

## Matthew 3:1-12 **John The Baptist – His Ministry**

### Ministry of John the Baptist

<sup>1</sup> In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" <sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying:

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the LORD;  
Make His paths straight.' "

### Person and Message of John the Baptist

<sup>4</sup> And John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him <sup>6</sup> and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, <sup>9</sup> and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. <sup>10</sup> And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>11</sup> I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

### Facts Revealed:

- ✚ John came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. [Matthew 3:1]
  - ✧ John was a Priest of the line of Abijah, son of Zachariah and Elizabeth. [Luke 1:5-25]
  - ✧ John had a special calling and enablement of the Holy Spirit on his life. [Luke 1:15-17]
  - ✧ John came in the Spirit and power of Elijah. [Luke 1:17, Matthew 11:11-14, 17:10-13]
  - ✧ John's ministry was focused mostly in the region of Judea, both his home town of Bethlehem and the wilderness in which he preached.
- ✚ John's primary message was to call the people to **repent** in preparation for the **Kingdom of Heaven** which is at hand. [Matthew 3:2]
  - ✧ Repentance is turning fully to the God of Israel. [Luke 1:16-17]
  - ✧ John was the fulfillment of the prophecy which said:
    - "The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the LORD;  
Make His paths straight.' " [Matthew 3:3]
  - ✧ Matthew was quoting the text of Isaiah which said:
    - The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
"Prepare the way of Yehowah (the Lord);  
Make straight in the desert  
A highway for Eloheynov (our God). [Isaiah 40:3]
  - ✧ Since John was to introduce Jesus to the world, then it is important to realize that in fulfilling this prophecy of Isaiah 40:3, John was going before Yehowah, and preparing the way of Eloheynov (our God) of the Old Testament.

- ✧ Thus Jesus is at first identified as both Yehowah and Eloheynov, or as the Lord and God of Israel.

### Person and Message of John the Baptist

- ✧ John was clothed like a prophet of the Old Testament. [Matthew 3:4]
  - ✧ John was clothed in camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist.
  - ✧ His food was locust and wild honey.
- ✧ The people took John for a prophet: [Matthew 21:26, Mark 11:32, Luke 20:6]
  - ✧ Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. [Matthew 3:5-6]
- ✧ John was straight forward with the religious leaders: [Matthew 3:7-12]
  - ✧ John called them, "Brood of vipers."
  - ✧ In asking who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? John was informing them that God has prepared a way to escape the coming Wrath of God, and that way is through repentance.
  - ✧ But to be effective, the repentance must bear fruit of evidence, that the repentance is real, and not just a show of the hypocrites, but it must be the demonstration of a changed life being lived for God.
  - ✧ John touched on the source of their confidence which was altogether based on their ancestral descent from Abraham and the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.
  - ✧ John told them that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.
  - ✧ The stones that were present are the memorial stones the Children of Israel placed in the Jordan river as testimony to the fact that they had crossed on dry ground when the Jordan was at flood stage as they entered the promised land. [Joshua 4:1-9]
- ✧ John then gave warning that judgment comes first before the Kingdom. [Matthew 25:31-46, 34, 41]
  - ✧ Even now, the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." [Matthew 3:10, Luke 3:9]
    - ✧ As the Kingdom is at hand, so also is the judgment that removes all that offend God out of the Kingdom at the beginning of the Kingdom. [Matthew 13:40-42]
    - ✧ The Judgment results in the tree bearing bad fruit, or no fruit, will be cut down and cast into the fire. [Matthew 3:10, 7:19, 13:40-42, Luke 3:9]
- ✧ I baptize you in water to repentance. [Matthew 3:11]
- ✧ He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. [Matthew 3:11]
  - ✧ His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. [Matthew 3:12]
  - ✧ This is the separation of the Saints from the sinners, the Saints being welcomed into the Kingdom, the sinners sent to the Lake of Fire. [Matthew 25:31-46, 34, 41]
  - ✧ Surely the judgment of eternal fire is implied for those who do not produce good fruit. Our lives must demonstrate the good fruit of faith and righteousness.