

The Gospel of Matthew: “Get Ready”

Matthew 3:1-12, February 7, 2021

Summary: Repentance as a response to the coming of the kingdom of God.

John the Baptist: Prepare the way (Isaiah 40:3) for the coming Messiah

The Different Ways John Talks About Repentance

1. The Message of Repentance: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven has come near!”

Repentance is a turning from sin & embracing a whole new “Kingdom mindset”

““Kingdom” indicates that God is about to do a big world event and not just a big individual event – a cosmic thing and not just a heart thing. What happens when God comes is not going to be grapeshot; it is going to be nuclear, a kind of explosion, a reshaping of the earth.” ... “A kingdom is coming when God comes.” Frederick Dale Bruner

We don’t bring the kingdom by our turning; we experience the kingdom’s coming, *“either blessedly by going to our knees or banefully by turning our backs.” Dale Bruner*

2. The Practice of Repentance: Confession of sins (3:6)

Remedy for sin, not in denial, explaining away, or blaming – honest admission & confession

“People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13)

Psalm 32:1-5 *“When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away...”*

Illustration: Film – “Dead Man Walking” – the power of confession

3. The Sign of Repentance: Baptism (3:6)

Baptism in Hebrew life:

- Cleansing ritual in order to enter the temple
- An entry requirement for foreigners/gentiles to become a convert to Judaism

“Jesus is always for the last, the lost, the least, the little & the nearly dead.”

4. The Proof of Repentance: Change in the way you live (3:8)

All Need to Repent (3:7-9) - Even those who seem least likely to need repentance

“Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.” (3:8)

Arrival of the kingdom of God in our lives will bring real spiritual life that produces change

5. The Journey of Repentance: Only the beginning (3:11)

“Even John’s magnificent ministry cannot remove our main problem (sin) or impart our main resource (the Spirit).”

Repenting is more than turning around, it’s what you turn toward that matters most: Jesus