

Episode #705 Matthew 3 Part 2-The Ministry of John

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. Last time we saw that the record of Matthew skips over the Lord’s growing up years to the time when his cousin John begins his ministry to Israel. He came proclaiming the kingdom of the heavens, which we discussed means nothing less than the heavens’ government or God’s government over the earth. John called on them to “repent” in the light of this. What does “repent” mean, and what was John truly asking them to do?

III. More about John.

A. Verse 3. Spoken of by Isaiah the prophet. “Esaias” is the Greek form of Isaiah. Isaiah 40:3 is the reference. Speaking of preparing, not just for the Lord’s coming, but for the kingdom of God! Notice that the word “fulfilled” is not used here, and yet this is an excellent example of a prediction coming true. Isaiah spoke of preparing the way of Jehovah. Yet here John is preparing the way for Jesus Christ. Shows that the Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old.

B. Verse 4. John’s rough clothing identified him with the common people and separated him from the common garments of a priest. His food was also not that of a powerful and wealthy figure. Locusts were allowable food under the law, Leviticus 11:21-23.

C. Verse 5. Throngs are going out to him! There are estimates that he baptized 200,000-500,000 people.

D. Verse 6. He baptized them in the Jordan. What exactly was he doing? Let us consider this very important topic of baptism. Throughout the history of Christendom, no ceremony has been given greater importance than that of water baptism. Yet what does the Bible have to say about it?

IV. John’s Baptism: of God, Luke 20:4? Or just a washing of men, Hebrews 9:10? The rulers in Israel had ritual washings. Mark 7:3-4. The application of water in any manner was thought to be devout. Mark 7:7-9.

A. Luke 1:63. His name was John; “Baptist” was not his last name! When his ministry started, he was called “the Baptist,” Greek *baptistes*, a Baptizer. Does not mean he belonged to the Baptist denomination! The only one in Scripture called this. God gave him this name. He was Baptizer before he baptized anyone.

B. Luke 1:5-25. He was a priest of Levi and Aaron by inheritance.

C. Matthew 3:11. His baptism was in Jordan, connected to repentance = Greek *metanoeo*, “have the aftermind,” means submission.

D. Matthew 3:6. They acknowledged their sins when they were baptized. Shows their true submission, acknowledges they were not submissive previously. Not everyone would have had these to confess. Luke 1:6.

E. Matthew 3:7-8. Those who were not truly submissive (Pharisees and Sadducees) were not accepted. John knew! Do modern baptizers?

F. Luke 3:3. Remission = *aphesis*, same as forgiveness. How can some say that water baptism is not about forgiveness of sins? Was not individual. When the nation of Israel submits, their national sin will be forgiven. Jeremiah 31:34.

V. Conclusion: John the Baptist was God’s baptizer, sent to Israel to perform his baptism on them. This baptism was performed in Jordan, was connected with repentance (submission), and

was with a view to the forgiveness of sins. Many make much of water rituals today in their churches, but all human ideas must be subject to the truth set forth in the Word of God. We will continue our study of this important topic of baptism in our next program.