and had they responded and repented the ministry of Elijah would have been effective there and then of course that didn't happen so this was John's mission too to bring him to repentance just as prophesied by Zechariah when he spoke that prophecy over his son and the fact that before we just move on just we need to etch it on our brains that Matthew is giving witness to

Jesus in fact all of the gospel writers did this but they were supported by the witness of John the Baptist who spoke nothing but good of Jesus and elevated Jesus above himself because he was the greatest prophet that ever lived and Jesus was going to be even greater when he turned up so there is this kind of question why did Matthew give a chunk of his gospel to talking about John how does it help the purpose of the gospel well it gives us this witness and it also fulfills a demand of the prophetic scriptures if there was no forerunner Jesus couldn't have been Messiah and that's very important Jesus had to fulfill all the scriptures that spoke about him and one of those scriptures said in Isaiah 42 I think there will be a forerunner who will come and prepare the way of the Lord had he not been there you could disqualify

Jesus as Messiah because it would have been the wrong timing now so what actually happened the religious leaders all went out to see John and given that they thought he might be Messiah that might well have been just to investigate him because anybody that looked like Messiah always got investigated and that's a topic for another day but they used to conduct this investigation on every messianic claim to see whether it was whether it was a complete write off don't even need to look any further or whether we need to go more thoroughly and investigate this so that could have been why they were there in any event he instantly showed that he had their number and was very uncompromising about the way he told them and I think there's a lesson in this for us he said who told you to flee from the wrath to come you brood of vipers now I meet some Christian ministers who are brutal in the way they speak to the unsaved and you might argue this is brutal



I don't think it is I think it just reveals the truth when you speak to a group of priests who are having heirs and graces and being self-righteous I don't think it's cruel to say you're not self-righteous at all you're actually no more righteous than a bunch of vipers we are commanded to speak the truth but commanded to speak the truth in love and we shouldn't be out to get people we shouldn't be sticking our chest out and become Christian bullies if you like we should be saying to people who told you to flee from the wrath to come of course they hadn't come to flee from the wrath they'd come to check out John the Baptist and probably to try and pick fault with him it also takes a lot of love actually because you wouldn't put yourself in front of a king who has every right to chop your head off just because he fancies doing it that day you don't need a reason to go to that man and say you shouldn't be with your brother in law's wife

John sets the same example as Jesus so should we and we should be uncompromising in the face of evil whilst also not being unkind we at some point in this church we are going to embrace people coming into the church who might be for example homosexual and we are going to have to challenge that behaviour but in my view what we don't say is you can't come in here you're homosexual what we say is welcome you need to understand that what you're in is sin and it's going to lead you to the pit of hell if you don't repent of it and while you're getting to that point by all means stay with us and there may come a future point where they're not going to change and you have to say well in that case you need to be under church discipline and you need to leave that process might take place but our attitude must always be that we take people to the

[ 41 : 03 ] Lord and we don't resort to I'll call it Christian bullying for want of a better phrase now into that whole scenario Jesus puts himself forward for baptism by John Jesus turns up and says you can baptise me back in Matthew's gospel how much time have I got left oh it's about right now of course from verse 13 onwards then Jesus arrived from Galilee I don't know we haven't read this bit yet then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John to be baptised by him but

John tried to prevent him saying I have need to be baptised by you and do you come to me but Jesus answered and said to him permit it at this time for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness then he permitted him and after being baptised 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 upon him and behold a voice out of the heavens said and you have to ask why it was a baptism of repentance but Jesus had nothing to repent of he was sinless so why does he put himself forward for baptism the puzzle isn't helped by the fact that Jesus said let's do it because it's appropriate to fulfil all righteousness why did

Jesus need to be seen to fulfil all righteousness because he was completely righteous well a few things I'd like to throw out as final thoughts first to demonstrate his approval of John's baptism and the repentance that accompanied it by having it done to himself he was aligning himself with that thought process and he was not putting himself above other men he was putting himself alongside other men secondly it demonstrated his humility all of Jesus' ministry constantly encouraged people if you want to be the greatest in the kingdom then you need to be the least if you want to sit at my right hand then you need to wash feet like I've just washed the filthiest job you could possibly have he demonstrated humility and that is an example to all of us that we should not put ourselves on pedestals the fact that

I stand up here and preach does not mean that I shouldn't clean the loos if they need cleaning you know it's so simple and straightforward in fact one could argue that Joe and I should lead the way wherever we can and do what needs to be done put out the chairs set up the stuff make the tea make the coffee empty the bins clean the loos we shouldn't divorce ourselves from that as I've seen in many churches that's beneath me I'm the preacher other people can do that that's not the attitude we see in Jesus and it wasn't the attitude in John the Baptist above others it was Jesus but his example was deliberately not to do so finally it was a great opportunity to introduce the triune God the Trinity in one's place at one time you had the

Son carrying out the Father's instructions the Father's voice coming out of heaven to set blessing on what was going on and the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus and you had the Trinity ministering as one in one place at one time and it was once again witnessed by a multitude of people so I think that's it so Father thank you so much thank you so much that you sent the forerunner you once again confirm that your word is true you once again show us that we can trust this word that it is watertight in every respect that we need to fear nothing from people saying your word is not true it shows itself to be true time and time and time again and Lord we thank you for the lessons that come from studying it that affect our conduct that encourage us to conduct ourselves in a righteous way your word says that we should pursue righteousness and all along the way you set examples of what that looks like in reality the kind of things we need to do the kindness we need to show the embracing of people in love the speaking of the truth in love the self sacrifice that you gave is written all over your scriptures for us to emulate and so we thank you that you didn't leave us to guess but you showed us the way with great clarity amen