

THE KING APPROACHES  
EBC - May 20, 2012 (pm)

**A. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Gospel of Matthew Is Referred to as the “*Royal Gospel*” Because It Presents KING JESUS AND HIS KINGDOM
  - a. Concerning King Jesus Matthew Informs Us
    - 1) **2:2** - Wise Men came inquiring - “*where is he who has been born King of the Jews?*”
    - 2) **27** - While foolish men rejected Him
      - 11** - Pilate asks - “*Are you king of the Jews?*”
      - 29** - Soldiers mocked him - “*Hail, King of the Jews!*”
      - 37** - His cross bore His charge - “*This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.*”
      - 42** - Crowd taunted Him - “*He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe him*”
    - 3) But a King He Is - King who says
      - 21:5** - daughter of Zion - “*Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.*”
      - 25:34** - believers - “*Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*
      - 22:13** - concerning pretenders - “*Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness*”
      - 25:40** - “*Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.*”
  - b. Proper for a King to have a herald who runs before and announces the King’s approach
    - 1) John Baptist was that herald
    - 2) He cried in the wilderness - “**Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight**”
2. Chapter Three of Matthew Transitions From the Birth to the Public Ministry of King Jesus
  - a. **Chapter 2** - ends with Jesus’ family moving to Nazareth
  - b. **Chapter 3** - begins “**In Those Days**”
  - c. **3:1** - records a 28 year gap
    - 1) Gap covers childhood, teenage years and young adulthood of Jesus
    - 2) Alexander McLaren says, “*Matthew leaps, as it were, into the arena full grown and full armed.*”
  - d. **Chapter 3** - records two major events
    - 1) **vs 1-12** - John Baptist’s preparatory ministry
    - 2) **vs 13-17** - Baptism of Jesus

3. Note Importance of John Baptist's Ministry

a. All the gospels begin differently BUT dovetail in ministry of John Baptist

- 1) Matthew - begins with genealogy of Jesus - progresses to birth of Jesus - flight to Egypt - return to Nazareth - MINISTRY OF JOHN BAPTIST ..... **Mt 3:1**
- 2) Mark begins with MINISTRY OF JOHN BAPTIST ..... **Mk 1:1-4**
- 3) Luke begins with conceptions of John Baptist & Jesus - visit of Mary & Elizabeth - births of John & Jesus - boyhood of Jesus - MINISTRY OF JOHN BAPTIST **Lu 3:2-3**
- 4) John begins with great declaration of Jesus' divine nature - progresses directly into the MINISTRY OF JOHN BAPTIST ..... **Jn 1:6-8**

b. Clearly - God would have us note the importance of the ministry of John Baptist

c. Concerning John Baptist - Lord Jesus said

**Matthew 11:11 - Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.**

d. Dr. S. Lewis Johnson wrote about John Baptist

*John was a rugged, stern John Knox kind of character, who thundered out the way of the Lord to a stiff-necked generation. I do not think that any true preacher of the word of God would have relished the task that John the Baptist was given . . . Campbell Morgan . . . has said that the ministry of John the Baptist was attractive because all of Jerusalem and Judea and the region round about the Jordan went out to him. His ministry was convictive because they were baptized by him and confessed their sins as they were baptized, and it was invective because he did not hesitate to say to that generation of Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned thee to flee from the wrath to come?"*

e. Dr Johnson further notes

*John the Baptist was a voice and not an echo. He was an individual who did not hesitate to say precisely what God gave him to say, and he did not say what he said making it dependent upon the attitudes of those to whom he was sent by God. He was truly a voice. He was not an echo.*

**B. TEXT SURVEYED**

1. Concerning John Baptist We Are Told

- a. **vs 1 - Where he preached - "in the wilderness of Judea"** - - Hendriksen refers to as - *"rolling bad lands . . . a desolation, a vast undulating expanse of barren chalky soil covered with pebbles, broken stones and rocks"* (196)
- b. **vs 2 - What he preached** - - **"Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"**
  - 1) **Vs 2** - has been called
    - A. T. Robertson - *"hopeless mistranslation"*
    - Broadus - *"worst translation in the N.T."*

- 2) Hendriksen says not as bad as all that BUT it does lack clarity & *repentance* would be better translated “*CONVERTED*”
  - Call is for an earnest sorrow & turning from sin
  - AND fruit bearing
- 3) John is declaring
  - Inauguration of the King
  - Judgment & end of a dead religion (Judaism)
  - New beginning of life - a baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire
- c. **vs 3** - Who he was - “*he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah*”
  - 1) Verse referred to is **Isa 40:3-5**
  - 2) Matthew’s use of OT prophecies SHOWS that they were primarily about Christ, His Church & kingdom & AND NOT Israel
- d. **vs 4** - How he lived & looked - “**Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.**”
  - 1) Johnny Cash - *Man In Black*

*Well, you wonder why I always dress in black - Why you never see bright colors on my back - - And why does my appearance seem to have a somber tone - - Well, there's a reason for the things that I have on*

- 2) John Baptist - **WAS A REASON HE LOOKED & LIVED AS HE DID**
  - Was not a delicate man BUT a rugged man with a rugged message
  - His dress & message were a protest against frivolity, carelessness, false security & a warning of pending judgment
- e. **vs 5-6** - Impact of his ministry
  - 1) Everyone understood he was a prophet (Mt 21:26)
  - 2) Great numbers of people heard - repented & were baptized
  - 3) Apparently religious elite were concerned & curious
- 2. **Vs 7-10** - John’s Encounter With Pharisees & Sadducees
  - a. **vs 7** - Calls them brood of vipers - had to be shocking to these men
    - 1) In area were small but poisonous snakes
      - One could be easily mistaken for a limb
      - Person reach for it & suddenly it would strike
    - 2) These men were supposedly religious BUT John saw them for what they were - snakes
      - Appear to be one thing - religious
      - BUT they are something else
  - b. **vs 8-9** - Calls them to genuine repentance
    - 1) Exhorts them to bear true fruit of repentance
    - 2) Reveals their arrogant presumption
  - c. **vs 10** - Warns of national danger - danger of Judaism

3. **Vs 11-12** - Preaches Christ

- a. Person of Christ - mightier, nobler
- b. Ministry of Christ - Greater - life-giving
- c. Judgement of Christ the King - preparing - exhaustive & without remedy

**C. APPLICATION**

1. Understanding John's Call to Prepare the Way for the Lord - Dr Johnson notes

*There were a few surfaced and artificially prepared roads, but their roads, generally speaking, were the roads of kings, and prepared for the coming of kings to villages and cities. They were originally built for the use of the king, and they were called "the king's highways." Now that is the background of this word in the third chapter, "PREPARE YE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT." John regarded his ministry as a ministry of preparation for the coming of the King, and he calls upon the peoples to make ready the highway because the King is soon to come.*

2. Understanding John's Ministry

- a. His ministry and calling unique
- b. He was a man with a burden
- c. He was a man under authority who realized the glory, superiority & rightful position of King Jesus
- d. He was anticipating the coming of the King
- e. He lived a life and declared a message out of step with his culture

**THERE WAS ONLY ONE JOHN BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY  
THERE IS ONLY ONE KING JESUS  
AND LIKE JOHN - WE ARE TO BE HIS HERALDS!**

3. Sharing John's Passion & Calling

- a. We too have a calling - work worthy of our calling
- b. We too are to have a burden - for the glory of Christ & salvation of people
- c. We too are under authority - called upon to declare to the world the authority of Christ by our submission to His word
- d. We too are to have a ministry of preparation & anticipation