

# Ambassadors of the King

Matthew 3:1-12 and II Corinthians 5:17-21

Prelude: The Kingdom of God (part 4)

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## I. Prepare for God's Kingdom (Mt. 3:1-12)

### A. Preaching Repentance (1-2)

<sup>1</sup> In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea <sup>2</sup> and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

B. Preparing to Receive the Lord (3) <sup>3</sup> This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "*A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'*"

### C. Prophetic Warnings (4-11)

#### 1. A wild and crazy prophet (4)

<sup>4</sup> John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.

#### 2. A compassionate presence (5-6)

<sup>5</sup> People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup> Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

#### 3. An honest confrontation (7-10)

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "*You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?*" <sup>8</sup> *Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.* <sup>9</sup> *And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.'* <sup>10</sup> *I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.* <sup>10</sup> *The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*

#### 4. A different baptism (11)

<sup>11</sup> "*I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*"

#### 5. A time of judgment (12)

<sup>12</sup> *His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*"

## II. Serve God's Kingdom (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

### A. New LIFE in Christ's Kingdom (17)

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

### B. Share a Ministry of reconciliation (18)

<sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

### C. Spread the Message of forgiveness (19)

<sup>19</sup> that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

### D. Be Ambassadors of God's Kingdom (20)

<sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

### E. Trust in Christ as Lord. (21)

#### 1. For salvation (atonement)

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us,

#### 2. For transformation (righteousness)

<sup>21</sup> so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Invitation:** To be saved, to become a sign of God's Kingdom, to be of service to the Savior/King.

***"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."*** Matt. 24: 14.

### Questions:

1. Why is confession and repentance necessary for change to happen? Where is this true in our times?
2. Think of ways that people have been reconciled to one another after a conflict or misunderstanding. How is this like, or different from, reconciliation with God?
3. Give some examples of how you and others are ambassadors of God's reconciliation. What can you do this week for others?