

Great Stories of the Bible - 04/24/22

The Ministry of John The Baptist

TEXT- Matthew 3:1-2

INTRO – 400 years of no prophet. He was a great man.

I. His Birth

A. Godly parents

Luke 1:5-6 *There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*

B. A miracle birth

Luke 1:7 *And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.*

Luke 1:11-14 *And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.*

C. Filled with the Holy Ghost from conception

Luke 1:5 *For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.*

D. His purpose was to prepare the way of the Lord

Luke 1:17 *And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*

II. His Ministry

A. His ministry was in obscurity

Luke 3:4 *As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying **in the wilderness**, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

Isaiah 40:3-5 *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and*

the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

B. His message - Repentance

Matthew 3:1-6 *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, **Repent** ye: for **the kingdom of heaven** is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*

Acts 19:4 *Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*

The Kingdom of Heaven -

The phrase, kingdom of heaven (lit. of the heavens), is peculiar to Matthew and signifies the Messianic earth rule of Jesus Christ, the Son of David. It is called the kingdom of the heavens because it is the rule of the heavens over the earth [Mat 6:10](#) The phrase is derived from Daniel, where it is defined; [Dan 2:34-36](#); [Dan 2:44](#); [Dan 7:23-27](#) as the kingdom which the God of heaven will set up after the destruction by "the stone cut out without hands," of the Gentile world-system.

The kingdom of heaven has three aspects in Matthew:

- "at hand" from the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist [Mat 3:2](#) to the virtual rejection of the King,
- in seven "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," to be fulfilled during the present age [Mat 13:1-52](#)
- the prophetic aspect--the kingdom to be set up after the return of the King in glory.

C. His humility – The first law of discipleship

2 Corinthians 4:5 *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

1. He preached in the wilderness

Luke 3:4 *The voice of one crying **in the wilderness**, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

Matthew 3:1 *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,*

2. His clothes and food were crude

And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

3. He recognized his limited role

John 3:30 *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

4. The friend of the bridegroom

the friend of the bridegroom. His office is to bring groom and bride together.

D. His boldness

Luke 1:17 *And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

1. He rebuked the religious leaders

Matthew 3:7-10 *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

2. He rebuked the political ruler

Luke 3:19-20 *But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.*

3. He rebuked sin and called all men to repentance

Acts 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*

E. He pointed men to Christ

John 1:29 *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

John 1:32-34 *And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

III. His Legacy

A. Jesus commendation

Matthew 11:11 *Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

B. His martyrdom

Matthew 14:3-5 *For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.*

Matthew 14:10 *And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.*

CONCL – From John we learn the importance of boldly pointing men to Christ