

JOHN THE FORERUNNER  
Lesson 56

MEMORY TEXT: "This is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Matthew 3:3

Lovely young Mary had her baby Jesus -- the most wonderful baby in all the world. But her cousin Elizabeth also had a child; and John, too, was used of the LORD. He is known to us as John the Baptist.

John looked around him and saw how careless God's chosen people had become. Many of them had forgotten God's promises to them, and they did not think about God's will or pleasing Him. Many of them lied and stole and lived wickedly. John knew they ask God's forgiveness -- they must repent.

John believed God's promise that He would send someone to deliver Israel. He realized that this Messiah would come and the sinners would not be able to receive his blessings. So John preached to the people, "Repent ye! The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" And when Jewish sinners listened and were sorry they had been careless, John baptized them. It was as though their sins against the Jewish Law were washed away.

John's baptism was not intended for Gentiles, for they were not under the Law of Moses so could not sin against it.

John's baptism was not for faithful Jews, but for Jews who had really sinned against the Law.

John's baptism is not for Christians. Their baptism is for a very different purpose, not to wash away their sins against the Law.

Faithful Jews were considered as baptized into Moses "in the sea and in the cloud" (1 Corinthians 10:2) so when they became Christians they did not have to be baptized. When the nation of

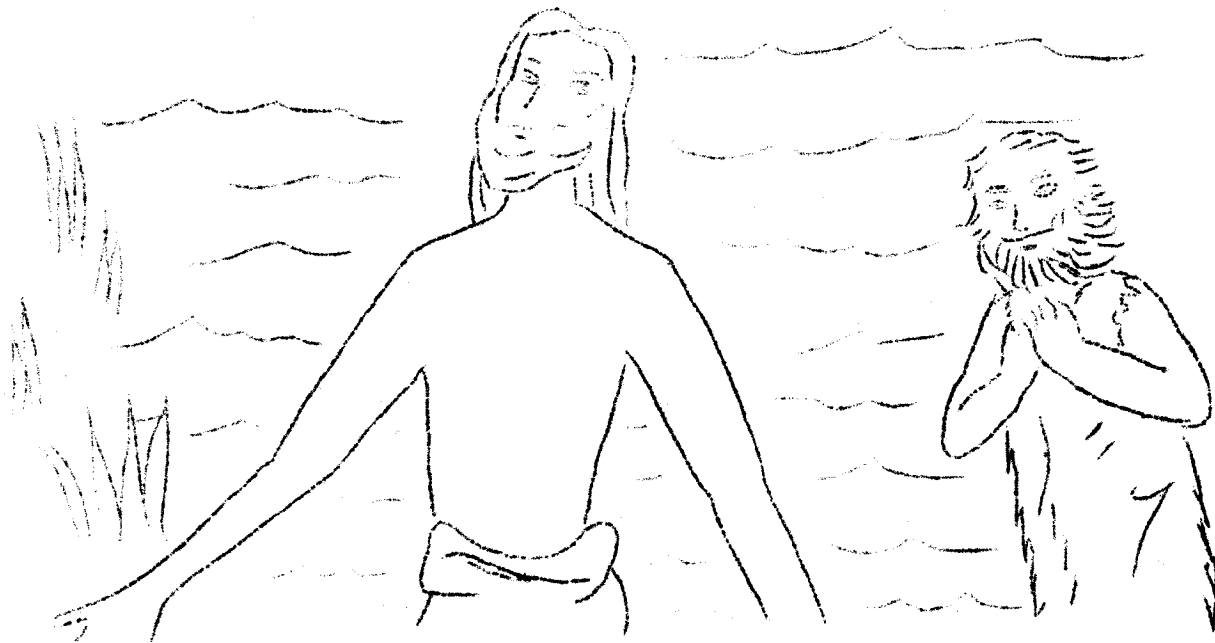
JOHN THE FORERUNNER  
Lesson 56



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Why did John expect God to send a Deliverer? Genesis 3:15; 22:18; 49:10. II Samuel 7:12-16. Isaiah 9:6,7; 11:1-9. Daniel 9:24, 25.
2. What is a Gentile? Are you a Gentile?
3. Was the Law of Moses (called the Mosaic Law) given to the Gentiles? To whom was it given? Exodus 24:3; Amos 3:2.
4. What does it mean to repent?
5. Why couldn't an unrepentant sinner receive the blessings of the Messiah?
6. What is the difference between "the nation of Israel" and "the Jews"?
7. Tell what happened at the Red Sea. Exodus 13:17-14:31.
8. If something is "immersed" in water, what does the word "immersed" mean?
9. How were the Israelites immersed "in the sea and the cloud"?
10. Had Moses told his followers to expect a Leader greater than himself? Deuteronomy 18:15.

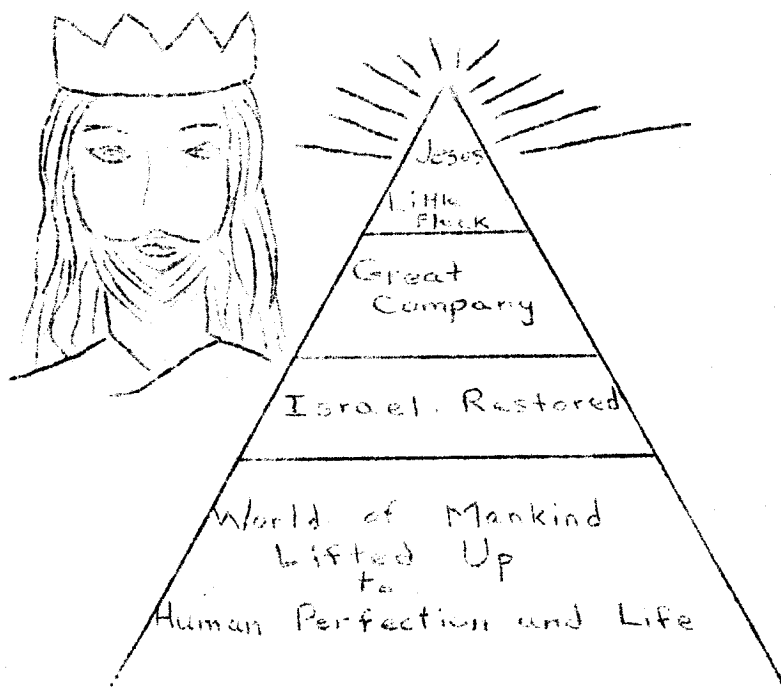
THE BAPTISM OF JESUS  
Lesson 57



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What characteristics did Jesus have that were like a lamb?
2. When was a lamb used in the Jewish sacrifices?
3. Why did John call Jesus "the lamb of God"?
4. Why was Jesus baptized?
5. When will a Christian live with Christ Jesus?
6. How is a Christian different after he is immersed?
7. When was Jesus' baptism finished?
8. How do other Christians finish their baptism?
9. Explain Romans 6:3-5.
10. Many nominal churches christen their babies -- sprinkle a few drops of water on the head. What is wrong with this kind of baptism?
11. Does lowering a person into water at an immersion service make him one of the 144,000 saints?

GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM  
Lesson 58



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Why did the Jews expect a Deliverer greater than Moses? Deuteronomy 18:15.
2. Why did the Jews expect a King greater than David? II Samuel 7:13.
3. Why didn't the Jewish people appreciate their Messiah? John 1:46.
4. What is the meaning of the word "Messiah"?
5. Contrast a servant of a family and a son of a family.
6. Was Moses God's son or His servant? Malachi 4:4.
7. Was Jesus God's son or His servant? Matthew 17:5.
8. Why do we say that 144,000 people is a little flock?
9. What is immortal life?
10. Why doesn't God give immortality to everyone?
11. How do we know that human beings do not have immortality? I Corinthians 15:53; Romans 2:7.

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM  
Lesson 59

MEMORY TEXT: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables." Mark 4:11

Jesus is considered a great and remarkable teacher even by men and women who do not want to be Christians. One of his methods of teaching was the telling of parables. A parable is a kind of story.

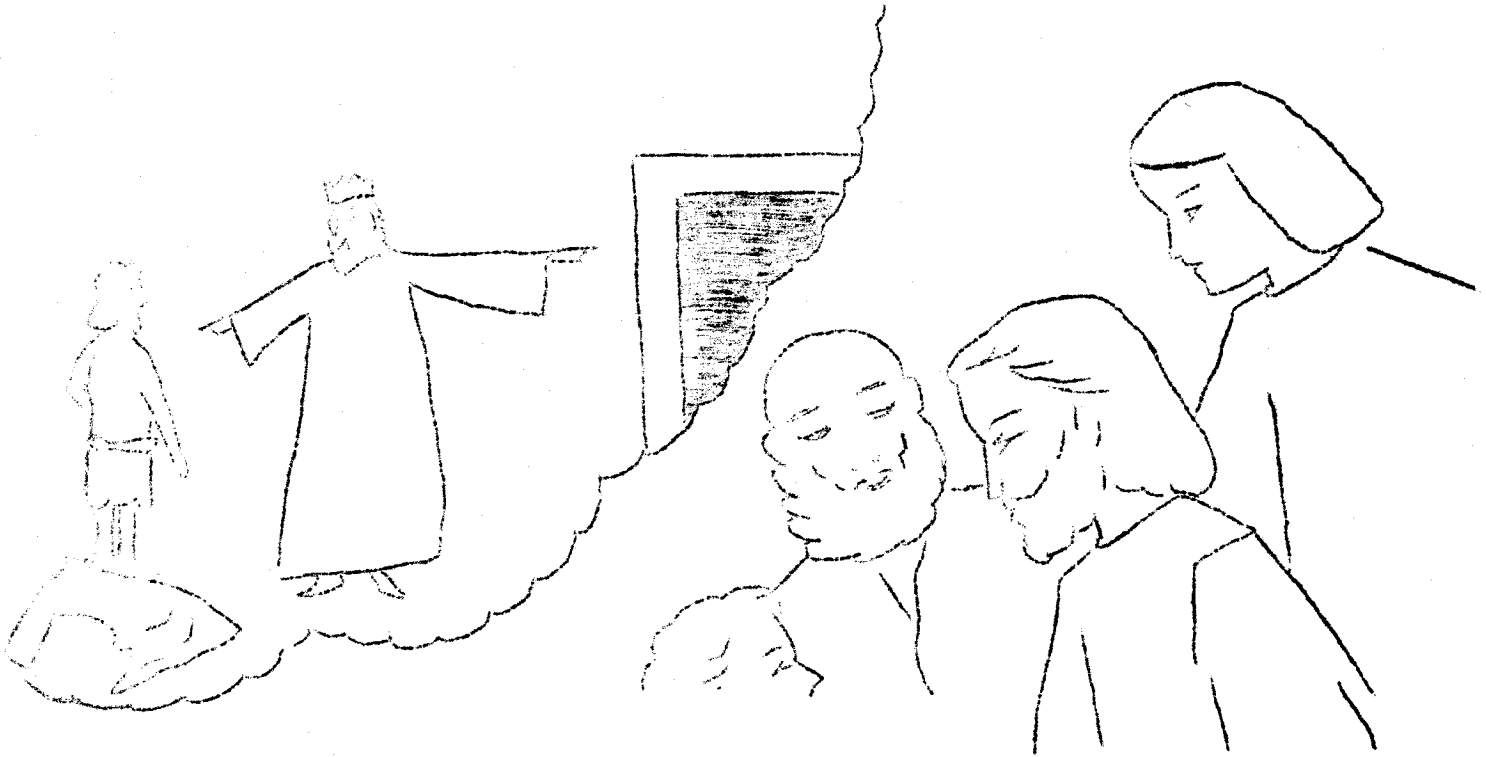
Matthew 22:2-10 records Jesus' story of a king who planned his son's wedding but the people who were invited did not bother to come. This was like the Jews who were first invited to receive the highest place in the Kingdom. Because they did not care to be a part of Jesus' kind of kingdom, the invitation was given to others, those who were not Jews.

In Matthew 22:11-14, we read Jesus' parable of the Wedding Garment. In those days, guests had to wear a wedding garment in order to attend a wedding. This garment was provided with the invitation to the wedding. In the story, the king was so upset to see a guest who had removed the garment (or robe) that he had the guest thrown out.

Everyone who wants a part in the Great Marriage of the Heavenly Bride and Bridegroom must wear the robe of Christ's righteousness. This does not mean that everyone who comes to meeting will wear a white robe. The robe of Christ's righteousness cannot be seen. What it means is that every Christian must admit he is not perfect. God can only give His approval to people who are perfect.

Then how can God help anyone on earth; no one is perfect. He does it in this way: If we say, "I know I am not perfect. But Jesus died for my sins. God will count me as perfect as

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM  
Lesson 59



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Did the people of Jesus' day like him? Matthew 4:23-25; 8:1; 13:1,2. Luke 5:21; 6:2; 13:14-17; 22:2. John 6:66; 7:5-7; 8:20.
2. Would there have been any Gentiles in the heavenly part of the Kingdom if 144,000 Jews had been willing to follow in Jesus' footsteps?
3. Why was it important that Jesus' disciples remember Jesus' words?
4. Are stories easier to remember than other lessons in school?
5. Is a parable a true story?
6. Why did Jesus speak in parables?
7. What does the color WHITE picture?
8. Are Jesus' followers ever going to be pure, righteous, perfect? Revelation 19:8.
9. Explain Isaiah 64:6.
10. Explain Isaiah 1:18.
11. Explain Psalm 32:1,2.
12. When might Jesus cast a person (one who had been following him) from his favor, out of the Truth, away from Kingdom blessings?

THE PRODIGAL SON  
Lesson 60

MEMORY TEXT: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."  
Matthew 15:24

Jesus' parables were directed to those about him, the Jews. When (Luke 15:11-32) he told of a man and his two sons, Jesus was speaking of God as the father, the older son as the Jewish religious rulers, and the younger son as the careless Jewish sinner.

The younger son was so much like the Jews to whom John the Baptist had preached. He was an unrighteous man, never thinking of God. He thought he could get along without his Father's care and protection, and so he became friendly with a citizen of the world (Satan, sin, wickedness).

When this young man realized that worldly activities were empty and did not satisfy him, he yearned to go back to his Father. This is like the thoughtless Jews who did repent and were baptized by John.

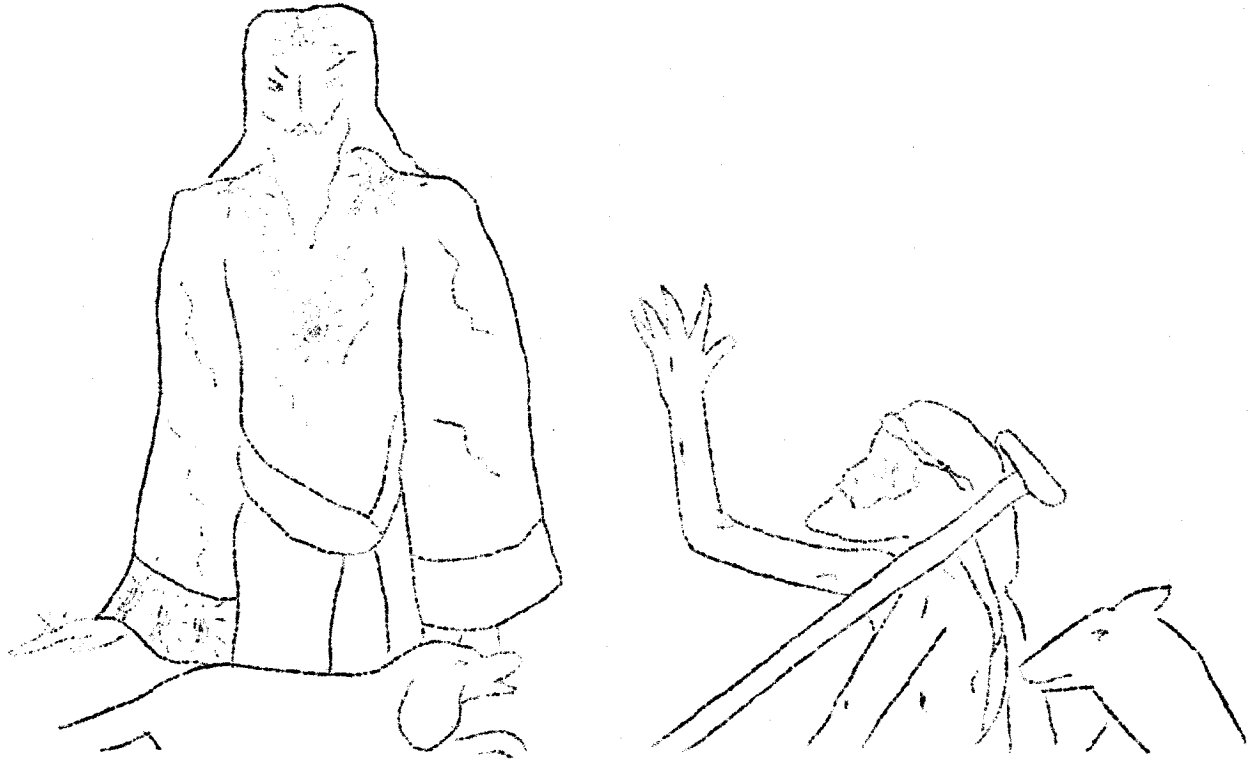
Although the proud, older brother (representing the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Doctors of the Law) did not want to share his Father's wealth and love, the Father Himself was loving and forgiving.

These are the gifts which the pleased Father gave to his prodigal son: a beautiful robe (picturing the robe of Christ's righteousness), an expensive ring (showing God's influence and power and favor), shoes (sandals of peace), and a fatted calf (as in the Tabernacle sacrifices, showing forgiveness).

Another parable Jesus told to the Jews was about the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). He was telling the proud religious leaders that God knew their hearts and would punish them.

The rich man was like the Jewish nation. They had received

THE PRODIGAL SON  
Lesson 60



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What does the word "prodigal" mean?
2. Explain who the "sheep" are in the memory text.
3. Were the scribes and Pharisees kind and loving?
4. Why weren't they glad to have sinful Jews repent?
5. How forgiving should a Christian be? Matthew 18:21,22.
6. Were the scribes and Pharisees humble?
7. Why wasn't Jesus friendly with the scribes and Pharisees?
8. When did Jesus call a Gentile a dog? Matthew 15:22-28.
9. How did God treat Gentiles during the Jewish Age? Amos 3:2.
10. How was the Jewish nation like the rich man? How were the Gentiles like a beggar?
11. What kind of troubles have Jews had since they crucified Jesus?
12. Since the Jews did not want to follow Jesus, who has received God's favor?