

## Jesus at Work

### Christians Know Things

Several decades after Jesus was born of Mary, the apostle John wrote, *"And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life"* (1 John 5:20). John had witnessed many proofs that Jesus of Nazareth is Immanuel. John had heard the witness of John the Baptist, saw the miracles Jesus performed, and received the voice from heaven that proclaimed Jesus to be God's Son. A Christian knows and understands these things by faith in the Word of God.

The work that Jesus came to do begins with the "herald of the King." John the Baptist told Israel, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 3:2). Many went to the Jordan River to hear John, confess their sins, and submit to baptism, Matthew 3:5-6. John told them, *"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"* (Matthew 3:11). About six months later, Jesus also came to John to be baptized. At first, John refused, wanting the superior baptism from the Son of God. *"But Jesus answering said to him, 'Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness'"* (Matthew 3:15). John's baptism did not forgive sins but showed the person's belief in and watching for the coming Kingdom of God. A little over three years later, Jesus would establish His church, the kingdom that will never end.

Matthew 4:1-11 tells about the temptation by the devil, which Jesus defeated with quotes from scripture. Soon after this, John pointed Jesus out to his disciples. Two of his disciples left John and followed Jesus (John 1:29-39). Soon many, including the twelve that would be closest to Him, followed Him. Jesus returned to Galilee and performed the first of many miracles at a wedding feast in Cana. Turning water into wine was a sign of the creator. Jesus declared Himself to be "God with Us" (Isaiah 7:14).

A little more than 18 years after He visited the Temple as a 12-year-old boy, Jesus returns to His Father's house as the mature Son of God. He found it full of wickedness. *"He found in the Temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the Temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, 'Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business'"* (John 2:14-16). Jesus would do this one more time before His crucifixion.

In John chapter 4, we read that one of the *"Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews"* (John 3:1), came to Jesus by night. During their conversation, Jesus told him that *"unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"* (John 3:5). It would be after the events recorded in Acts chapter 2 before the disciples would fully understand this statement. Most of those in Jerusalem and the rest of Judea were not eager to hear Jesus, but a Samaritan woman and her neighbors were. Jesus went through Samaria, a place hated by the Jews, to talk to those that were looking for Christ. The woman and the townspeople did believe Him (John 4:1-45).

Matthew recorded that *"When Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee"* (Matthew 4:12). Many people came from all over Palestine to hear Jesus preach. He

performed miracles of healing, feed thousands with a simple lunch, controlled nature, healed the blind, and raised the dead. But in all that the people saw, it was not what they wanted. They asked, *"What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?"* (John 6:30). They wanted physical food, not the Word of God. Many today want something they can touch rather than the changed heart caused by belief in and obedience to the words of Jesus. Those in Jesus' time heard Him say, *"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins"* (John 8:24).

The ultimate sign that God was satisfied with the work of His son occurred when Jesus died and was buried. *"But God raised Him from the dead ... God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU'"* (Acts 13:30-33). Not born as a man this time, but as the Eternal King. Are you reborn of water and the Spirit? Do you believe enough to follow Jesus into the burial of baptism to be raised with Him into eternal life also?