

Matthew 3—A Forerunner's Message—REPENT! The Kingdom is Here!

- **INTRO:**
 - WEATHER CHANNEL COVERAGE/EVACUATION WARNINGS—A STORM IS COMING; HERE ARE THE AREAS THAT ARE SAFE—FLEE TO THEM. DO NOT STAY WHERE YOU ARE OR DEVASTATION IS COMING!
 - John the Baptist—had a very cool, catchy and attractive mission statement—REPENT!
 - JTB = a voice crying out in the wilderness (brings to mind Israel in the wilderness!)
 - JTB is NOT the point...he is the POINTER and he points to the Kingdom and repentance and Jesus
- **John the Baptist, the Man—Foretold Prophet (v.1-4)**
 - JTB is the foretold forerunner prophet! Quoting Is. 40:3
 - Isaiah 39:6-7, 40:1-3—Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord. And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord: make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
 - Isaiah 39:6-7 = the devastating news of exile and devastation
 - Isaiah 40:1-2 = the amazing news of gracious deliverance
 - By using this verse and connecting JTB to Isaiah, Matthew is making clear that Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of deliverance for us! In Jesus, the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our God and King. In Jesus, Isaiah 39 becomes Isaiah 40
 - John 1:21—are you Elijah?
 - There was a widely circulated belief that Elijah would somehow arrive back on the scene to prepare the way for the Messiah.
 - 2 Kings 1:8—they answered him, “He [Elijah] wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist.” And he said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.”
 - Malachi 4:5-6—JTB is the fulfillment of the Malachi passage
 - “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”
 - Matthew 11—Jesus confirms that JTB is the Elijah who was to come! Stamps him!
 - God is proving, through all these connections/prophecies—THIS GUY IS A TRUSTED SOURCE! HEED WHAT HE SAYS (WEATHER CHANNEL EVACUATION NOTICE!)
- **John the Baptist's Message—Repent! The Kingdom is Here! (v.1-2, 8, 11)**
 - KINGDOM IS HERE! THIS IS WHY REPENTANCE IS SO URGENT!
 - 80 times—Jesus talking about the Kingdom in the gospels.
 - Matthew 4:17—Jesus says the same thing...”repent for the kingdom is at hand.”
 - Repent—more than a call to stop sinning but a call to walk with and enjoy God!
 - Sermon on the Mount—seek first the Kingdom of God—another way to say, “repent”
 - Zechariah 14:9—And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one. “all Jerusalem and Judea”—JTB was walking in significant influence
 - REPENTANCE FOR JTB = Change your allegiance and priorities!
 - Repentance = turn FROM one thing and TOWARD another.
 - Response = confession and baptism as the outworking of repentance
 - POINT—everybody needs to bow before King Jesus, proclaim allegiance to him and
 - TURN = repentance = God will work REPENTANCE into people's hearts!

- **Rhythm of Repentance = we repent when we trust Christ...we repent DAILY/constantly**
 - We don't get OVER the gospel and repentance but something we live in!
 - If you don't come to a life of repentance, God will bring you to a life of repentance! COME! Experience the joy of forgiveness in Jesus, of intimacy with the Lord!
- Our God of Grace = in the face of our adulterous sin, he stands ready to receive us in repentance!
- **John the Baptist's Method: Baptism**
 - **The People's Problem—They prefer religion over repentance—BAPTISM IS THE PROCLAMATION OF ONE'S ABANDONING (REPENTANCE) OF ALL OTHER HOPE, SECURITY OTHER THAN JESUS, SIGNIFYING NEW LIFE IN CHRIST AND ETERNAL HOPE OF SALVATION IN HIM.**
 - **Display/demonstrate/declare that newfound allegiance through baptism!**
 - Matthew is writing this book to the older brother in the prodigal son story—the ones who feel entitled to the father's love because of their obedience/heritage and who are scandalized by the gracious love of the Father and finds himself outside of the party!
 - **Outward Expression—true salvation works itself out in a changed life.**
 - v.8—calling them out as hypocrites—they had come to the baptism but they were not orienting their lives around this message!
 - **Like evacuating in your mind but never leaving—that's not evacuation!**
 - **Pharisees—found all their value in following all the law—created even more laws!**
 - **Sadducees—believed b/c of heritage they would be right w/ God**
 - v.8—for a Jew to receive baptism was to admit that their heritage/lineage did not guarantee them right standing with God!
 - Jesus, the Bible and JTB are consistently hard on the self-righteous and shockingly welcoming to the self-denying repentant!
 - **JTB—in the Kingdom of God, the self-righteous are OUT. The Kingdom is not for religious elite but the repentant sinner!**
 - Jews wanted to say—we have Abraham as our father. JTB's point, “you need Jesus as your Savior!”
 - v.7—brood of vipers—like snakes, they are slithering around pronouncing a talk without yielding allegiance! Brood of Vipers = sons of Satan!
 - **A fruitless faith is NO faith at all—James = faith without works is DEAD!**
 - We are saved by faith alone but the faith that saves is never alone—it comes with transformation!
 - Baptism = a fruit in keeping with repentance—a first step—TAKE THE STEP!
 - **JTB—don't come TELLING me what the deal is; show me with your life!**
 - **Internal Conversion—true salvation is a result of spiritual birth not religious observance**
 - v.9—JTB knew that the Pharisees and Sadducees were both locating their value on the religious connection they had! Instead of focusing on repentance and grace, they were focusing on what they could bring to the table.
 - Nothing we have or can claim is of any use to us other than Jesus when it comes to sin.
 - We need NEW BIRTH...not better heritage, better families, WHATEVER! JTB is destroying our religious haughtiness! Religious people don't love Jesus or repentance, they love self-righteousness! To love repentance is to love Jesus!
 - “Raise up children of Abraham”— all who are in christ are sons of Abraham!
 - **John 3:3— what do you need to see/experience the kingdom—NEW BIRTH! This speaks to the helplessness/humility that is tied to repentance! These things detach our hope and security from ourselves and locate them on Jesus, the True King.**
 - **Eternal Significance— True Salvation effects our eternity**
 - v.10—a HUGE warning to all people—judgment coming and, for those who reject repentance, that will be an awful day!

- JTB is tearing off their masks of hypocrisy, warned them against self-righteousness and told them to keep fruit of repentance. HE was not pandering to their preferences of prejudices! JTB is calling it out like it is!
- Christ saves us from that judgment...we do NOT save ourselves!
- 4 Baptisms—They all point to Jesus
- Water Baptism—A Sign of Repentance
 - A preparation for salvation
 - What is this? Something JTB was doing as a precursor to the coming of Christ
- Spirit Baptism—Evidence of Salvation Experienced
 - This comes when you are baptized (immersed) into the Holy Spirit as we trust Christ as Lord and King. This is our spiritual baptism!
 - 1 Cor. 12:13—we are all baptized (Spirit) into one spiritual body!
- Fire Baptism—Expression of God's Final Judgment
 - purifying fire of the Spirit
 - v.12—Talking about the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit. There is a judgement here
 - Threshing floor—all about separating the good from the bad! This process was aimed at purifying the crop. The chaff would blow away and the wheat would remain—the chaff would be burned up.
 - Not easy teaching—reality of Final Judgement—Jesus will, one day, separate his true followers (Heaven) and send all those who don't truly follow him to Hell.
 - To be wheat—MUST BE BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT! To not trust Christ is to not be born again/not be baptized by the Holy Spirit.
 - GRACE—the older brother problem will be ever before us in Matthew! Religious, self-righteous people are CONSTANTLY called to repent and actually follow Jesus and receive his grace. Matthew got this because he was a despicable tax collector—He got it—Jesus chose him and changed him!!
- Jesus' Baptism—The Savior Identifies with us
 - Jesus, himself, is enrolling in the purified and prepared people of God.
 - Jesus had no sin to confess. No false kingdoms to forsake!
 - Jesus is Isaiah's Suffering Servant who will bear the sins and punishment of God's people and here, his baptism plays a huge role in setting the stage for it! He not only bears the sins themselves but also the symbol of their forgiveness, baptism!
 - Jesus was providing, in his baptism, a picture of his coming death and resurrection!
 - Now, all those who follow Jesus, join in his death and resurrection as our eternal hope