

9/24/17

### Matthew 3

We left off as Joseph, Mary and Jesus had returned from Egypt to Israel and settled in the town of Nazareth, from where Joseph and Mary had made their journey to be registered for the census at Bethlehem. Lk. 2:4

There are many lies that attempt to be passed off to explain the miracle that Jesus did during His ministry, one is that Jesus learned the magical arts during His stay at Egypt.

#### 3:1-12      The ministry of John the Baptist.

3:1-2      The time of the ministry of John.

\* “In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea.”

- 1) The specific time is indicated by the phrase “in those days”, but thirty years have elapsed since the birth of John the Baptist. vs. 1
  - a) John and Jesus were born six months apart, John being the older. Lk. 1:36
  - b) We have no information about John from his birth to the beginning of his ministry.
  - c) Even as we have information about Jesus after His return to Nazareth,

except for the one incident in the temple. Lk. 2:41-50

- d) Since we are told Jesus began His ministry at thirty-years of age, John had to be the same age. Lk. 3:23
- e) In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, August 28-29 A. D. Lk. 3:1
  - 2) John is described as “the Baptist”, as he was baptizing Jews and Gentiles. vs. 1
  - 3) John came preaching “kerusso”, meaning to herald as an envoy of the king. vs. 1
    - a) The message not his, but given to him.
    - b) The authority was vested to him.
    - c) The response of the people was not his responsibility, only the proclamation of the message.
  - 4) The location was in the wilderness of Judea. vs. 1
    - \* South of Jerusalem, west of the Jordan River and north of the Dead Sea.
  - 5) The message of John, the first Israel had heard in 400 years since Malachi. vs. 2
    - \* “and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”
    - a) The simple but serious message was repent “metanoia” means to change the mind, to do an about-face.

- 1)) Seeing oneself separated from God, unfit for heaven and in need of salvation.
  - 2)) Characterized by acknowledging one's sin, confession, abandonment and restitution when possible.
  - 3)) Manasseh the most evil king repented. 2Chron. 33:12-13
- b)** The urgency is marked by the reason given, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand!", the rule of God on the earth promised to Israel, bringing Judgment and the setting up His kingdom.
- 1)) The phrase is unique of Matthew, appearing 32 times, opposed to the "kingdom of God" that is broader in scope.
  - 2)) It is at hand marked the urgency.
  - 3)) Kingdom is both present and yet future.
  - 4)) **The Kingdom** is not the church.
  - 5)) The church is part of the Kingdom.
  - 5)) The Kingdom will be established by Jesus not the church.

**3:3-4** The prophecy being fulfilled by the ministry of John the Baptist.

- 1) The quote is from the LXX of the prophet Isaiah, "For this is he who was spoken of

by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'" vs. 3

\* The passage is Isaiah 40:3.

- a)** John was that voice that broke the silence of 400 years.
  - \* "All did prophesied till John the Baptist". Matt. 11:13
- b)** John was to prepare the way of the LORD, referring to Jesus the Messiah.
- c)** The picturesque description was by the custom of preparing the roads for the arrival of a king or person of great importance, going out and making the paths "tritous", worn ways straight "eutheias" to make level.
  - 1)) Judgment of the nation. Is. 1-35
  - 2)) The historical condition. Is. 36-39
  - 3)) The redemption through Messiah. Is. 40-66
- 2)** The life-style of John was also like Elijah, "And John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey." vs. 4
  - a)** His dress was of camel's hair, the course and rough dress of prophet and leather belt. 2Kings 1:8; Zech. 13:4

\* Jesus identified John as the partial fulfillment of Elijah. Matt. 11:14; 17:10-13; Lk. 1:17

b) His food was locust, grasshopper or carob fruit and wild honey. Lev. 11:22

**3:5-6** The people came out to John.

1) The Jews and Gentiles went to John, “Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him.” vs. 5

\* Water baptism was practiced for proselytes, but never for Jews.

2) Those that repented were baptized by John, “and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.” vs. 6

\* Water does not cleanse sin; nor complete salvation. 1Pet. 3:19-21; 1Cor. 1:12-17

**3:7** The religious leaders that came out were confronted by John.

\* "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

1) The Pharisees were the separatist and ritualists.

\* Found 100 times in New Testament.

2) The Sadducees were the rationalist, they did not believe in spirit, angels, resurrection or punishment.

a) They appear 14 times in New Testament.

b) They were the wealthy priestly line.

c) Essenes were a third group, ascetics down in Dead Sea area.

d) There were also a group called the Ebionites, another ascetic group

3) A brood of vipers, offspring of Satan opposed to God, idea of snakes fleeing a desert fire.

4) The wrath to come is the judgment of God, but the believer has not been appointed to wrath. Rom. 2:5; 5:9; 1Thess. 1:10; 2Thess. 1:5-10

**3:8-10** The call to repent to the religious leaders.

1) The life of godliness will give evidence of fruit of true repentance, “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.” vs. 8

2) Their national heritage could not save them, “and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as *our* father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” vs. 9

3) The warning about the spiritual peril if they did not repent, “And even now the

ax is laid to the root of the trees.  
Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” vs. 10

- a) The ax is the judgment by God to the root, the source of life.
- b) Every tree, person not repentant would suffer the judgment of God, “cut down and thrown in to the fire”.
- c) Jesus will cut every tree down that is not bearing fruit and cast it into everlasting fire.
  - \* The indication of the ax laid to the “root” refers to a final perdition.

**3:11** The distinction between John and Jesus the Messiah.

- 1) John was baptizing with an outward ritual unto repentance pointing them to the Messiah, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.” vs. 11a
- 2) Jesus, the One coming after John was mightier and greater than John, baptizing with the reality the Holy Spirit to transform the believer constantly through sanctification, “but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” vs. 11b-d; Eph. 5:18

- a) John says he is not worthy of being Jesus’ slave let alone His forerunner.
- b) He must increase and I must decrease. Jn. 3:30

**3:12** The judge to separate the believer from unbeliever is Jesus.

- 1) Jesus will separate the wheat from the chaff, “His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor.” vs. 12a-b; Matt. 13:24-30
  - \* The metaphor is of threshing wheat is to separate it from the chaff from the wheat by throwing it up in the air.
- 2) Matthew interprets for us the “fire” the final judgment of God, “and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”
  - \* The wheat is the repentant believer, the chaff is the unrepentant unbeliever.

**3:13-17** The baptism of Jesus.

**3:13** The coming of Jesus to John.

- 1) Jesus came from way up in the north, Galilee, “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him”.
- a) Remember he lived at Nazareth.
- b) Not the nicest area in Galilee.

- 2) The journey was with the purposed intent to come to John at the Jordan River in the Judean wilderness to be baptized.
- a) This was not coincidence or a mere friendly visit, but a prophet appointment.
- b) The event is so important that the three synoptics record it and John.  
Mk. 1:9-11; Lk. 3:21-22; Jn. 1:29-34

**3:14** The objection of John to baptize Jesus.

- 1) John protested, “And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”
- \* The word prevent “diakoluo”, means to hinder or stop Jesus.
- 2) They were cousins; John was 6 months older, but he did not know Jesus was the Messiah by his own words.
- \* John “I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.” And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. “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.” Jn. 1:31-33

**3:15** The command of Jesus to John.

- 1) The proclamation to John, “But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit *it to be so* now.” vs. 15a-b
- \* Permit it so now, the word permit “aphiemi”, means to send away his objection.
- 2) The revelation, “for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.” vs. 15c-d
- a) For the preparation of the justification of sinners.
- b) Identifying with sinners.
- c) Identifying with death.
- d) Identifying as High Priest.

**3:16-17** The sign to John to identify the Messiah. Jn. 1:33-34

- 1) The confirmation, “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.” vs. 16
- a) Not that He received the Holy Spirit for the first time for He had the Holy Spirit as a permanent relationship being God without measure. Jn. 3:34

- b) The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove, a symbol of the Holy Spirit. vs. 16
- 3) The affirmation, “And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” vs. 17
  - a) The vice was of God the Father. Ps. 2:7; Is. 42:1; Jn. 12:28
  - b) This also took place on the Mount of Transfiguration. Matt. 17:5
  - c) Here we see the Father as High Priest approving of the unspotted lamb for atonement!
  - d) We have the Trinity present, Jesus coming out of the water, the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus and the Father affirming the Son, in whom He is well pleased.