

## Matthew 3

The following are my study notes and teaching points on the book of Matthew / Chapter 3

See that chapter in [blue](#) below in with \*\*\*\*\* by my study comments in black.

### 1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

\*\*\*\*\* In this chapter we see John the Baptist on the scene. In the wilderness of Judea a region of Israel. He is not often thought of a Prophet but he was one indeed and per Jesus; John was the Greatest man to ever live! Luke 7:28

Note: the man God would use to make way for Christ was NOT in a town or religious building at all. He was a man out in the wilderness and not from a big city or from man's religious systems. We know very little about his life except about his parents and his birth was close to Jesus birth. Perhaps his entire adult life was lived out in the wilderness dedicated to God? John is a great example to me as he obviously lived most all of his life in holy service to the Lord out of the lime light and with no fame or prestige. We know John's heart and mindset as he said "he must decrease so Christ could increase". John 3:30

### 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

\*\*\*\*\*John the Baptist (nothing to do with the modern baptist church by the way) comes saying 'repent'. Repent (*metanoō* in Greek ) means to turn your mind to God and then you turn your ways as well. It is NOT a popular word today as it is viewed as too harsh, but without it there is no salvation found.

He then says "*the Kingdom of God is at hand*". A kingdom has a ruler a land and subjects. What this means is he is making the way for Christ who is coming on the scene and Jesus will show us God's kingdom, how it operates and how we are to enter into it as His people. What a privilege for John to be the one making the way for Christ the King!

### 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

\*\*\*\*\*God's Word is very unique in that it often operates in future telling or prophecy. Here we see Isaiah had spoke of this event centuries before:

***The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Isa 40:3***

Again, John's main role was to come out of the wilderness and proclaim Christ. A good side thought here, is how Israel had to come out of the wilderness from Egypt once and now John does that as well. (Later Jesus is in the wilderness too.) Each time they came out into something better. It is a sign of how God can sustain, redeem and lift up what seems to be lost or perishing. Remember that as you go through a wilderness

experience or trial in life. God may be getting ready to bring you out into something grand for His glory. He is a REDEEMING Lord and what a God we serve! (Job 19:25) For I know my redeemer lives.

So how is John preparing the way for the Lord? Several things come to mind:

He is fulfilling prophecy for Jesus to come. A key for Him to be the true Messiah. He is dealing with the Pharisee rulers, something Jesus will take on as well in his ministry. (They want him dead.) He is proclaiming repentance (taking on a new thought) and that will be needed if Israel is to embrace their King. Also John is taking water baptism to the level it will need as it is a symbol of Christ who comes to wash us clean and baptize us in the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament Micveh's ( water holders) were known well by the Jews and used as ritual cleansers but this baptism of John (then to Jesus baptism) has a new, deeper meaning indeed. The comment about the path being straight has meaning too. Remember Jesus said to enter in *on the straight gate* to eternal life Luke 13:24 and in Prov 4:27 we are told to not look left or right so we know salvation is a straight ahead path in Christ.

#### **4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.**

\*\*\*\*This rugged rough description of John is very interesting and telling. (Me being an old back woods country/hunting boy myself.) Notice how this description would never have John accused of being fancy or feminine. What a contrast from today's so called leaders and modern pastors who are often feminine as they get all polished and gussied up to please the culture and pew people. But God uses rugged John, who rolls out of the wilderness in camel hair with leather girdle (waist piece) on, and perhaps he had locust parts in his teeth? Imagine what the perfectly dressed city dwelling Pharisee thought of this John? We know God looks at the heart, not a man's less than perfect or fine garments. 1 Samuel 16:7

I have to think God was using something foolish in John to the Pharisee to confound them and their pride and arrogance.

#### **But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;**

##### **1 Cor 1:27**

Another point to make about John. He lived in a wilderness, he ate bugs and wild honey but yet John was favored by God highly. Think about that the next time you think your circumstances are hard or tough and you complain. The bible says we should be content with food and clothing. 1 Timothy 6:8

John was content in that very hard life, I think we should be that in our lives today as Christ is enough amen?

#### **5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,**

\*\*\*\*\*John was causing a stir as he preaching away from the temple as he was making the way for the Messiah to come. People were coming to see and hear him and his message.

## **6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.**

\*\*\*\*\* John is tying preaching, repentance and water baptism with confessing sins. It is as an archetype of Christ with the Spirit to come in Acts 2? Baptism means immersion and it is a symbol of being washed clean or cleansed. Jesus will come and do that for those who repent and follow Him via His sacrifice. 1 John 1:9

## **7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?**

\*\*\*\*\* The Pharisee/Sadducees hear of what John is doing and come to investigate it. They are used to people coming to them for teaching but now people are going out to see and hear John. These leaders had to be curious indeed. We do not have to wonder about how John felt about these teachers of the day. John was already aware of their hypocrisy and false ways and instantly rebukes them. If John is making the way for Christ, he does well because much of Jesus ministry was combating the wicked leaders of His day. Jesus says a similar thing in Matthew 12 to perhaps these same men (calls them vipers).

## **8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:**

\*\*\*\* John goes right to the point and reminds these corrupt men that just being baptized is meaningless unless a man's heart is right for God. This includes repenting; turning your mind to God and from your sins as I said. What is the result of that happening in a life? Godly fruit that shows in how we live and act and obey the scriptures. Your fruit is lacking if you keep or walk in any sin as it shows you are NOT fully submitted to God in all ways. Jesus went on to talk a lot about fruit in the book of John. The bible message is that a saving faith makes fruit. And good fruit trees make lots of fruit or they have no good purpose and are cut down and burned.

## **9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.**

\*\*\*\* Knowing these Pharisee leaders would say "*we are Jews with a long blood line of God's people*" and rely on that for their status. (from Abraham THE Father) John reminds them that God is NO respecter of persons. (See 1 Timothy 5) These false, corrupt, prideful leaders would continue and go on to trust in their own religious pedigree, righteousness and lineage vs the Messiah Himself and they end up wanting Jesus dead. John is correct is his rebuke and warning them they are in a spiritually dangerous place. John basically says, do not think you are doing God a favor by your religious ways as the rocks will cry out to God if we do not. Talk about humbling them and us as well. God is over and above all proving He does NOT need us as humans! Read John 8 where Jesus deals with who He is in regards to Abraham.

**10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.**

\*\*\*\*\*Again John uses the common bible fruit analogy with faith in God. Those who follow Christ are likened to fruit trees and His spirit grows that good fruit. If you lack it, it is your fault via a false conversion or a stiff neck and rebellious life. The Pharisees had rotten fruit and most of churchianity today does as well. This is a direct and solid tie to James who says faith and works go together. See James 2 / The fire is a warning of damnation/hell and Jesus himself often mentioned hell as He preached. John is indeed making the way for the Lords ministry to come. See Matthew 7:19 as well

**11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:**

\*\*\*\*\* John did not have the Spirit of God indwelling men in his ministry. That was to come in Jesus. Then John, in his godly humble way, lowers himself and lifts up Christ. See John 3:30 where he does it again via "*I must decrease so Christ can Increase*". This should be our charge as well when we live daily and minister truth to others. Johns reference to holy ghost fire is speaking of Acts 2 when the Spirit fell and the NT body was born. See Isaiah 4:4 as a prophecy of this event.

**12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**

\*\*\*\*\*This verse does not make much sense to us today unless we understand a process of harvesting wheat back then. A fan, floor, gathering, chaff and with fire? This is the process that the Israelite's used to harvest their wheat. The stalks/bundles with grain are gathered, they are beat to separate them and the wheat falls to the floor. Then the fans make air to blow off the stalks/chaff to reveal the valuable wheat on the floor. John is tying an agriculture method they all knew well to God harvesting His souls and doing away with His enemies. The wheat (souls of true believers) is gathered and the chaff (unbelievers) is worth nothing then burned. The unquenchable fire is hell, and nothing is going to stop its burning and torment. This verse is a simple warning to say make sure you are **wheat and not a tare** or you will be cast off and burned. See Mathew 13 for more on wheat and tares.

**13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.**

\*\*\*\*\* In keeping with the plan of God, Jesus the Messiah would have to be water baptized to be the example for us in the New Testament body of Christ. Who else to do this job but the one making a way of the Lord, John the Baptist.

**14 But John forbid him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?**

\*\*\*\* John again humbles himself before Christ in an act of reverence and worship. Imagine a mere man baptizing the God of the universe. Was John even capable of grasping the magnitude of this moment?

**15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.**

\*\*\*\*\* Jesus tells John it must be and John of course concedes. Christ is coming in the flesh to fulfill the OT law, fully. He will become our righteousness for salvation and the ONLY path to the Father / eternal life. See 2 Cor 5:21

Righteousness is a right standing before God, something we can't have without Christ's work. His baptism is symbolic as the 3 (Father Son and Spirit will be shown as One.)

**16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

\*\*\*\*\* John baptizes Jesus and we see an event that has much meaning for His people. Jesus is proving He is the chosen Messiah. We see the Spirit of God and the Father speaks and approves. This is a great area of scripture to refute those who say the 3 in 1 Godhead is NOT true and that God is just One, not 3 in 1. We see it clearly shown here and it proves the concept fully as do other scriptures. Jesus now has the Spirit in and upon Him and He is ready for His ministry to begin on earth. Isaiah 11:2 is a verse that prophecies about this event when the spirit rests on Him. We get the same promise for God when we place our faith in Christ and repent. We will get a new heart as the spirit comes to convict, teach, guide and comfort. John chapters 14-17