



“John the Baptist: Herald of Repentance”

Matthew 3:1-12

The Preparation of the King

Introduction:

Review of Matthew, Chapters 1-2: “The Coming of the King”

Introducing Matthew, Chapters 3-4: “The Preparation of the King”

Matthew 3:1-12: John the Baptist: Herald of Repentance (herald = a messenger, one who announces a special event)

Matthew 11:11 “Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!”

I. The Historical Backdrop of John’s the Baptist’s Message

Matthew 3:1 - “Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea...”

A Brief Overview of John the Baptist’s Life (cf. Matthew 3, 11, 14, 16, 17; Mark 1, 6, 8; Luke 7, 9; John 1, 3, 4, 10)

II. His Timely Message

Matthew 3:1-2 “... John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” (“repent” = Greek: *metanoeo* = turning from, abandoning old ways and adopting a new way)

III. The New Motivation for Repentance

Matthew 3:2 “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

IV. The Herald of The New Message

Matthew 3:3 “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!’”

Point #1 - The Old Testament Prophets Predicted John the Baptist’s Ministry (cf. Luke 1:17; Malachi 4:5-6)

John the Baptist is the last of the Old Testament Prophets and the beginning of a whole series of New Testament preachers. He was the Transitional Prophet, the Forerunner of Jesus and the forerunner of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament.

Point #2 - The New Testament Proves John the Baptist Fulfilled His Purpose Before He Died.

Matthew 3:3 “...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!’” (cf. Acts 13:36)

Point #3 - John the Baptist looked like and Old Testament Prophet.

Matthew 3:4 “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.” John the Baptist lived like one of those OT hero-prophets.

V. The Response to His Message

Seeker Group #1 - Those who will accept the truth even if it causes them to change.

Matthew 3:5-6 “Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.”

Seeker Group #2 - Those who reject the truth because it requires them to change.

Matthew 3:7 "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?"

- Regarding the Pharisees
- Regarding the Sadducees

Matthew 12:34 "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. "

VI. The Meaning of True Repentance

Matthew 3:8-12 "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."

Mini-Sermon Point #1 - True repentance bears fruit.

Matthew 3:8 "Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance..."

Repentance has many faces in Scripture...

Mini-Sermon Point #2 - True repentance doesn't rely on ancestry or spiritual heritage.

Matthew 3:9 "...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." (cf. Matt. 7:23; 25:41; Lk. 13:27)

Mini-Sermon Point #3 - False religionists need to know what a wasted life can expect.

Matthew 3:10 "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." (cf. Matt. 7:20-21)

Mini-Sermon Point #4 - True repentance is a result of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives.

Matthew 3:11 "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."

Regarding John's baptism vs. Jesus' baptism

Whereas, before Christ the Holy Spirit was "with" believers, after the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit will also "live inside" of us. John's baptism was for people still under the OT law that required animal sacrifice. It merely paved the way for Jesus' baptism, in which He would be the ultimate sacrifice for sins. (cf. Acts 19:3-5)

Mini-Sermon Point #5 - True repentance is evidenced by humility.

Matthew 3:11 "...He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals..."

John 3:30 "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Mini-Sermon Point #6 - True repentance accepts God's judgment towards unbelievers.

Matthew 3:12 "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."

Ephesians 5:16 "making the most of your time, because the days are evil."

Conclusion:

John 1:6-8 “There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He (i.e., John the Baptist) was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.”

The Romans Road to Salvation

Romans 3:10 “There is none righteous, not even one.”

Romans 3:23 “...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”

Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 8:1 “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 8:38-39 “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 10:9-10 “...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

Matthew 11:11 “Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & ACTION ITEMS:

1. Describe your spiritual upbringing?
2. What kind of truth-seeker are you?
3. What does true repentance look like?
4. Write out or read out loud the “Romans Road” verses:
 - Romans 3:10
 - Romans 3:23
 - Romans 5:1
 - Romans 5:8
 - Romans 6:23
 - Romans 8:1
 - Romans 8:38-39
 - Romans 10:9-10
 - Romans 10:13
5. What did you get most out of this message?