

014 the Wheat and the Chaff

by David Servant

John the Baptist emphasizes the urgency of repentance and the reality of heaven and hell, using the illustration of the winnowing fork to separate the righteous from the unrighteous.

Duration: 7:42

Scripture: Matthew 3:11-12, Matthew 25:46, John 3:36, Romans 3:23, Hebrews 10:31

Topics: "Judgment And Salvation", "Heaven And Hell"

Description

John the Baptist's sermon in Matthew chapter three emphasizes the baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire, clarifying that it signifies a choice between salvation and damnation based on one's relationship with Jesus. The illustration of separating wheat from chaff on the threshing floor symbolizes the future separation of the righteous and the unrighteous by Jesus, with the wheat representing the saved and the chaff the unsaved. John's message revolves around the foundational truths of human sinfulness, God's holiness and judgment, and the reality of heaven and hell.

Transcript

All right, we're studying the amazing ministry of John the Baptist in Matthew chapter three and breaking into the middle of one of his sermons in verse number 12. And I actually want to read again verse number 11, I guess. John said, I'm baptizing you in water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I'm not fit to remove his sandals, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

So our question is, what's he talking about there? He'll baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Because sometimes we hear guys say, have you been baptized in fire yet? God wants to baptize you in fire. I think that's a misunderstanding of what Jesus, John the Baptist rather, is talking about here.

Because in the verse before that, the verse after that, both times he mentions fire and both times it's the fire of hell. And so it becomes logical to think that the fire in verse number 11 is also the fire of hell. Well, Jesus is going to baptize hell bound people in the Holy Spirit and fire? Well, yes and no.

I would have rather if John had said, he'll baptize you in the Holy Spirit or fire. That is, you're going to get either salvation or damnation. And just because he said and doesn't necessarily mean that the implication wasn't or.

It didn't necessarily have to mean you're going to get these both. It depends on how you relate to him. You either receive the Holy Spirit, his baptism of Holy Spirit, or you receive his baptism in fire.

In any case, it's very clear that John the Baptist is not afraid to mention hell when he preaches the gospel. Let's look at verse number 12 now. His winnowing fork is in his hand and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor and he will gather his wheat into the barn and he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

If that isn't a reference to hell, what is? And what gets burnt? The chaff. Now, this is a wonderfully clear illustration of what's going to happen. A little bit foreign to people who are living in the modern countries, but this is something very familiar to people who live all around the world who are growing wheat and rice and so forth.

When they would gather the stocks of wheat and so forth onto a certain place on the field, it's a flat place, it would just be called a threshing floor. And they have to separate the wheat from the chaff, the wheat, the actual berries of wheat, the fruit as it were, from the little leaves and little particles that are really not part of it. So it's just cleaning the wheat as it were.

And the way they would do that is by, you've got it all mixed together. You're looking at this wheat, but there's all this chaff mixed together. So they take the winnowing fork, it's kind of like a shovel, throw it in there and throw it up into the air over here so that the wheat falls directly underneath the shovel, but the chaff, which is light and more easily carried off and affected by the wind, blows away into a spread out pile over here.

So you have to have a little bit of breeze going at least to separate the wheat from the chaff. And as you continually do that with what you've gathered in all together and it's all mixed together. And isn't that an interesting illustration? Because right now on the earth, the wheat has not been separated from the chaff at all.

We're all living amongst one another, but the day is coming when there will be a separation. And so here comes the winnowing fork and he's speaking of Jesus. He's just like that.

The John is emphasizing the urgency of all of this. And he's going to thoroughly clear his threshing floor. So he hasn't come to do a half-hearted job or do part of the job.

He's going to do all the job. He's going to go to work on that big pile of wheat and chaff and he's going to work it and work it until the wheat is completely separated from the chaff. And then he has a different destination in mind for both of them, just like the person who does this around the world.

They're going to take the wheat. That's the good stuff. That's the fruit.

That's the nutritious stuff. That's the whole reason that the original grains and seed were planted was to get this fruit. And so he takes the fruit, the wheat berries, now that they're all separated, gathers them, puts them safely in his barn because that was the goal along.

And he takes the chaff and he burns it because it's worthless. What a clear picture. And it's very obvious that John's entire gospel really revolved around several facts, several foundational facts.

One, people are sinners. Number two, that's bad news for them because God is a holy God and he's a God of wrath and he's going to judge everybody. And three, there's a reward for those who repent and obey, but however, there's a punishment, a severe punishment for those who will not repent.

They go to hell. Three things, sinfulness of man, the wrath, holiness of God, and his judgment, his future judgment, and the reality of heaven and hell. Separation from the righteous, righteous from the unrighteous.

Well, those are the most foundational principles of the gospel. Yet I have heard repeated times over the years from pastors, so-called evangelists, even people who are doing witnessing. They'll tell people, oh, you don't have peace in your life, but you can have that peace.

The world is in such turmoil today and we have terrorism and we have the stock market falling and gone all the current stuff. And present Jesus as the solution to bring you peace because we're trying to be relevant. People are troubled, so we got to meet them where they're at.

Well, they're troubled, but they should be more troubled. They should be greatly troubled if they haven't repented because much worse things are happening than a little lack of peace or a falling stock market or terrorism sporadic here and there around the world. Much worse things are happening.

And so the astute evangelist and the astute person who's sharing my gospel tries to cover those three elements. And you don't have to do it wagging your finger and condemning people. You can do it with tears and compassion.

Can't you? Sure you can. Okay. And so showing them the love of Christ.

Okay. Okay. See you next time.

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