

## Pursue the Kingdom

### 1) Matthew 11:1 – 6 NKJV

Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. <sup>2</sup> And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> *The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.* <sup>6</sup> And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”

a. Why didn't Jesus just tell John that He was the Messiah?

### 2) Matthew 11:7 - 15

<sup>7</sup> As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. <sup>9</sup> But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> For this is *he* of whom it is written: ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.’

<sup>11</sup> “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

<sup>12</sup> And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup> For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. <sup>14</sup> And if you are willing to receive *it*, he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup> He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

a. Why do you think people went out to see John the Baptist?

b. What does a reed shaken in the wind symbolize?

c. Why did Jesus need a messenger to prepare His way?

d. What does it mean that the violent take the kingdom of heaven by force?

e. Who is greater than John the Baptist? Why?

### 3) John 3:22 – 30

After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. <sup>23</sup> Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. <sup>24</sup> For John had not yet been thrown into prison. <sup>25</sup> Then there arose a dispute between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. <sup>26</sup> And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified— behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"

<sup>27</sup> John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' <sup>29</sup> He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. <sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

a. What does John mean by saying, "He must increase and I must decrease"?

### 4) John 1:1 – 9

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. <sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. <sup>8</sup> He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. <sup>9</sup> That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

a. Who was sent as a witness to the Light, and what was this witness supposed to accomplish?

### 5) John 1:14 - 18

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" <sup>16</sup> And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

a. Who is the Word made flesh, and what have we all received of Him?

b. What does it mean to be the only begotten Son of God?

## 6) John 1:19 - 34

<sup>19</sup> Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup> He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

<sup>22</sup> Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup> He said: "I *am* 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the Lord," as the prophet Isaiah said."

<sup>24</sup> Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup> And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup> John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. <sup>27</sup> It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."

<sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! <sup>30</sup> This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' <sup>31</sup> I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water."

<sup>32</sup> And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. <sup>33</sup> 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.' <sup>34</sup> And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

- a. What does it mean that the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world?
- b. Why did John come baptizing?
- c. To what did John the Baptist testify?
- d. How is Jesus' baptism different than John's?