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Matthew 3:1-10

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!”’
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.””

In this passage John is quoted as crying out, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

The means for repentance that John proclaimed was “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” as stated in the synoptic or parallel passages in Mark 1 and Luke 3. According to verse 6 John administered a water baptism in the Jordan River “as the people confessed their sins.” This water baptism was the proto-type or for-runner of Christian baptism performed today in the name of Jesus.

“Although many question the necessity of water baptism for the forgiveness of sins today, most serious students of the Bible conclude that repentance is essential for the forgiveness of sins.”

In this passage, when John “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?’” John was a preacher with real back bone who feared God more than men and their authority. He told it as it was--these religious rulers needed to repent! And he refused to baptize them until they proved their repentance by bearing appropriate fruit!

Oh, for preachers like that today! Men who would lead the life themselves, and call others to the standard of excellence and Godliness by the power of Jesus Christ!

In verse 9 John states, “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.” Here he dismisses the claim to Godliness on the basis of position or family bloodlines. No, God judges on the basis of individual conduct--not position or genealogy but “good fruit.” That is, a Godly life.

Would John refuse to baptize you? What about Jesus?

Their message was repent or perish/turn or burn.

Have you put out the fires of hell in the waters of life?