

The Kingdom of *Heaven* is at Hand

Matthew 3:1-12

In Matthew's story of the Messiah-King, he skipped the next 30 years or so of Jesus' life.

Matt. 3:1 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ² **"Repent, for the kingdom of *heaven* is at hand."** ³ For this is **the one** referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, "The voice **of one** crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready **the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!**'"

Mal. 3:1 "Behold, I am going to send My messenger (Elijah/John the Baptist), and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; **and the messenger (Angel in Hebrew) of the covenant (Jesus)**, in whom you delight, behold, **He is coming**," says the Lord of hosts. ² "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³ "He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord **offerings in righteousness**. ⁴ "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. ⁵ "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me," says the Lord of hosts. ⁶ **"For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."** ⁷ "From the days of your fathers **you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,**" says the Lord of hosts. "But you say, 'How shall we return?' ⁸ "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. ⁹ "You are cursed with a curse, for you

are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! ¹⁰ “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. ¹¹ “Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,” says the Lord of hosts. ¹² “All the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land,” says the Lord of hosts. ¹³ “Your words have been arrogant against Me,” says the Lord. “Yet you say, ‘What have we spoken against You?’ ¹⁴ “You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked in mourning before the Lord of hosts.....

Mal. 3:4 “Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. ⁵ “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. ⁶ “He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”

AFTER 400 YEARS OF SILENCE WHILE THE NATION OF ISRAEL WAITED FOR GOD TO SPEAK TO THEM AGAIN THROUGH ELIJAH (IE. THE PROPHET JOHN THE BAPTIZER)!

GOD GAVE ISRAEL 400 YEARS TO REPENT, even so, all but a remnant Responded to Jesus... SADLY, God’s call fell on deaf ears!

THE JEWS AND THE JEWISH AUDIENCE OF MATTHEW KNEW ALL THESE THINGS, YET THE NATION as a Whole, REFUSED TO REPENT AND REJECTED HER MESSIAH, **SAVE FOR A REMENANT!!!!!!**

LET’S TALK ABOUT AN ABOMINATION OF THEOLOGY ABOUT THE NATION ISRAEL CALLED “REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY” ☹

There are those out there teaching that Gentiles have replaced the nation Israel, because they rejected Jesus!

OR that the CHURCH has replaced ethnic Israel and there is no longer a place for the nation Israel.....This was the belief of John Calvin and some Calvinists today who teach the Church is the continuation of Israel, **HOWEVER THEY MISS THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, COMMON SENSE, IE. the (PRESENT EXISTANCE OF ISRAEL TODAY) AND MOST IMPORTANTLY THE "CHARACTER" OF GOD...ie. HIS FAITHFULNESS!!!!**

IMPORTANT ROAD TRIP THAT SETS THE STAGE FOR WHAT JOHN WILL SPEAK OF NEXT, that Israel is compared to a tree/trees (AN OLIVE TREE IF YOU WILL BY THE APOSTLE PAUL) that could be cut down in judgment especially, her religious leaders and her temple IN 70AD as animal sacrifice (an abomination to God) was destroyed in judgment as the "whole" nation continued to go astray...

STEVE: GO TO ROMANS 11

Rom. 11:7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;⁸ just as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day."⁹ And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, And a stumbling block and a retribution to them."¹⁰ "Let their eyes be darkened to see not, And bend their backs forever." **Rom. 11:15** For if their (Israel's) rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?¹⁶ If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.

¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."²⁰ Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;²¹ for if God did not spare

the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. ²² Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³ And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? ²⁵ For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; ²⁶ and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." ²⁷ "This is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." ²⁸ From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; ²⁹ for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

POINT: IF GOD HAS "ALWAYS" BEEN FAITHFUL, AND HE NEVER CHANGES, HE CAN BE FAITHFUL TO FINISH WHAT HE BEGAN IN ME!!!!!!

Back to Matthew...for one final point...

⁴ Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; ⁶ and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" ⁸ "Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;" ⁹ and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our

father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ "The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Let's make sure we don't mess ourselves up

with John the Baptist's call of repentance and Judgment was for Israel who God called out in the Book of Malachi. Israel was sorely in need of a head and heart change so as to WELCOME HER MESSIAH! John the Baptist's picture of the Axe at the tree and call to bear the fruit of repentance for the religious leaders, who John affectionately calls, "YOU, Brood of Vipers" could NOT be further away, with the love and encouragement of our Heavenly Father for His children...who are the branches of our Father the Vinedresser in JOHN 15.....

Comparison of Matthew 3:10 AND John 15:1-8

Theme	Matthew 3:10 – Warning of Judgment for Israel	John 15:1–8 – Call to <i>Abide</i> in Christ as proof of a “disciple”
Speaker / Setting	John the Baptist was preaching repentance <u>to Israel</u> before Jesus’ ministry begins	Jesus was teaching <u>His disciples</u> at the Last Supper on the way to garden before His crucifixion
Main Image	A tree about to be cut down	A vine with branches <i>IN</i> Christ
Focus	Judgment on those who do not bear the fruit of repentance	Intimacy with Christ as the source of any and all fruit
Key Verse	<i>“The axe 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.” (Matt 3:10)</i>	<i>“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you <u>remain in me</u> and I in you, you will bear <u>much</u> fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)</i>
Tone	Urgent, confrontational, prophetic warning	Intimate, instructive, relational encouragement of Father’s love
Audience	Crowds (including Pharisees and Sadducees)-unrepentant Israel	Disciples (Sans Judas) — <i>already believers and followers of Jesus</i>
Fruit Represents	Evidence of genuine repentance	Evidence of genuine ongoing connection with Christ & H/S
Result of Fruitlessness	Cut down and burned — symbolizing judgment of Israel	Uselessness of the disciple for the work of Jesus (Bema Seat) Gardener who prunes fruitful branches and <u>“LIFTS UP”</u> dirty branches so as to bear fruit
God’s Role	Judge with the axe at the root	
Response Expected	Repentance, preparation to be ready to meet your Messiah	<u>Abiding</u> in Christ, leading to “Much” spiritual fruitfulness
Greek Word For English, “Cut Down”	Matthew 3:10 from the Baptist= ekkopto , cut down (off, out), hew down	John 15, From Jesus= Airo , Lifts Up <i>Takes Away (NASB)</i> (“Cuts off” NIV)

STEVE: COMMUNION

Our REPENTANCE may NOT be necessary at Salvation, as some may NOT EVEN UNDERSTAND IT'S MEANING.....HOWEVER, it is an ONGOING revelation of the Holy Spirit as needed to each of us, per John's Gospel who NEVER used the word REPENT EVEN ONCE as a requirement for Salvation....

Jesus says, Come as you are...."DIRTY" and let HIM clean you up....from whatever THE HOLY SPIRIT brings to mind...

For BELIEVERS, SIN needs to be confessed regularly....

REPENT/CONFESS/ 1 John 1:9/ and then embrace the Forgiveness of the Father, through the Blood of Jesus, and the Conviction of the Holy Spirit and allow GOD HIMSELF to WASH YOU CLEAN.....

WORSHIP TEAM UP FOR SONG: HOLY FOREVER.....

DON'T take communion until *after* we worship our savior Jesus