

010 What Happened to John the Baptists Gospel

by David Servant

The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and getting ready for God, highlighting the foundational message of the gospel that has been lost in modern times.

Duration: 7:40

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-2, Matthew 3:8, Matthew 3:11-12, Matthew 4:17, Luke 3:3, Acts 2:38, 2 Peter 3:9, Revelation 3:19

Topics: "Repentance", "Kingdom Preparation"

Description

This sermon delves into the ministry of John the Baptist as a forerunner to Jesus, emphasizing the call to repentance as a crucial step towards preparing for the coming of the kingdom of heaven. The urgency of repentance is highlighted, stressing the need for a heart change that leads to a life change in alignment with God's will. The message underscores the importance of being ready for God's judgment by obeying His commands and seeking His forgiveness through repentance and mercy.

Transcript

Good to have you with me, thank you so much for joining me as we continue our chronological study through the entire New Testament. Today we're back in Matthew's gospel, Matthew chapter three. So if you've got your Bible, open it up to Matthew chapter three.

We're going to start reading today about the amazing ministry of a person whom Jesus highly esteemed, a guy by the name of John the Baptist. And realize, of course, that we just covered in our previous segments and broadcasts two chapters of Matthew, and it covered well over 30 years. There are many, many, many gaps in our understanding of what happened in the first 30 years of the life of Jesus.

Don't you wish there was more recorded? But we have to trust that the Holy Spirit, being a very wise guide and the inspirer of the writers of the New Testament gospels, if it had been that important, he would have recorded it for us. So it's not like we're reading People magazine here trying to find out interesting little factoids and tidbits that don't make any difference. Jesus came to save us from our sins, and the majority of that occurred, of course, in his birth, his arrival upon the earth, and then with his ministry.

And his ministry was inaugurated by his forerunner, John the Baptist, a relative of his, actually through his mother. So Matthew chapter three, verse number one. Now, in those days, John the Baptist came,

preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, quote, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And he was the one crying in the wilderness, we'll read in the very next verse. That is the essence of John's message. It's clear, not only from what we read in verse number two, it's clear from everything that we were reading thereafter.

John's entire goal, and don't miss this, his entire goal was to motivate people to repent. So what does it mean to repent? Some people say, well, it just means you're just changing your mind. Well, that's true, but it's much more than changing your mind.

It could actually be better stated by changing your mind, changing your heart, and as a result, it changing your actions. And I would submit to you, and we'll see this as we keep on reading, if there's no change of action, if there's no change of lifestyle, there's really no repentance. Repentance is a heart change that results in a life change.

And to repent means, of course, to turn away from sin, turn away from that which is displeasing to God, to start doing what is pleasing to God. How much more simple can you make it? And so if he's calling them to repent, that means he's assuming that they're doing things by which they're not pleasing God, and that they need a lifestyle change, and so he's calling them to repentance. Jesus himself had the same message, we'll ultimately read that in Matthew's gospel, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Now notice there's urgency to John the Baptist's cry. He's got a reason people should repent. Why should you repent? Because the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Well, the Jews had been, of course, based upon all the prophetic scriptures, had been anticipating that there would be the dawn of a new age, when literally the kingdom of heaven would come to the earth, and God himself would be ruling from Jerusalem. This is all in the Old Testament. God will dwell among them, and so forth.

So they were anticipating that. They weren't so keen on the suffering Messiah, but they were certainly keen on the kingdom of God coming. And if God's coming, well, you better get ready, just like we get ready when just about anybody comes.

Right? I mean, you think of what Christianity has been reduced to over the years, it's such a far cry from what we read about in the New Testament. Goodness, when anybody comes to my house, we prepare. Unless we don't know they're coming.

I mean, if someone's going to come inside our house, we look around, make sure that there's not a big mess, and so forth, straighten things up, get prepared, because we want to give a good impression to people who maybe are just our friends, or neighbors, or our own family members. But here, the implication is God is coming, not just the kingdom of heaven. The one who rules the kingdom is the king, so in essence, he's, of course, saying the king is coming, God is coming.

You better get ready. Well, how do you get ready for God? You start doing what he tells you to do. That's so simple, yet that has been basically removed.

This most foundational, fundamental aspect of the gospel has been edited and removed from so many modern gospels. It's not the gospel. I'm getting a little bit rowdy about this, because it's no laughing matter.

It's so sobering, it's so serious. We hear preached today, God loves you, has a wonderful plan for your life, and just accept him. That's not getting ready for God.

God doesn't need your acceptance. The question is not whether you accept God, the question is whether he accepts you, and he only accepts you if you do what he's saying, because he's God. He's the king.

He's the Lord. He's the judge. He's the great judge.

He's the one who has the power, Jesus said, to kill and to cast into hell, so fear him. That's what Jesus preached. What has happened to the gospel? My goodness, repent, why? Because you're not ready, you need to get ready, which also is packed into that one simple sentence as an indication that God is merciful God, because he's coming to judge.

You better make sure that you're ready. You're not ready, but he's giving you time to get ready. He knows what you're doing right now.

He knows how you're living your life. He's being merciful to you. He hasn't cast you into hell yet.

He hasn't judged you for your wickedness yet. He's given you time, and he's showing you mercy just by warning you to get ready. The implication there is, if you'll get ready, he'll forgive you, and you'll be ready, and everything will be okay.

Wonderful. That's always been the message. That's been the message from the beginning, even in the Old Testament.

That's the deal God has always made available to people. Repent, I'll forgive you, and everything will be okay. Now, of course, you say, well, there's much more theology than that.

Yes, of course, God has forgiven us when we repent through the death of Christ, and so on and so forth. We know all of those things, but this is the basic, most foundational message that we find in scripture, the message coming from heaven, and unfortunately, it's hardly heard. It's very rare today.

Okay, see you next time.

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