

The Ministry of John the Baptist

Matthew 3:1-11 and Luke 3:1-18

February 21, 2021

Review:

We will be a:

- Rejoicing people
- Engaging people
- Discipling People
- Encouraging People

Today's passage:

There hadn't been a prophet speaking for 300+ years since Malachi, and then John the Baptist appears on the scene.

John was prophesied about:

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare 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 brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; ⁵ The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Isaiah 40:3-5

"Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 3:1

John the Baptist is preaching and baptizing and the Pharisees and Sadducees show up to see what's going on. John definitely had a word for them.

We need to first understand who these people were:

Pharisees – legalists and traditionalist who were consumed with keeping the law. If we are honest, this is many modern day church goers.

Sadducees – More powerful and their ranks included chief priests and high priests. They were consumed with politics rather than God. Controlled the temple business in which Jesus cleaned out.

Jesus calls the Pharisees and Sadducees "brood of vipers," asks them who warned them of the wrath to come and told them to bear fruit worthy of repentance. In this John the Baptist does three things:

1) **Bluntly tells the whole crowd they are in a rotten condition (so are we).**

In Genesis 3:15 it speaks of the battle between good and evil. In essence John the Baptist is saying they (Pharisees and Sadducees) were 'sons of the devil.' "That's exactly what Jesus said in John 8:43 to another crowd, 'Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.' So John's first word is an indictment of his listeners: you are people in Satan's grip. You are his children with his nature." ~ **John Piper**

Before the Good News will ever be good to me or anyone else, I must grasp and understand the bad/awful news first.

I am lost, hopeless, hell bound and in a BAD way.

But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. **Isaiah 64:6**

We are in a rotten condition which is why we need Jesus.

If there is no fruit, there is no root.

2) Warns there is wrath on the way.

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?" **Matthew 3:7**

But in accordance with your hardness and your ^[a]impenitent heart you are ^[b]treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, **Romans 2:5**

3) Mentions there is escape from the wrath.

Luke 3:7-14

Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43

I obey because I have been saved, not in order to be saved.

"This is the meaning of repentance: a turning of the direction of our life and the affections of our heart, so that we become oriented on God and love the things he loves. John promises the people "forgiveness of sins" in response to their repentance, their turning to God, but he calls them to demonstrate the seriousness of their turning by accepting baptism in the Jordan. This was a remarkable demand of John on his Jewish kinsmen. In the context in which John lived baptism had one main significance among the Jews: it was the symbolic rite that proselytes had to go through to become Jewish. This made John's baptism very offensive. It implied that unless the Jews were willing to repent, they were not really Jews and could not count on the promised blessings God had made to his chosen people. Or to put it another way, in calling Jews to accept a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, John was telling them that they cannot rely on their Jewishness for salvation; they have to be changed in their heart toward God." ~ **John Piper**

Prayer Focus:

Unbeliever – I would repent and trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of my sins.

Believer – I would acknowledge to God any sin in my life that is keeping me from walking in step with Him and ask that He deal with me and my heart.