

The First Coming of King Jesus Part 10: The Message of the King

December 11, 2022

Matthew 3: 7-12

How do you share the Gospel with someone who believes he is good, or those who have been religious their whole life? How about the proud and self-righteous?

The primary mission of Jesus on earth was to proclaim truth to those who needed to place their faith in Him. Who didn't know truth or hadn't heard the truth. John the Baptist's message in this passage uses many metaphors and word pictures (snakes, trees, axe, stones, fire, winnowing fork, and barn.).

The KEY to John's sermon has two purposes in Matt. 3: 7-12:

Purpose 1: To call individuals to salvation in Christ, not in good works or religiosity.

Purpose 2: To bring national salvation to Israel if they repent- would the leaders believe on Him? If they did repent, the promises of a king and a kingdom found in the OT would come to the nation.

The context of John's sermon is the kingdom of heaven is at hand, Matt. 3:1-2. John had no concept of a coming church age after Jesus. Jesus had come and so John was heralding the kingdom that was coming at this time and repentance was needed to enter this coming kingdom.

10 Statements of Truth which present the Gospel to the stubborn, unsaved, self-righteous person, or nation:

- 1) God's wrath will begin the kingdom: V7, "brood of vipers," Pharisees (made laws and oral traditions for the people) and Sadducees (wealthy priests who rejected the resurrection and only believe the Torah) these are the hypocritical leaders of the Jewish faith with false salvation. JTB is describing their real father as Satan, John 8:44, 1 Jn. 3:10. They aren't truly repentant.
- 2) You must repent to avoid God's Wrath: V8, "bear fruit in keeping with repentance," evidence of a humble, internal faith in the Lord. Fruit a well know metaphor of a changed life: Matt. 7:16, 12:33, 13:8 (crop), 13:23. James 3:18, The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace with God). Examples in OT: Ps. 1:3, Prov 11:30, Is. 3:10, Hos. 10:12-13, Is. 5:1-7. Those being baptized were bearing fruit of repentance.
- 3) Self-righteousness will not avoid wrath: V9, JTB calling these children of the devil. They believed they were children of Abraham because of their Jewish ancestry. God could make children from rocks. They based their faith on their heritage and not a true heart of faith to God. Gen. 15:6, Jn. 8:37-40, Abraham had faith in God. Justification is by faith.
- 4) Pre-judgement has already begun: V10, "the axe is laid to the root of the tree." The axe is chopping away those who don't bear fruit. The "fire" of eternal judgement is real, see also: Matt. 13:42, 18:8-9, 25:41. A rejection of the Gospel hastens the judgement of the lost. Heb. 9:27, judgement from the Lord comes to all.
- 5) The King possesses all the power: V11, "mightier (stronger, more potent) than I," JTB is baptizing with water and is preparatory for showing repentance needed in the coming kingdom. Jesus is the radiance and exact representation of God, Heb. 1:3. Jesus upholds everything ever created, Col. 1:16-17. Rom. 3:19, every mouth will be shut.
- 6) The King will qualify kingdom citizens: V11, "baptized with the Holy Spirit." What is this baptism? The baptism of the Holy Spirit includes 7 aspects: a) regeneration, making new, Jn 3:8, b) sealing of the Spirit, permanently preserved with the HS, Eph. 1:13. c) indwelling of the Spirit, 1 Cor. 3:16. d) control of the Spirit, filling, the power to obey the Lord, Eph 5:18, Col 3:16. e) fruit of the spirit is evidence of a change life, Gal. 5:22-23. f) gifts of the Spirit: to use in service to one another, Romans 12:6-8, g) baptism of the Spirit, immersing of the believer by the HS, assimilating them into the body of Christ and genuinely into the family of God. All Christians are baptized upon salvation, 1 Cor. 12:13.

There is no other way than being baptized by the Holy Spirit to be qualified to enter the kingdom.

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7) The King is the instrument of God's wrath: V12, Jesus is the one chopping the trees, He is the judge and throws them in the fire of hell, Jn. 5:22, unquenchable fire "fireproof-fire."

8) No one will escape the king's verdict, V12, "thoroughly clean out the threshing floor." Everyone will be subject to Only 2 verdicts: 1) Redeemed and saved through faith in Christ. 2) Unredeemed and lost, guilty and condemned. No one escapes judgement.

9) The king will bring in His own to the Kingdom, V12, "He will gather His wheat into the barn." See also: Jn. 14:3, 1 Thess. 4:16 (The Lord will descend), Rev. 19:14 (followed with Him).

10) The King will separate the unrepentant from the kingdom forever: V11, the chaff will be burned. What is this baptism of fire? 3 Views of this issue.

View 1: Fire is spiritual purification: Based upon construction of the sentence and conjunctions "with," "and." Seen as describing one event, this view supported with the text in Acts 2:3. No context that the fires of Acts 2:3 are actual fire. The tongues are "as of fire" or "like fire", and there is no connection to purification.

>>>How does the Bible show purification? Water is normally the metaphor used to cleanse. Ez. 36:25. John 3:5, "born of water and the Spirit." Titus 3:5, "the washing of regeneration." These cleansings aren't referred to using fire with the work of the Holy Spirit. This grammatical construction makes it difficult to accept this view.

View 2: The fire of judgement. Fire is referenced in v10 and 12 and is a flame to burn bad trees and chaff, so there is no reason to change the meaning in v11. Other metaphors used: Fruit is results of repentance, trees are people, brood of vipers are children of Satan. Fire references chaff and bad trees.

View 3: Baptism of fire ultimately speaks of Jesus' judgement when He returns. View 3 builds on View 2 at the time when He returns.

a) Timing reason: Grammatical structure shows they are closely related, but don't have to be same thing but can be at the same time.

b) Context reason: the futuristic coming of Christ to establish His kingdom. Can't only be referring to the church age but also refers to the end time event when Jesus comes again.

c) Pentecost Reason: Peter preached the coming of the Spirit in Joel 2:28. Pentecost was a partial fulfillment, because the rest of Joel 2 happens in context of V31 is the Day of the Lord and the judgement of the earth, Zech. 12:10-14.

d) Kingdom setup reason: the judgement of Jews and Gentiles at His end time coming judgement after one massive outpouring of God's Spirit to save those who are left before His coming. (Sheep and Goat judgement of Matt. 25:31-46).

Further Discussion and Application

Reflecting on the 10 Statements of Truth for presenting the Gospel, examine how man's righteousness compares to God's righteousness? What do we need to be willing to do to understand and receive this new life (Matt. 16:24-26, Jn. 14:6).

There is an obvious mindset of the self-righteous and proud who won't humble themselves. How does God continually show them grace and is longsuffering towards them? Consider God's mercy and His eventual judgement on those who reject Him?

Read Matt. 3:7, why did the Jewish leaders come to John's baptism and preaching?