

Fruits Meet For Repentance

Mt 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

We first note that John came preaching "**2 Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" It is the proclamation; if you wish to be saved; you must confess that you are a sinner, in need of "**the**" Saviour, and then you are ready to be baptized.

"**the kingdom of heaven is at hand**" is simply the announcement that the Messiah has come into the world, and a further prophesy that he was coming there to be baptized. Jesus walked, and experienced, in all the ways he expects us to walk.

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

Next; we see that John gives his credentials "**3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying,**" which is the fulfillment of prophesy from: *Isa 40:3; 1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. 3 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. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*

"**5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed**" John is preaching what is here prophesied: The revealing that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, was being announced. The revelation: Salvation has indeed come into the world; to those who will hear the word of truth, and will repent of their sins, and be baptized in a profession of faith in Christ.

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

We see; the preaching of the gospel was effective, and many were brought to repentance. Again; it is necessary to see; that you are a sinner, and need "**the**" Saviour, then you are ready to be baptized. We also believe this is a picture of the engrafting, of the Gentiles into the church, from the phrase "**and all the region round about Jordan**" which would have included all nations there present.

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?

We notice; John recognized the Pharisees and Sadducees for what they were, and was not afraid to call them what they were. "**O generation of vipers**" This is an admonition, to ministers of the gospel of

Jesus Christ, to remind people that they are indeed sinners, either: Sinners that are saved by grace, or sinners still in the lost condition.

John is saying to them, Pharisees and Sadducees; quit looking down your nose, at the rest of the world with your holier than thou attitude, and understand that you are just like them. You need the Messiah just as much as they do. You need to make confession of your sins, just like everyone else. You need to humble yourselves and fall down at the feet of Jesus, the Christ. I can certainly witness with this from my own experience. Where I was raised up in church, there was an attitude with which I was greatly infected, if you were not exactly like we were in our beliefs and actions, you were hell doomed and lost. Praise the Lord for the written word of God, for a desire to read and study that word, and the scales being removed from my eyes, to allow me to see, and understand; God has many people in all walks of life that are saved.

We are reminded, as we continue in scripture; these Pharisees, and Sadducees, are indeed vipers, poisonous asp, spewing forth lies and deceit; manifested by their pursuit, of destruction of Jesus, and the lead they took in bringing to fruition his crucifixion.

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 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. 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. 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: 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.

John is telling, the Pharisees and Sadducees, you think you are secure in your self-righteousness, and because you are of the natural lineage of Abraham, but I tell you, until you can see yourself as a sinner, a sinner in need of "**the**" Saviour; until you can truly make confession of what you are, you cannot come to that status of life called repentance, which makes you worthy to be baptized. Remember what scripture teaches about who is a Jew? **Ro 2:28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.** This is how both Jew and Gentile are included in the church: "**which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit**"

John continues and tells them; the system of worship you are practicing, in self-righteousness, is coming to an end very soon. The ceremonial and sacrificial laws are going to be fulfilled in this Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, "**Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance**" or you too will be hewn down and cast into the fire, lost in the old way, and miss out on the new and living way.

"**for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.**" According to other scripture references, and the Matthew Henry commentary; John is baptizing at the place, where Israel crossed the river Jordan to enter into the land of promise. There would be present; the altar of 12 stones brought up out of Jordan, and this may be John's reference to stones. It is the prophetic picture: we remember that Israel also set up an altar of 12 stones in the middle of the river

Jordan, which would not be visible to the eye, but they knew were there, that God was going to graft in the Gentiles as we saw earlier that **"5 and all the region round about Jordan,"** demonstrating that this preaching of John was not necessarily confined to the nation Israel, but rather, to all that came to hear the message **"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."** and be baptized.

"Isa 21:10 O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you." We have here that thought of a threshing floor. Some commentators state that the temple of Jerusalem was built upon a threshing floor. What happens on a threshing floor? It is the place where the chaff and the wheat are separated by winnowing, and other means, and the chaff is then burned and the wheat stored up. This is pointing to the separation of the church and world, here in time, by the separation of the saved and the lost; and ultimately, of the end of time and the separation of God's people from the devil's people, with the saved being transported to the immortal heaven and the lost cast into the eternal lake of fire with the devil and his followers. This is why God's ministers preach: **"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."**

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 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. 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.

Jesus set an example of immersion for baptism. This is one of the scriptures that we use to support the doctrine of baptism by immersion. The Primitive Baptist faith believes, as the bible teaches, that water baptism is by immersion; to be completely covered in the watery grave and then lifted up again, emblematic of the burial and resurrection of Christ, and representing the newness of life, in the born again believer, and the symbolic washing away of sins, which was actually accomplished by the blood of Christ.

Baptize is from the Greek word **"baptizo"** and means: to immerse, submerge; to make whelmed (i.e. fully wet); used only (in the New Testament) of ceremonial ablution, especially (technically) of the ordinance of Christian baptism, wash. The root word for baptize is **"bapto"** which means: to overwhelm, i.e. cover wholly with a fluid; to dip.

Considering these definitions, we understand that the water baptism is to be immersed, not sprinkled, not splashed, or any other mode that people may come up with to claim as water baptism. We see that God was pleased with the actions of Jesus: **"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."** Let us give thanks and praise to our Saviour and Lord for his accomplished work of salvation by grace for all of God's people. Let us give thanks and praise to our Saviour for setting a living example for us to follow.

Elder Clarke Lee, 03-14-2021