

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW; YOUR KINGDOM COME...ON EARTH

Week 7 – Then Jesus Came....

March 9, 2021

John the Immerser's message was pointed against sin. John's message was urgent. John's message was filled with God's promise and hope. Jerusalem and ALL Judea went out to John on the east side of the Jordan River and were baptized by him in the Jordan while confessing their sins (Matt. 3:6). John pointed all, including the Jewish religious leadership, to Jesus the Messiah. John was "the voice crying in the wilderness"...crying out "Repent!"...telling the people they needed to prepare their hearts for the One Who would come and baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. The Holy Spirit was promised in the New Covenant for Israel: Eze. 36:26-27 - *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you;... 27 I will put My Spirit within you.* And, fire brings judgment that will purify the pure and destroy the wicked. Purification by fire was a message spoken by the prophets – Isa. 4:4; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:2)

I am suggesting that, because John knew that God told the NATION of Israel to repent, John was genuinely appealing to the Jewish religious leaders to REPENT!!! John did not compromise God's message!

What about our voices? Your voice, my voice?

- Are we a voice for such a time as this in our world today?
- OR, does our voice defend ourselves?
- Is our voice NOT compromising?
- Is our voice being directed by the knowledge of God's word? His word is TRUTH!
- Is our voice urgent?
- Is our voice loving/compassionate?
- Is our voice silent at times so that we can listen?

Matt. 3:13 - *Then Jesus came...*

He was expected! The Jewish people watched and waited for the Messiah. And God delivered on His promise to send the Messiah, the Redeemer - because God is faithful to His word. Thirty years following His birth, approx. 27-28 years after having lived in Nazareth, Jesus came to the Jordan River from Galilee. He traveled from His home in Galilee to the Jordan River – a 60+ mile walk. Jesus stepped out of obscurity to be announced to Israel and to begin His public ministry!

CONSIDER: Jesus waited those many years in Nazareth performing duties at home and at the carpenter's shop...KNOWING all the time that He was God incarnate – God in the flesh... KNOWING all the time that there was a LOST WORLD... KNOWING that there were those who were waiting and watching for Him.

Col. 2:9 - *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*

While ministering on earth, He made Himself of no reputation which means Jesus set aside the independent use of His divine attributes which He fully possessed, as He humbled Himself for us. He set aside the voluntary display of His divine attributes.

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At times in the gospels we see Jesus' omnipotence/His power displayed. He stilled the storm on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 8:23). He raised the ruler's daughter (Matt. 9:18, 23). He healed lepers, He exorcised demons. He fed 5,000.

And, there were times that He did not exercise His omnipotence...HE REMAINED ON THE CROSS!!!!

Then Jesus came... to identify with mankind...so that He could serve mankind...so that He could bear our sin...so that He could wear the crown of thorns and be pierced through for us!

The Hebrew for Nazareth means "the guarded one." God was guarding/shielding His Son...until it was time. His living far from Jerusalem, the center of Rabbinic Judaism, spoke volumes. And, He would be far from their scrutiny until it was time. Jesus was living within God's plan of redemption...His own plan of redemption...waiting for the right time.

Matt. 3:13 - *Then Jesus came...*

Then Jesus came from Galilee...

Then Jesus came from GALILEE...???? Galilee was the frontier in the northern portion of Israel between the Holy Land and the "external world." The "external world"??? ...all the other lands – the NOT JEWISH lands!

In 722 BC, Assyria invaded Israel and first carried away the Jewish people from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali (Isa. 9:1-2). (SEE MAP last page of handout) Some of the Jews who were left behind in Israel intermarried with the Assyrians. Thus, Galilee was known as the "Galilee of the Gentiles." And, one of the most important trade routes in the Middle East passed near the Sea of Galilee ("Via Maris"). Traders came along this route from Gentile nations.

Jesus living and ministering in the "Galilee of the Gentiles" was in keeping with God's plan. It was God's plan that both Jews and Gentiles come to know Him through the Messiah. Isa. 49:6 - *It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.*

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan (a journey of 60+ miles) to be baptized by him...by John. But John's baptism was a baptism of repentance – for the purpose of forgiveness of sin!! Jesus desired John's baptism which was a baptism for sinners. WHY?

Matt. 3:14-15 - And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' ¹⁵ But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him.

Jesus came into the world to identify with sinners. Seven hundred years before Jesus' incarnation, Isaiah, in Isa. 53:12, prophesied that the suffering Servant, Jesus, would be *numbered with the transgressors*. The context: the crucifixion. The transgressors were the thieves on the cross...sinners. Bottom line – Jesus ministered

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among sinners; He identified with sinners. And so, Jesus was executed as a criminal. Crucifixion was the death for criminals. Jesus came to die a criminal's death!

Jesus is our “sin-bearer.” He Who had no sin took His place among those who had no righteousness. Jesus took upon Himself the judgment from God the Father for our sins...for the sins of the world (I John 2:2 - *And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*). The judgment from God intended for us as sinners was placed upon Jesus!

And, in this immeasurable grace offering from God, those who accept Jesus' gift of forgiveness receive His righteousness. This is the GREAT EXCHANGE! Jesus takes our sin and gives us His righteousness! At the Jordan/at His baptism, Jesus identified Himself with those whom He came to redeem. Jesus' baptism publicly began His ministry.

At Jesus' baptism, He was announced to Israel. It was appropriate that Jesus was recognized publicly by John, who heralded Jesus' coming. John declared to all that here was the One for whom they had been waiting.

Also consider...John was of the tribe of Levi. One of the duties of the priests in the OT was to present the sacrifices that the people brought to the tabernacle/temple before the Lord! John's baptism of Jesus could be seen/understood as a priestly presentation of the Messiah Who was/Who is the ultimate sacrifice! Consider John's declaration the next day, *Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world* (John 1:29).

Matt. 3:16-17 - When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

Jesus' immersion into the waters was a symbol of His death. He went down into the water, symbolizing death. And His immediate rising symbolized His resurrection! What a proclamation Jesus made at the beginning of His ministry.

All three persons of the Trinity are at the baptism of Jesus in Matt. 3:16-17: *Jesus saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'*

Jesus – God the Son - in the flesh/dwelling with us – Emmanuel

The Spirit – God the Holy Spirit

The voice - of God the Father

At the baptism of Jesus we read the first explicit mention in the NT along with a graphic picture of our Triune God! Jesus, the Spirit, and the voice of God the Father all appear at one time, revealing the uniqueness of each Person of the Trinity while affirming their essential unity – that God is ONE. The whole/entire undivided essence of God belongs equally to each of the three Persons.

This is how God saves us—by sending his Son and the Son sending the Spirit (John. 16:7). Salvation comes by the three Persons of the Trinity. God loves us because He has known love from eternity past *within the Trinity*

At Jesus' baptism, the Spirit of God descended *like a dove*. This is the only time, at Jesus' baptism, that the Spirit is ever seen in Scripture as a dove. We've already realized that Jesus' baptism speaks of His identifying with sinners and speaks to His death and resurrection. How does the dove fit into Jesus' sacrifice? We've already considered in Jesus' baptism that John, from the tribe of Levi, presented the Messiah – the ultimate sacrifice! Does the dove fit into the sacrificial system?

If a Jewish person was not able/could not afford to present an animal from a flock (a lamb, a goat), Lev. 5:7-11 speaks of the provision of presenting a turtledove – a dove. A dove was the sin offering for almost everyone. The Spirit of God descended in a form speaking to God's grace...God opening the way to all people – even the lowest of the low.

And, the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove speaking of sacrifice, is a reminder of the reason for John's baptism and the need for repentance – SIN – all have sinned and there is a sacrifice available for EVERYONE. No one is left out! Jesus, in His baptism, in His identification with sinful man, was anointed not only for ministry and for His death. He was anointed to be THE sacrifice – provided for EVERYONE (I John 2:2).

Let's look further at the “WHY”/the reason for the Holy Spirit's descending upon Jesus at His baptism.

John 1:32-34 - *And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. ³³ I did not know Him (Jesus), but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”*

This was not a temporary gift of the Spirit of God. John tells us that the Spirit “remained” upon Jesus – the Spirit “abode” upon Him; the Spirit did NOT depart! Jesus was about to begin His public ministry and He would carry out His ministry in the power of the Spirit of God.

Luke tells us in Acts 10:37-38 - *³⁷ that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸ and we saw how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.* Was the Holy Spirit descending LIKE a dove the anointing by God upon Jesus? What does the anointing mean?

Isa. 61:1 - *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, (the Messiah is speaking) because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;*

The origin of anointing came from the shepherding world – as in shepherding flocks of sheep! Lice and other insects would often get into the wool of sheep, and when they got near the sheep's head, they could burrow into the sheep's ears and kill the sheep.

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Shepherds in Biblical times poured oil on the sheep's head. This made the wool slippery, making it impossible for insects to get near the sheep's ears because the insects would slide off. From this, anointing became symbolic of blessing, protection, and empowerment. Biblically speaking, anointing with oil was for the purpose of consecrating a person fulfilling a function in the service of God – blessing them along with protecting and empowering them.

In Scripture there is one “THE” Anointed.

Psalm 2:2 - *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed.* Psalm 2 declares that His Anointed/the Messiah is the King and is the Son of God Who is God!

Yet, we find in the OT that three specific functions received the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil (symbolizing the Holy Spirit) to signify God's blessing, His call, His empowerment on that person's life within that office (Ex. 29:7; Ex. 40:9; II Kings 9:6; Eccl. 9:8; James 5:14):

- Prophets – revealed the counsel & will of God - I Kings 19:16.
- Priests – were those who sacrificed and interceded for the people – Lev. 4:3; 8:12; Psa. 105:15.
- Kings – were those who ruled – representing God's kingship - I Sam. 24:7-11; Psa. 2:2; Dan. 9:25-26.

Jesus fulfilled those three functions: Prophet, Priest, and King.

- As a Prophet, Jesus had a message for the people. Jesus is the WORD of God (John 1:1)
- As a Priest, Jesus offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice. He is the Priest and the Sacrifice! Heb. 7:27 – *Jesus... Who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.*
- As King, Jesus offered Himself as King to Israel at His first coming.

Psalm 45 speaks of the glories of the Messiah. Psa. 45:7 - *Your God, has anointed You (Messiah) with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.* It appears that the

Messiah's companions were the prophets, priests, and kings. Again, Jesus fulfilled all three roles: prophet, priest, king – thus “more” than His companions applies.

The Holy Spirit confirms that Jesus is the Messiah, “the” Anointed.

Jesus saw *the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'*

The voice of God the Father is proving that Jesus is the Son of God.

In Psa. 2:7 we read, *The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.* Timeframe – in the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus will reign as King.

The voice of the Father at Jesus' baptism acknowledged that Jesus is the Messiah – THE Anointed Who would be the King of Israel (Psa. 2:6 – Who will sit on the holy hill of Zion).

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And then we hear the voice of God the Father proclaiming about the Messiah...

...in Whom I am well pleased which is from Isa. 42:1 where we read of God presenting the Messiah as the suffering Servant through the prophet Isaiah.

At Jesus' baptism...

- Jesus identified with sinners and His baptism pictures His death.
- By being anointed with the Holy Spirit, He is declaring that He is Prophet, Priest, and King which will lead to His sacrifice.
- By the God the Father's voice, Jesus is declared to be the Son of God Who is accepted as the worthy sacrifice and King.

How significant is Jesus' baptism?

ETERNALLY significant!

QUESTIONS:

What was new to you?

Did anything impact you? Why?

What are you going to do with it?

Bouncing off this lesson, what do you want to study further?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread Week 7 w/ Biblical references.

Jot down observations and questions. Begin finding answers.

Begin to pray about a Jewish person you'd like to invite to our Passover Seder. Make sure they know we're studying Jesus and the promises God made to Israel.

Share what you learned through this lesson with at least one person

Read Week 8 when you receive it.



