



Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 33:1-19 – New Testament Reading: Acts 19:1-23

**Behold the King
“The Results of Repentance”
Matthew 3:7-12**

The goal of Matthew’s gospel is to prove to his Jewish readers that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior sent from God, and the King for which Israel longed.

- In the first chapter – Matthew proved Jesus was the King by His miraculous birth, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah, and by tracing His royal lineage through David and back to Abram.
- In the second chapter – Matthew proved Jesus was the King by the behavior of the Magi who traveled from Persia to worship Him, and King Herod, who feared Jesus so much, he had all the baby boys born at the same time Jesus was born to be slaughtered.
- In the third chapter – Matthew proved Jesus was the King by the way He was “announced” – Jesus was given the royal “herald” as a King by John the Baptist.

Brief Biography of John the Baptist:

- Miraculously born to devout parents who had forsaken the false religion of Jerusalem and decided to live among the Essenes in the Judean desert.
- Followed the example of Samson and Samuel in taking the Nazarite vow to let his hair grow, to abstain from partaking any intoxicating beverage, and to refrain from touching the dead.
- Adopted the lifestyle of Elijah, wearing a cloak made of camel's hair held up by a leather belt, and eating off of the land, including wild honey and locusts.
- Came forth with the message of "repentance"; calling people to prepare their hearts for the coming of the King.
- Fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3-5 that said, before the coming of the King, a *"voice would be crying in the wilderness; prepare ye the way of the Lord."*

1. John's Requirement of Repentance – Matthew 3:5-7 – Vs. 5-6 – *"Then went out to him Jerusalem, and Judea and the region around Jordan and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."*

Multiple thousands of people made the 30-mile trip from Jerusalem to Bethabara to be baptized by John as the outward evidence of their inward desire to prepare their hearts for the arrival of the King.

- John's baptism was not a baptism of conversion but of preparation. Once they received Jesus as the Christ, they would need to follow Him in believer's baptism.
- Baptism was not an initiation to a denomination but an outward manifestation of an inward transformation.
- John's message of repentance was illustrated by his life.
- Thousands of people purified their hearts of all known sin in preparation for the coming of the Christ.

2. John's Rebuke of the Religionists – Matthew 3:7-10 – Vs. 7 – *"When he saw the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

Because of the difference in their understanding of repentance, the Pharisees and Sadducees were skeptical about what John was preaching, but John was also doubtful about their request to be baptized for the repentance of their sin.

There were four major "concepts" of Judaism in that day:

Pharisees	Sadducees	Essenes	Zealots
Pious separatists who wanted to maintain their Jewish heritage.	Willing to compromise with the culture if it	True believers who left Jerusalem and	Revolutionary patriots whose desire was to overthrow the Roman

	assured them of wealth and power.	developed communes in the Judean desert.	government by whatever means necessary.
Lost their piety and became legalists, condemning those who didn't agree with them.	Operated the Temple Franchises; making profit off of fellow Jews who came to the Temple for worship.	Part of the group that discovered what became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.	Tried to enlist Jesus into their group but failed. However, Jesus was charged with insurrection.
Received Jesus' greatest condemnation.	Jesus ran them out of the Temple, calling them a den of thieves.	The first to hear John the Baptist and to believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ.	Tried but failed to overthrow the Roman government in AD 73.
Believed in and lived for the resurrection	Did not believe in the resurrection or eternal life.	Welcomed those Jews who became Christians	Committed mass suicide rather than to be captured by the Romans.
Accepted the Old Testament but equated Oral Tradition	Accepted the Old Testament, but loyal to the Pentateuch. No Oral Tradition	Preserved the Scriptures for the next generation.	N/A
God gave man a free will, but He oversees it to achieve His will.	God gave man a free will and does not interfere with man's life choices	God decreed it all; man has no choice in the matter at all.	N/A

3. John's Results of Repentance – Matthew 3:7-12 – Vs. 8 – “Bring forth the fruits meet for repentance.”

The evidence John was looking for to prove they had truly repented was a transformed life that resulted in: (Luke 3)

- The “fruits” of repentance – a change of heart.
- The “works” of repentance – a change of life.

Repentance is not required for salvation; it is the essential evidence of salvation. Unless there is evidence of genuine repentance before a person is baptized, not only will their baptism not mean much to them, but the full meaning and purpose of baptism is lost for the Church and Christianity.

Cheap Grace

“The preaching of forgiveness without repentance, baptism without discipline and communion without confession: a grace without discipleship – i.e., a grace without repentance.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

- The chief reason for the weakness of today's church is the preaching of the benefits of Christianity without the full cost of true discipleship.

- Many who claim the name of Christ are unrepentant in their hearts, which may prove they have not surrendered their lives unto the Lordship of Christ.
- The only way to prepare our hearts for the imminent rapture of the Church and the return of Jesus Christ is to live in the constant repentance of our sins – to keep short accounts with God, and to live at peace with all men.
- Should the Lord call us home today, either by our death or by the rapture, would He be able to gather “fruit” from the tree of our salvation, or would He thrust His ax to the root, because it failed to produce what He planted?