

Matthew 3:1-17

John Baptizes sinners, snakes & the Savior

30 years passed from Ch 2 - Jesus baby in Bethlehem, then child hunted by king Herod. Now Ch 3 Savior of the world after 3 decades of time people loose focus, lull into complacency & become dull to spiritual things. **Child has joy in getting gifts, Parent has joy in giving gifts.**

God 30 yrs preparing His Son ***Luke 2:40..Jesus. continued to grow & become strong, increasing In wisdom & the grace of God was upon Him***

Also preparing people for a great move of God--***Simeon in Temple...a good man...very devout...filled-w/ Holy-Spirit. And constantly expecting the Messiah to come soon. (TLB) Lk 2:25***

We've all been in times of waiting for God to move...Danger during **times of preparation** of getting distracted, become indifferent to spiritual things. I've heard it all & now dull of hearing no longer open to a new work of God.

I want to stay open & available to H.S. not closed & critical--unmoved when God is moving

Matt 3:1-17 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight!

Mary & Elizabeth were cousins--John & Jesus 2nd cousins 6 months apart. Preaching in wilderness is not a great spot for evangelistic campaign. Big city for max exposure spending giant sums of money, billboards, flier, ads.. But Gods ways are not our ways....Who's John gonna preach to--lizards, rocks, scorpions, snakes. occasional Acacia tree?

Those God **raises up** & empowers for service, He also **stirs up** & brings out those willing to listen. Mixed multitude always presses into popular religion, come w/ their respectability, power, money, influence others come for et life

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Church today guilty of same error - making the way so broad, so easy, so accessible even unbelievers feel at home in the church. Turning from sin no longer prerequisite to enter the K of G.

Repentance is more than regret, its turning around, change directions, change your mind & will to follow Jesus. Sorry for sin & want God to replace it w/ His will.

Acts 26:20...repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. Jer 31:18 like an untrained calf; bring me back that I may be restored, for Thou art the LORD my God.

In 1st C church ***Lord added daily those who were being saved.*** Not w/ ad campaigns, expensive promotional strategies. **Isaiah 40:3** refers to highway reconstruction project where roads were smoothed, potholes filled, tree roots dug out, rocks & debris cleared w/ unsightly litter buried for king coming. All in preparation for king's arrival. In ancient times they had a saying there are three states of misery- sickness, fasting and travel.

4 Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt about his waist; & his food was locusts & wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea, & all the district around the Jordan; 6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

John the Baptist in our day would have no chance making cover of GQ magazine, Men's Health, Men's Journal (maybe-some rugged characters). John came in spirit & power of OT Elijah w/ similar appearance 2.Ki 1:8. Didn't try to impress by dress or appearance w/ latest fashion statement. Not trying to look **drip** or **skibidi** or dress **fire** –be hip, cool, trendy, fads

John no guest speaker on **Church growth**. Point # 1 plant a church where there are no people & make it hard to find. Point # 2: dress down ragged, repulsive smelly animal skin. Gross people out so they not drawn to

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minister after eating breakfast ok Locust wings lodged in beard. Point #3
Be offensive call congregation & potential converts snakes & hypocrites.

John didn't look like any religious leaders of his day--not dress, talk, look or live like them. An indictment against current religious culture that placed more emphasis on outward appearance than ministry to the heart.

Today at how to grow your church bigger seminars, focus is on appealing to masses - When preaching avoid words like Sin, hell, repentance, homosexual, adultery, abortion. Keep it positive, self-esteem, how to be success, prosperity, health, friendships, feeling good about yourself.

Diogenes said *The truth is like the light to sore eyes. He who never offended anyone never did anyone any good*; **Barclay** adds *It may be that there have been times when the Church was too careful not to offend*;

John avoids demographic studies, psychological techniques, sociological surveys finding out what people want from religion. **Makes his calling and election sure** – he's God's man, in God's time, delivering God's message to those that God brings out.

John's obedience to Gods call translates into the people's obedience to Gods will. Mixed multitudes always look for the lowest common denominator telling them what they want to hear, to tickle the ears.

Truth motivated the first group of sinners. Repent-confess-baptize - a forsaking of sin & practicing obedience to God. Simple, direct & powerful is God's message to change lives. But now we have the second group - the snakes

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? 8 Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance; 9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, -we have Abraham for our father for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.10 And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

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Likely some were the same religious leaders in collusion w/ Herod to murder babies 30 yrs earlier & soon some will plot to crucify Jesus.

Their motivation for coming is in question. For show? Popular social event? Peer pressure? Gain advantage w/ people?

John spots hypocrisy when he sees it. impure motives! Soon these become John's greatest antagonists--until he's martyred.

He uses a metaphor understood by those living in the dry, parched land w/ stunted thorn bushes & dried up brittle grass. Desert fires would spontaneously combust sending flames across the brush w/ snakes & scorpions scurrying for their lives ahead of the flames.

John is saying ritual & religion is not enough-clean up your act. Ceremony won't cut it-right living is what you need. Fruit of repentance is to change the way you live. **Alexander the Great *change your name or change the ways***

Anticipating excuses-trust in faith of forefathers. God has no grandchildren only sons & daughters--A personal faith because He is a personal God.

Jews believed Abraham had such great faith that all his descendants were automatically favored by God. **Tradition:** Abraham stood at gates of hell redirecting any Israelite who by chance found themselves there.

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. 12 And 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

To remove & carry sandals a slave's job. John prepares hearts & the way for Jesus. Willful sin & serving Christ are incompatible & impossible. HS leads us in our walk & fire refines us in our thought-burns dross from life - sanctifying process.

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Spirit is Heb- **ruach** (hovered--created order out of chaos). Gk is **pneuma** breath as well as spirit. Gods spirit breaths Gods life into our life bringing order out of chaos--giving purpose to purposeless, rules the unruly. Many want H.S. w/o fire of purity- Simon

Acts 8 Winnowing is separating for eternal purposes--those who would go to heaven & those who would not. **John Bunyan** heard a preacher say *Wilt thou leave thy sins & go to heaven, or wilt thou have thy sins and go to hell?* Each of us must choose **Prov 28:13** *He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses & forsakes them will find compassion.*

13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me? 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. 16 And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.

Why was Jesus baptized? Although sinless, identified w/ sinful humanity thru baptism. Jesus our substitute, took our place baptized in water & blood. Jesus our example in submitting to baptism.

Jesus affirms John's ministry by going to him for baptism. Jesus shows commitment to Father's will. Declaring the trinity in unity at start of His ministry. H.S. descending-Son receiving--voice of Father declaring

Gen 1:1-In the beginning God. Not El singular or Ela duality but Elohim - plurality--hinting at trinity Deut 6:4 Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! – **Echoed** compound unity. Not three gods but one God in three Persons—Fist.....**Man** – body/soul/spirit. **Water** - liquid, vapor, solid. Scientist say at 0 degrees for split second water is all three at once gas, solid, & liquid. I'm a father, a son and a brother but one person.

Communion