

## Jesus: No Spin Matthew Chapter Three: Time for a Change

personal / group study for use with the message of October 4th and 5th, 2008

John the Baptist calls people to 'repent' (make a 180 degree about face) in anticipation of the arrival of the kingdom of God. John sounds like an Old Testament Prophet, he calls the Pharisees and Sadducees offspring of a viper! John calls them to repent or they will face the judgment of God. Jesus arrives while John is preaching. True repentance prepares the way for Jesus in our lives. True repentance changes our hearts and our lives!

### Introduction.

John does not soft sell the coming kingdom of God. He's what we call today a "fire and brimstone" preacher! He is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, in *Isaiah 40:3*: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness; 'Prepare the way of the Lord: Make His paths straight.'"

"When John realized that a lot of Pharisees and Sadducees were showing up for a baptismal experience because it was becoming the popular thing to do, he exploded: "Brood of snakes! What do you think you're doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snake skins is going to make any difference? It's your life that must change, not your skin! And don't think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as father. Being a descendant of Abraham is neither here nor there. Descendants of Abraham are a dime a dozen. What counts is your life. Is it green and blossoming? Because if it's deadwood it goes on the fire." *Matthew 3:7-10 (the Message)*.

### Read.

**Matthew 3:1-17:** "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

*John's clothes were made of camel's hair and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.*

*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*

*"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.*

*As soon as Jesus was baptized he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

\*All scripture taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.

### Questions.

Many people today are putting on a religious show, like the Pharisees did. Living by rules, or going through the motions, attending church, saying the right words. God wants changed hearts that show through in our lives. He wants to do the changing. He can transform people who come to Him in repentance of heart and faith in the blood of Jesus.

### **ThinkAboutIt...**

1. Think about your baptism, was it a ritual alone or was it an expression of something more?
2. Why would people be drawn to the message of John the Baptist?

### **ReflectOnIt...**

3. Look up Psalms 50:1-3 in the Bible. Are there similar themes in the words of John?
4. What do the images of judgment mean? Who will these things happen to?
5. What is the theme of John's message? (3:3)
6. How is repentance linked to salvation?
7. Is Jesus repenting and confessing? Why does He ask John to baptize Him?

### **RespondToIt...**

8. Have you been baptized? Why or why not?
9. How can you "prepare the way for the Lord" in the lives of people you know?

**Make a list of people you would love to be with in the kingdom of heaven. Pray for them by name daily. Always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within you when asked.**

- When you believe in Jesus as your Savior, the Holy Spirit enters your life and will dwell in your life forever. You are a new creation, sealed forever. But, moment by moment, you have the choice to submit your will to the will of God, to listen to and obey His Word and His guidance. You don't "get more of God", but He does "get more of you". You still have free will even after you come to Jesus in faith; God wants children, not puppets.

## **Extra.**

Read Romans 6:3-4 for more about baptism.

What is does unrighteousness (sin) mean? What does self-righteousness mean? Explain true righteousness.

### **Oak Pointe Church**

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