

“Let Me Introduce You to the King”

Matthew Chapter 3

The setting for the coming King is one of expectancy. For four hundred years the voice of God through the prophets has been silent. But much has happened in these years:

- a. Alexander the Great's empire was divided between his generals. One of these became the Seleucid Empire and gained control over Israel.
- b. At this time there was an intense effort for Hellenizing the Jews. (Conversion to Greek customs)
- c. The Maccabees lead a revolt against the Seleucid Empire (Antiochus Epiphanies defiled the temple)
- d. Eventually Rome conquered Greece and at this point in our narrative has occupied the known world. Thus occupied & ruled over Israel.

The kings of nations controlled and restricted the people

Judaism had its struggles as well.

- a. Many Jews had been accepting the hellenization of their customs.
- b. The Sadducees were a religious/political group of aristocrats who were more interested in pleasing Rome than holding to traditions. They were only concerned about Jesus when His movement may disturb Rome.
- c. The Pharisees were like middle class people devoted to the spiritual condition of the nation. They held to the scriptures but they gave equal weight to the oral traditions passed down through the centuries. Their policing of the nation through the many constraining laws left the people overwhelmed by being controlled by rituals rather than freed by relationship.
- d. The Essenes were a separate group that believed they were holding to the true Jewish religion. They believed that the worship that the Sadducees and Pharisees participated in was corrupt and in need of reform. The Essenes lived communally and has become more in view due to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in their community in Qumran.

The religious rulers controlled and restricted the people and fight among themselves as to who was right

WHO DO YOU TURN TO FOR HELP? WHO DO YOU TURN TO FOR ANSWERS?

Mat 3:1

1) John the Baptist Arrives to Baptize vs 1-4

Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying,

Mat 3:2

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Mat 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!'"

Mat 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.

- Who was John, the Baptist?
 - Luke 1 - Father was a priest. According to the lot it was John's father's time to light incense in the temple. An angel appeared to him and told him he would have a son who would be a forerunner for the Lord.
 - John should have followed in the priestly line of his father.
 - Possibly John had seen the hypocrisy and didn't want any part of it. Fulfilling the message spoken to Zachariah his father.
- What was his message?
 - **Repent** - Turn Around - Detour - Go a different way. Repentance isn't something we do before coming to God. It is what coming to God is like. To go a different way. His way not ours.
 - **The Kingdom of Heaven** - the people have been subject to the kingdoms of the world. The news of the Kingdom of Heaven gave them a revived hope. A Kingdom that is superior / Higher than the kingdoms that have failed them so far.
 - Matthew 4:8 Satan tempts Jesus with the Kingdoms of the World. He couldn't tempt with the Kingdom of heaven, It wasn't his to tempt with. Jesus already had the greater kingdom.
 - **Is At Hand** - It is here. He didn't say it was on the horizon or around the corner. But at hand. Now was the time to grasp the truth of the Kingdom of Heaven.
- John's message **WAS NOT** you are sinners. You need to repent! His message **WAS** the Messiah is coming, you need to repent!
- Fulfills Prophecy Isaiah 40:3. In the ancient days when a monarch went through the wilderness and arriving upon a city, He would send forth forerunners to clear the road of debris, holes or any other obstacles so the monarch could easily arrive to the destination.
 - Matthew sees John, the Baptist instructing the people to make the road straight, to remove debris and obstacles for the coming King.

Mat 3:5

2) Jerusalem and All Judea Arrive to be Baptized vs 5-12

Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan;

Mat 3:6

and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

- People came because of the message not because of his presentation.
 - Crazy looking - Camel's hair tunic, Leather belt, eating Locust and wild Honey.
 - Baptizing in a dirty river
 - Dealing with SIN!!!
- People came because the message resonated in the heart of the people. The marketing or polished performance didn't cause all these people to confess their sins and be baptized. John didn't have the schooling to teach him how to have a successful ministry we have today. John simply was sent with a simple message. *"Repent the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*
- Baptism was not new to the Jews. Baptisms were washing to become ceremonially clean for religious service. Gentiles performed baptisms to become clean before becoming a Jew. John's was different in that the others the individual baptized themselves. This was performed by this man a prophet calling for confession of sin.

Mat 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?"

Mat 3:8

"Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;

Mat 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.

- The Sadducees and the Pharisees in their mind were right. They had no need for repentance.
- **Luke 18:10-14** *"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."*
- John recognized this and immediately spoke to the religious. The religious need to be shaken off their self assurance to see their need. This is what John did. He told them to *"flee the wrath to come"*
 - **What about Wrath?**
 - It is God's Wrath.
 - It is deserved.
 - It is surly coming.
 - There is only one thing to do, FLEE! How? Repentance.
- These religious people were good at giving the appearance of desiring spiritual things. Looking good as hoping for the Messiah. John made it clear if you were truly hoping and desiring spiritual things you would *"bear fruit in keeping with repentance."* It's more than the appearance. It is an entire manner of life.

Mat 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.

- The warning for the religious. The ax is at the root. Bad trees are cut down and thrown into the fire.

Mat 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.

- Are there different Baptisms? Yes.
 - **John's Baptism** - repentance - preparing the way of the Lord to the heart of a man
 - **Baptism in the Name of Christ Jesus** - A believer's baptism. Outward show of an inward work.
 - Acts 19:1-7 *"It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. There were in all about twelve men."*
 - **Baptism of the Holy Spirit** - here in Matthew 3:11 Jesus himself baptizes the believer. Acts 2

the believers were together in obedience to Jesus waiting for the promise. The Holy Spirit. That they would have Power to be witnesses. Power to function before all men as a true believer.

- **Baptism of Fire** - here in Matthew 3:11 Jesus himself baptizes the Unbeliever. Verse 12 illustrates the two baptisms Jesus performs.

Mat 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."

- Jesus has a winnowing fork in His hand. This is used to separate. He separates who is His and who is not.
 - Who is - is gathered and securely saved away.
 - Who is not - is gathered and burned up.

Mat 3:13 **3) Jesus Arrives to be Baptized** vs 13-17

Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him.

- Up to this moment we know very little of Jesus' life.
 - We have seen the birth of Christ.
 - We have seen Him at 12 years old Joseph and Mary bringing Jesus to Jerusalem and accidentally leaving Him behind. When they find Him he is teaching in the temple saying, "*Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (business)?*" Luke 2
- Here we see that out of obscurity Jesus comes. The first act recorded by Matthew is an act of obedience to the things of God.
- Jesus came. He was not by any outside influence but of His own commitment to obey. Church attendance, Bible Reading, Baptism, Ministry should not be force but come from a desire within to walk in obedience to God.

Mat 3:14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"

Mat 3:15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.

- John just finished saying one is coming who is greater. He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and Fire. John knew he needed what Jesus had not what he himself had.
- Jesus had quite often been misunderstood. Also he didn't go far out of his way to correct these misunderstandings. Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. The religious thought the He was a sinner. In the same way Jesus submits to a baptism of repentance.
 - Was Jesus a sinner that He needed to repent? No! John recognized that He did not need a baptism of repentance.
 - Jesus was sent for a purpose. To be the substitute. To substitute Himself in our place. Jesus was to take the place, take the punishment that was ours.
 - It is important to see that at the very beginning Jesus is putting himself in the place at the substitute. To completely identifying with man.
 - John permitted it.

Mat 3:16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him,

Mat 3:17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

- At this remarkable moment when Jesus arrives to begin ministry and starting by identifying with sinful man, the Triune God is present. The Son Jesus, The Spirit descending, and the Father approving.
- The Father introduces Jesus as:
 - 1) His Beloved Son - God at this moment establishes Jesus to be more than other men who are baptized. The introduction from heaven was heard that Jesus was His very own Son.
 - 2) In whom He was well pleased - not that He was baptized into repentance but that He identified with sinful man to become the substitute in their death.
- When the King is coming. There are forerunners who prepare the people for his entrance.
- Jesus came and was announced by John, the Baptist, and by God Himself.
- Well, Jesus died, was buried and Rose and ascended into heaven to come again.
- The King is coming. You and I are the heralds to proclaim and prepare the way of the King into the hearts of men.

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