

John The Baptist's Message

October, 25 A.D.

Matthew 3:7-10

Luke 3:7-14

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Text:

Matthew 3:7-10, But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax 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.”

Commentary:

I. Many Pharisees and Sadducees, rival Jewish factions, came to John's baptism.

A. Pharisees were wealthy, zealous, powerful, proud, conceited, worldly, vigilant enemies of Jesus who were nonetheless a leading Jewish sect. Some were honorable people.

B. Sadducees were not as numerous as the Pharisees, but they were a powerful sectarian group. Many served as priests. They denied the existence of angels and spirits. They did not believe in the resurrection like the Pharisees.

II. John called these people “offspring of vipers” or “children of snakes.”

A. This described the total depravity of these self-righteous Jewish people.

B. Both Jesus and John spoke of the Pharisees and Sadducees in comparable ways although some from these groups were actually supporters of Jesus, honorable people.

C. Matthew 23:33, “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?”

III. “The wrath to come” can refer to the destruction of the nation of Israel in A.D. 70 and/or to eternal destruction.

A. Most Pharisees and Sadducees did not submit to John’s baptism.

B. Luke 7:30, But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God’s purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.

C. Matthew 21:23-27, Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?” Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John’s baptism – where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?” They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘from heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men’ – we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.” Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

IV. Repentance is directly related to a reformed life.

A. Much crying and “carrying on” without change in life is not repentance, because repentance is changing your mind and heart about the way you have been living.

B. True repentance will produce fruit, results.

C. Acts 17:30, 31, In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.

D. Acts 26:20, First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and **prove their repentance by their deeds.**

V. These Jews took great pride in being descendants of Abraham.

A. Being a descendant of Abraham was no cause for boasting a spiritually elite position before God.

1. Matthew 3:9, And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. NIV

2. Romans 4:1-2, What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ²If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. NIV

B. A true son takes the character of his father.

1. John 8:44, You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. NIV

C. The character of the Pharisees and Sadducees did not resemble the character of Abraham and they, therefore, could lay no just claim to being his sons.

D. Matthew 23:29-32, “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of prophets.’ So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!”

E. God in his power can make descendants of Abraham from rocks.

F. Being **spiritual** children of Abraham is the important thing.

G. Romans 2:28, 29, A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

H. Romans 9:6-9, It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's

children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” In other words, it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring. For this is how the promise was stated: “At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.”

I. Circumcision does not gain them acceptance with God.

1. Galatians 6:15-16, Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

VI. The ax was at the root of the trees; that is, destruction of the Jewish nation was imminent.

A. The destruction would be total, down to the roots of the nation.

B. Every tree, person, institution that does not obey God, truly repent is not righteous, does not bring forth good fruit, will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

C. Evil Pharisees and Sadducees would suffer sorrows and tribulations and would be ultimately destroyed!

Text:

Luke 3:7-14, John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

The ax 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, “What should we do then?” the crowd asked. John answered, “The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same. Tax collectors also came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?” Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely – be content with your pay.”

Commentary:

I. Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

A. Many do not know disasters are coming.

B. Many do not know when to flee the wrath to come.

C. Many do not know where to flee.

II. The Pharisees and Sadducees were willing to observe Rites and outward forms, but were short on genuine righteousness and godliness.

III. These Pharisees and Sadducees asked John, “What then must we do” to escape the wrath to come?

A. In general John taught people to live moral and upright lives. He also taught concern for those in need.

B. Benevolence was a major part of the teachings of John.

C. Benevolence was also a major part of the teachings of Paul,

1. 2 Corinthians 8:13-15, Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: “He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little.”

D. And James,

1. James 2:15-17, Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

E. And later, the other John; that is John the Apostle.

1. 1 John 3:17, If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

IV. Transition here goes back to John the Baptist who told the tax collectors/publicans to be fair, just and equitable in their collections.

A. John did not require the tax collectors to resign their positions. Publicans were a most hated group equal to prostitutes and murderers in the eyes of first century Jews.

B. Being unpopular is not a sin.

C. Chief publicans such as Zacchaeus (**Luke 19:2**) collected all they could and kept for themselves everything over the amount owed Rome.

D. The crowd must have been disappointed that John did not condemn the tax collectors for holding the office of publicans.

V. John instructed soldiers to:

A. extort from no man by violence.

B. accuse no one wrongfully.

C. Be content with their wages which were equal to that of a common laborer.

D. Whose soldiers these men were is not stated.

E. John did not require these soldiers to leave the army.

F. Soldiers were to exercise restraint, practice truthfulness and contentment.

VI. John did not preach a different message for each of these groups.

A. The message was standard!

B. John simply pointed out to each group what was needed to bring them into compliance with the overall standard.

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Questions

1. When John saw many _____ and _____ coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them, "You brood of _____! Who warned you to flee from the _____ to come?"

2. John further said that being _____ of _____ wouldn't save them. "The _____ is already at the _____ of the _____, and every _____ that does not produce _____ will be cut down and thrown into the _____."

3. The _____ and _____ in the _____ rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been _____ by _____.

4. _____ is directly related to a _____ True _____ will produce _____, _____.

5. A true son takes the character of his father. The character of the _____ and _____ did not resemble the character of _____. John said they were not true some of _____.

6. The crowd listening to John asked, "What should we do?" John answered, "The man with two _____ (undergarments) should share with him who has _____, and the one who has _____ should do the same."

7. _____ also came to be baptized of John who told them, “Don’t _____ any more than is required.”

8. _____ were told, “Don’t _____ money and don’t _____ people _____. Be content with your _____.

9. Was it sinful to be a tax collector? _____ Two well known Biblical publicans were _____ and _____.

10. All disciples must do right to please God regardless of profession, line of work. What on your job interferes with your Christian witness?_
