

BAHRAIN REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH
The Preaching of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-12)

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Preliminary

Note: There was a period of four hundred years of silence from the last Book of the OT (Malachi) to the NT.

- God did not send any Word through the Prophets.

Reason: In 430 B.C., after God's favor in freeing the Jews from Babylonian captivity; instead of continuing in God's grace, they still managed to sin against God

- They continued to worship false gods; married pagans; disregarded the Sabbath and tithing; and even the priests were unfaithful to their duties.

Point: The four hundred years of silence was God's judgment upon sinful Israel.

Aftermath: God restored the proper worship for Him through the Gentiles—this was a continuation of God's judgment on the Israelites... Mal. 1:6-14; 4:5-6

1. John the Baptist

Note: John was the prophet chosen to prepare the way for Jesus... Mal 3:1; Isa 40:3; Mt 3:3

- His birth was a miracle; his mother, Elizabeth, was old and barren... Lk 1:7
- Elizabeth was a cousin of Mary; in other words, Jesus and John were relatives by flesh... Lk 1:36, 39-45
- John was considered a figure-like Elijah... Isa 40:3; Mal 4:5; Mt 3:11; 11:10-15; Lk 7:27
- John was a humble and simple person... Mt 3:4, 11

Challenge: Although Jesus was His relative by flesh, John recognized Jesus as the God-Messiah and saw himself merely as a servant... Mt 3:11

Death: He was killed by King Herod, who had his head cut off and presented it to Herodias's daughter... Mk 6:22, 27-28

2. The Mission of the Call to Repentance

Note: John lived in the wilderness of Judea, far from Jerusalem, where he preached repentance... Mt 3:1, 6

- People came to him from Jerusalem, Judea, and Jordan.
- He reminded the people to prepare for the coming of Christ Jesus.

(a) For Correcting Religious Errors

Context: John's mission was to restore the heart of Israel to God... (refer to "reason" in the introduction)

Note: The Pharisees and Sadducees came not to listen and be baptized by John, but to investigate his activities... v.7

v.7 = *you brood of vipers* – hypocrites, deceitful, and dangerous

Absurdity: Believing in salvation due to lineage is a false belief...

v.9 = *Abraham as our father*... cf. Jn 1:13

Truth: True children of Abraham are the sinners who repent...
from these stones = Gentiles, hard-hearted people who repent.

Point: Lineage-based religion cannot save – salvation is only connected with repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(b) Call to Repentance

v.2 = *Repent* – a change of mind; a change of heart towards God; a struggle against sin... Rom 12:2

Note: Remorse is not repentance... i.e., Mt 27:3ss = *Judas Iscariot*

- Repentance occurs only when the gospel reaches a person's heart... Mt 3:1f; Act 2:36-38

Fruits of Repentance

- Acknowledging the seriousness of sin... Ps 51:4; 109:21-22
- Self-judgment due to sin... Rom 7:24; Act 2:37, 38; 1 Tim 1:15
- Sorrow over sin... 2 Cor 7:9; Lk 22:62; Ps 130:1-3
- Shame before God... Isa 6:5; Lk 5:8; 1 Tim 1:15
- Freedom from captivity to the old self... 2 Cor 5:17
- Obedience to God's commandments... Mal 3:7; Rom 12:1, 2
- Submission to Jesus as Lord... Mt 28:18; 8:2
- Humility... Job 42:6; Jms 4:9,10
- Living in holiness... 1 Pt 1:16; 2 Tim 2:19-22
- Reading and following (as guidance) the Word... 2 Tim 3:16-17
- Obeying baptism... Mt 3:6; Mk 1:4; Act 2:38; 8:12-13; 9:18
- Daily repentance... Mt 6:12

(c) Warning of the Coming Judgment

v. 2b = *the kingdom of heaven is at hand*... read: vv. 10, 12

- There is judgment for the blessing of salvation for those who repent... cf. 2 Cor 5:10
 - There is forgiveness even for the worst sinner... 1 Tim 1:15,16
- There is judgment of punishment for those who do not repent
 - No salvation for those who do not repent and for false repentance... Mt 15:8

3. Baptism [Review of Baptism]

4. Baptism of the Spirit and Fire... v.13

Error: Often thought to refer to manifestations of the baptism in the Spirit and fire as related to supernatural gifts... e.g., what happened on Pentecost... Act 2:1-4

Truth: The “*Baptism of the Spirit*” = Jesus giving the Spirit to believers... i.e., sanctification

- The stony heart is replaced with a fleshly heart... Mt 3:9b; cf. Jer 31:33; Eze 36:26
- Baptism by fire = a picture of purification and strengthening... Num 31:23; Zech 13:9; Mal 3:2-3; 1 Pt 1:7

Implications:

- (a) Jesus is God and John was a servant of God... thus, John is a model of a believer who should not be worshiped.
- (b) John is the greatest servant, but Jesus is the greatest of all... Mt 3:11
- (c) John is the preacher of repentance; Jesus is the Savior... Mt 1:21
- (d) Everyone called to salvation has repentance, faith, and obedience to baptism