

MATTHEW 3:2-6

A. Matthew 3:2 - And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

1. Some have the idea that John's kingdom in this verse is just a **spiritual** kingdom. Some think it is equivalent to the Body of Christ - which is **crazy**.
 - a. They do not understand that God interrupted Israel's prophetic program and postponed the kingdom hope of reigning on earth until the fulness of the Gentiles is completed. Then in the Tribulation, the prophetic program (Israel's hope of their earthly program) continues to eventually bring in a **literal** kingdom.
 - b. Jeremiah 23:5-6 - Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. Jer. 23:6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

*A literal, visible, physical, earthly kingdom on earth
 - c. Revelation 20:4 - And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.
 - d. Luke 1:30-33 - And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

**If one says that it is just spiritual, then how could the virgin birth be a literal fact because it is in the same context (vs. 35)?
2. An important fact: Understanding scripture dispensationally provides **safety** for the Body Church. If not used, it leaves the church vulnerable to misinterpretations, modernism, covenant theology, false charismatic faith teachers, legalism, and even cults' teachings.
3. [Repent]
 - a. There had to be a moral-spiritual **preparation** before the Kingdom. John the Baptist confronts his nation about their sinfulness, uncleanness, apostasy, and perverted paths.
 - b. To repent simply means to change your **mind** - to turn around your thinking. Once you thought wrong, but now you think right. Once you thought your belief about Christ was right, but now you know that's wrong and what God says in His Word about Christ (D.B.R-Rom. 4:5) is right.

Repent does not mean being **penitent (having sorrow for sins), nor doing penance (**paving** for your sins).
 - c. Israel was to make/get ready for the King's/Lord's coming. Here in verse 3, Matthew considers Christ to be the **Jehovah** of the Old Testament (Isaiah 40:3).

B. Matthew 3:3 - For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

1. Question? Why all of a sudden, after hundreds of years, was the Kingdom at hand, or near and within their grasp?

Answer: John fulfilled prophecy to be the one to bear witness to the true light of the Lord (Jn. 1:6-8). The kingdom was at hand because the Messiah would be, then was, in their midst.

2. When Christ came, the kingdom came with Him for it was invested in Him. Notice the words king and kingdom being used interchangeably. They are one and the same (kingdom).
 - a. Mark 11:10 - Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

*Now compare the verse about the same event (the King).
 - b. Luke 19:38 - Saying, Blessed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

*This is because one showed that the other was there.

3. Luke 17:20-21 - And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Luke 17:21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.
 - a. *This verse has often been used to say the Kingdom of God is in the believer, thus spiritual. But the verse is not saying it is in the individual, but it says within you - as a group. As a group, the kingdom was in their midst, among them - Him!
 - b. John 1:26 - John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

*The Kingdom of God is right here in your midst - look, believe and you will see Me.

4. The Kingdom of God-heaven was at hand because the King was there and available to the nation.

C.

1. Does this remind you of anyone else in the Bible?

Matthew 3:4 - And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

Answer: Elijah

II Kings 1:8 - And they answered him, *He was* an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, *It is* Elijah the Tishbite.

2. John was God's prophet, the first one in 400 years who did come in the spirit of Elijah.

Matthew 11:7-9 - And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? Matt. 11:8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. Matt. 11:9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

Luke 1:17 - And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Malachi 4:5 - Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

3. Israel **ex**pected Elijah to come before the coming of the Lord/Christ to earth.

Matthew 17:10-13 - And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? Matt. 17:11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. Matt. 17:12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Matt. 17:13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

****Answer:** Jesus said: Matthew 11:11-15 - [Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Matt. 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Matt. 11:13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. Matt. 11:14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. Matt. 11:15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.]

- a. If Israel would have believed and received Christ as King and Messiah, then John the Baptist would have **been** the promised Elijah.
- b. But God, in His purpose and foreknowledge, knew Israel was not going to accept and believe in Christ. So God, instead of sending Elijah, sent John the Baptist as a **type** of Elijah in the spirit and power of Elijah.

D.

Matthew 3:5 - Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

1. John was calling the Israelites out of the camp, separating them from apostate Judaism. John was calling out a believing **remnant**, a little flock.

Luke 12:32 - Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

2. These believers, some old but mostly new, **id**entified with John's message of repentance. How?

E.

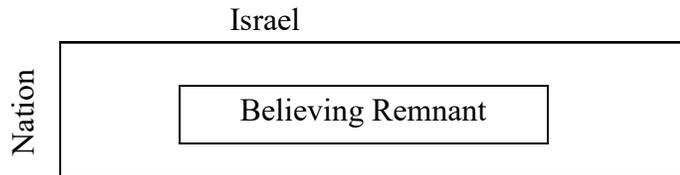
Matthew 3:6 - And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

1. John preached a national repentance, by means of a national baptism **for** remission of sins.

Acts 13:24 - When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

Mark 1:4-5 - John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Mark 1:5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

2. Water baptism was a part of their forgiveness of sins and for them to be part of Israel's believing remnant.



3. Re- member, Matthew 3 is still an O.T.-Time Past-under **law** text.

*John's priestly credentials allowed him to preach [the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins]. John was of the **Levite** order that dealt with numerous and different washings-baptisms. Heb. 9:10- "washings" and Heb. 6:2-"baptisms" use the same Greek words as used in Matthew 3.

4. The Mosaic law was **still** in effect.

Galatians 4:4 - But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

Matthew 8:4 - And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

- a. ****Baptism was something Israel expected with the coming of Messiah-King and their kingdom.**

John 1:23-25 - He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. John 1:24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. John 1:25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

- b. The question is, **why** did they expect that (baptism)?

Ezekiel 36:24-25 - For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Ezekiel 36:25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

****They were expecting water purification (washing-baptism) with their coming King & kingdom.**

Zechariah 13:1 - In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

*Water baptism is the issue of Israel **pre**paring herself for her Messiah-King and kingdom.

- c. Water baptism is associated in the **Jewish** mind with cleansing of sins and being purified.

John 3:23-25 - And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. John 3:24 For John was not yet cast into prison. John 3:25 Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

- d. Also, to get a priest ready for ministry, they would **wash** (baptize) him and then **anoint** him.

Exodus 29:1, 4, 7 - And this *is* the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, Exo. 29:4 And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. Exo. 29:7 Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour *it* upon his head, and anoint him.

- (1) **Israel, in the kingdom, will be a kingdom of **priests** and a holy nation.

Exodus 19:5-6 - Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: Exo. 19:6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

- (2) To become a priest, prepared to minister, one needed to be baptized and anointed.

John is telling Israel to prepare, to make herself ready for the coming kingdom. John is calling for a national washing-cleansing-forgiveness so that the nation could **minister as priests. Christ would anoint them later with the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:11- I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: (Acts 1:8)

Isaiah 61:6 - But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

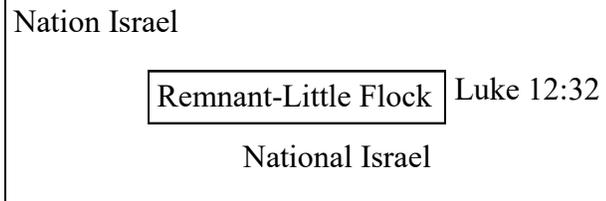
1 Peter 2:5, 9 - Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Revelation 1:5-6, 5:10, 20:6 - And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, Rev. 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Rev. 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. Rev. 20:6 Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

- e. There was a battle going on between John's scriptural baptism and the national leaders' **rejection** of the truth about the coming King-kingdom.

Luke 7:29-30 - And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Again



*The door into the believing Little Flock was belief-water baptism.

- f. This issue-truth does **not** change, even after Christ's resurrection and ascension. At Pentecost, Peter is talking to pork-abstaining, Sabbath-keeping, law-abiding, temple-worshipping, bearded Jews. Peter says in Acts 2:36-38, 40 - [Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Acts 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.]

There is no change in the message between John and Peter. Only added were the **historic events of Christ's resurrection, His ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

- g. Those of the nation of Israel who responded in **faith** to John the Baptist's message would become part of the Little Flock, ready for the King-kingdom. But those who would remain in **unbelief** (especially the apostate religious order) would remain lost chaff ready for the **fire** of God's judgment (John 8:39, 42, 44-45).