

# Matthew 3

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] to Matthew chapter 3, I want you to see the way prepared for the king. The way prepared. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask you to join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God found in Matthew chapter 3. And we will read it in its entirety and then we will pray. It says, Now in those days, John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the Lord. Make his path straight.

Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem was going out to him and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore, bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father, for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. The axe is already laid at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance. But he who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor. And he will gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan, coming to John to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent him, saying, I have need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me? But Jesus answering said to him, Permit it at this time, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on him. And behold, a voice out of the heavens said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this morning, and Lord, we thank you for gathering together. We thank you for the awesome opportunity of worshiping with brothers and sisters in Christ, but Lord, we thank you more for the chance we have of reading your word. And Lord, we pray as we have heard it read, and we have seen it. Lord, now that you would speak to us. We pray that it would be your voice that is heard. It is not the voice, the opinions, or the thoughts of man, but it would be the very word of God that pricks our heart and touches our mind. We pray that through it we would be drawn closer to you, and you would be glorified and honored through all that we do and all that we are, and we give you the praise in advance. It's in Jesus Christ's name we pray. Amen. You may be seated.

We see this morning in the third chapter of Matthew, the way being prepared for this appearance or this arrival of the King. We know that the King has come through very unlikely of families, at least unlikely by all of our thoughts and all of our considerations, but intentionally chosen by Lord God Himself. We see that the King has come in such a supernatural manner with His virgin birth. We've seen that there has been the obedience of His earthly father, Joseph, through all the dreams and revelations.

As a matter of fact, after this, Joseph falls off. We don't read anything of him anymore in Matthew. We see that he has fulfilled everything God has asked him to do. He has been obedient to the point of bringing Him back, and now Matthew goes ahead some 30 some odd years. He jumps ahead because we're told in the other gospel. When Jesus presents Himself publicly, He was about 30 years old. Now, we can't say that He is emphatically 30 years old. Some think that maybe He was somewhere between the age of 25 and 30, because anything over 25 and Jewish reckoning most of the time was referred to in round whole numbers around 30 years old. So we know that Matthew is now jumping ahead in time, and He is bringing us to this place where Jesus is going to be publicly

presented. And before He is publicly presented, though, the way is prepared, and He is going to have the forerunner go before Him. All of these things spoken of, all of these things talked about, they are, they coincide with the other gospel accounts. They're all pointing to this one who shows up and now is here declaring, here is the King. We can read of the conception and the birth of John the Baptist and the gospel of Luke, and we can read there and see how things happen. And we know that the very first thing that God did when He broke over 400 years of silence was that He sent the angel to speak to Zacharias in the temple. And we have seen that passage before, that Zacharias is in the temple and he's offering up the incense, which is a symbol of the prayers ascending to the throne room of heaven. And the angel appears to Him and tells Him that his wife Elizabeth will conceive and have a child. Now, we know that this one is John the Baptist. This is a preparatory work that has taken place some 30 years prior to what we read, what we see here.

[ 5 : 16 ] But what we are seeing is now the way is opening up. Many people believe because as little as we know about Jesus, we know even less about John the Baptist, right? We know even less about John the Baptist, but he is one that Jesus refers to as there has been none greater born of women than John the Baptist. None greater born of women on the earth other than John the Baptist. He is referred to as a great man by Jesus Himself, and we know so little of Him. One thing that many people believe is that John kind of went into the wilderness for a while, basically because of what he's eating and what he's wearing, to a community referred to as the Essenes of that day. And those were people who lived kind of a monastic lifestyle, and they separated themselves. And all of a sudden, he shows up on the scene. He had a very particular purpose and a very particular reason for being there, and it was to prepare the hearts and minds of people for the arrival of the King. And that's where we're at this morning. All of that backstory, all of that background to get us to this place.

The first thing I want you to notice is the prophet's appearance. The prophet's appearance. John the Baptist is the last of the Old Testament prophets. You say, well, pastor, we're not reading this in the Old Testament. This is a New Testament book, and you are exactly right. But the last one to come in the office with the position of what we would refer to as the Old Testament prophets would be John the Baptist, who is coming forth and heralding a message of something that is about to take place, something that is about to be. He is forth-telling, not fore-telling. He's not telling future events.

He is forth-telling what God is about to do, and that really is the role and the responsibility of the prophets throughout the Old Testament to tell forth what God has said, right? To proclaim publicly what God had revealed to them privately. And here we see that his appearance comes at just the right time because Matthew writes for us, moved by the Spirit of God. Now, in those days, John the Baptist came.

That amazes us, and I know that we read it, and we kind of take it lightly, and we don't really give it the weight that it needs to be, but just slow down and think about this for just a moment. Now, in those days, John the Baptist came. See, humanly speaking, John could have come at any time. Humanly speaking, John could have decided at any time he had lived in the wilderness long enough. As a matter of fact, it wasn't a very pleasant place to live. He could have, humanly speaking, said, you know what? I've been wild honey and locusts long enough. It's time to go dwell in the city a little bit. Humanly speaking, John could have made a decision to show up at any given moment.

[ 7 : 55 ] But according to the divine plan, according to the hand of God upon him, the Bible says, now in those days he came. What amazes me as we study scripture, and what amazes me even when we look throughout history, because the Bible says that Jesus came forth in the right time. That God has a plan and a purpose and a timetable on which he operates. It is not coincidental that at the exact moment when Jesus is about to go public, that John the Baptist makes his appearance and begins to proclaim the soon coming of the kingdom of heaven, or as the other gospel accounts refer to it, as the kingdom of God. What we need to understand is that God always has his man. Even in the quietest of moments, even in the darkest of days, even in the most despairing of times, when things did not seem to be right or even fitting historically, socially, or even religiously, in those days John the Baptist came.

At the right time, according to God's timetable, according to the perfect planning and purposes of God. Now, this does not strike us as coincidental if we stop and pay attention to it. In particular, if we understand the fact that before the foundations of the world were laid, God had already

determined to take on flesh, dwell among men, and to die the sacrificial death. That before God had even created man, that before God had ever seen man, what we would say seen man fall, God already had a plan of restoration in the works, so to say. Because the Bible refers to Jesus as the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. That is, God knew what he was doing before he ever said, let there be light.

God knew what he was doing long before he ever created the heavens and the earth. God knew what he was doing long before he ever fashioned Adam out of the dust of the ground, and it formed in a complicated manner Eve out of the rib or the bone of Adam. Long before he did that, God had a plan and a purpose. And part of that plan and purpose was that in those days, John the Baptist would come.

That at the right time, this prophet would show up. And look at what it says. Matthew is always pointing to the prophetic fulfillment of the word of God. Now, I need to tell you this because we have said this in other places. Much of what Matthew points to has a partial fulfillment in Old Testament theology or Old Testament history. This verse that he cites here, it says, for this is the one.

This is the one referred to by Isaiah, the prophet, where he says, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord, make his path straight. Now, if you go to the book of Isaiah, or not let me say if, when you go to the book of Isaiah, and when you read the book of Isaiah, and you see this prophecy in Isaiah, and then you continue reading the rest of that chapter in Isaiah, you will see that Isaiah is referring to the coming back to Jerusalem of the Babylonian exiles.

[11:07] What Isaiah is speaking about is that the people in exile in Babylon are going to come back and be restored in Jerusalem. Now, that happened when Cyrus issued a decree, right? You remember that from the book of Ezra and the book of Nehemiah and all those things, and the people went back. So, some people would say that prophecy has already been fulfilled. Matthew says, now, this is the true one. This is the real one. Because God is not limited to only operate in one particular way. God is not limited. God, at the same time, can proclaim that the Babylonian exiles are going back to Jerusalem, and also proclaim somebody's going to go ahead of the true king that's going to really bring man out of captivity.

Because, see, there's more to the story than just Babylon. There's people being enslaved against their will. There's people being held captive by their choice. There's people being held captive by their sins. There's people being held captive by their rebellion. And there's God setting them free. And what we see is the prophet's appearance at the right time. Now, let's just stop and bring an application here. Because if God was that concerned about John the Baptist living in the wilderness, feasting on locusts and wild honey, dressed like Elijah, wearing camel's hair and a leather belt, if God was that concerned about him and making sure he lived at the right time, he's also that concerned about you and making sure you live at the right time.

Because just as John the Baptist showed up in history at the right time, so you too showed up in history at just the right time. Which means there's a reason. You say, well, God hasn't called me to be a prophet. Remember how I said, Jesus said, no man born of a woman is greater than John in the earth, right? But he also, let's bring the rest of that verse of fulfillment, but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. So you don't have to be a big man in heaven to be greater than John. You can be, as I said, I'd be content to be the street sweeper of the streets of gold. I'll sweep the streets and live in a broom closet. I'll be the smallest one in heaven because that says I'm greater than the man that's ever been born on earth. So any that is a member that has his residence or his occupation or any who can say, I am a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, the Bible says is greater than the greatest of those born of women on this earth. And God's concern about when and where and the time they dwell is just as important as when John the Baptist showed up. You live, let me say it friend, you and I live at just the right time. You say, well, I don't know. I can think of some other times in history I would like to live, or I could think of better days that I could have went back to. You notice we always talk about the good old days that have went beyond and the good old days that were in the past. And the more I study history, not everything was good back then.

[14:09] And the good old days of the past have got us to troubling days of the present. And the troubling days of the present are going to lead to the worst days in the future. But God put us at the right time. This is where he's put us to show up now. So we see here the prophet's appearance. Number two, when this prophet comes and he begins to prepare the way, we see the people

awakened. We see the people are shaken. They are awakened. Remember, there has been 400 plus years of silence before John the Baptist shows up. The last word from God is the book of Malachi. What does Malachi proclaim? The very final chapters of Malachi speaks of one who would come preparing the way. So the very last thing God said in Malachi is the very first thing he says in the New Testament, right? The very last thing he says in Malachi is one is coming to prepare the way of the Lord, to turn the hearts back to the hearts of the children back to their fathers, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children. There's one coming who awaken the hearts of men and women. There is one coming preparing the way for the coming king.

What is the very first thing God does when he breaks that 400 plus years of silence? John the Baptist shows up and he starts waking people up. God's just continuing his purposes. He's continuing his plans. There is a 400 year gap in history between the book of Malachi and the opening pages of the New Testament. Now we know things went historically. We know that things happened throughout that time frame.

We know there are a lot of different changes in world empires. I mean we read of nothing of Alexander the Great. We read of nothing of the rise of the Roman Empire. We read of nothing of the Maccabean Revolt. We don't read anything of the ascension of King Herod through all of his marriages and all of those plans.

You can read it in other works but the Bible has just this moment of silence because God is silent. He's not proclaiming anything. He's not saying anything new. He's not telling the people and all of these things are going on and generation after generation and after generation is more and this is the world as they know it.

And all of a sudden John the Baptist shows up. He begins to shake things up. Look at what it says. Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist and his food was locusts and wild honey which just simply means as many people say if John showed up in most churches he'd be asked to leave.

[ 16 : 30 ] I mean let's just be real about it. Right? Not a very popular guy. If the message John preached when he came was preached in most pulpits he would be asked to leave.

I mean if he called the church folks brood of vipers. If he pointed to the ruling powers and told them the problems they were doing wrong. I mean if he preached the sermons he preached he would be asked to leave.

So it's not his appearance that is drawing people in. Right? It's not his likability. He's not a man of charisma. He's not a man of charm.

If Jesus is coming as the Messiah in a bruised reed he will not break. That means he's coming in gentle and lowliness. John does not come with gentleness.

Right? John does not come with ease. John does not come with patience. John has a very short ministry window. Some believe about six months.

[ 17 : 28 ] And in those six months he turns the world upside down and loses his head. But he has a very particular purpose. And look at what it says. Then Jerusalem was going out to him and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan.

What does it say? People were being drawn. People were being drawn. Now they're not being drawn by what he's wearing. They're probably not being drawn by what he's saying. They're not being drawn by what he's offering them. He's asking them to come out of the cities.

And they're coming out to the wilderness. And they're going to him around the Jordan River. They're going to him in these desolate forgotten places. And they're showing up. And he's doing something in particular here. He says they're drawn to him. They're all going.

And they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River. Baptism is not something new and unique to the Christian faith. Right? Baptism is not even new and unique to Jewish faith. But it is something that the Jews practice when people would convert to Judaism.

So if there was a Gentile or a non-Jewish person who was born. And they said, well, you know what? I believe in the teachings of Judaism. I believe in the laws and the regulations. And I want to live as a Jew though I am a Gentile.

[ 18 : 31 ] Then they would be baptized. And they would, from that moment on, that was a symbol of them showing. I am following this way. And that's what they were doing. But John the Baptist came and he's offering baptism.

Baptisms were usually done around synagogues or in temples. And he's at the Jordan River. And people are coming. It says, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. Look at this. Here's the awakening.

As they confess their sins. As they confess their sins. Now, this is not salvation. Just in case anyone ever tells you that baptism saves you.

Notice right here. John's not saying he's saving anybody. What's going on. Is the people are going forward and being baptized to say that they agree with what John is saying.

And with what John is saying is that we are all sinful people. John is proclaiming to them their sin nature. And to demonstrate their agreement with that message.

[ 19 : 36 ] They go and are baptized by him because it says they are confessing their sins. The wording is there. They are confessing the fact that they are sinners.

And that baptism was a public confession of the reality that I am a sinner. And this is why I say that people were awakened.

Because after 400 years of silence, the first thing God does is he awakens the sin nature inside of people.

He shows them their need. He shows them their need. Those of you that went through pre-marriage counseling with me. Those of you who have heard me preach through the Old Testament know that probably one of my favorite passages as it relates to marriage, and even as it relates to the Old Testament, is the early pages of Genesis.

And you have the Genesis account in Genesis 1 where God creates everything and in Genesis 2. And then you have this account where there's Adam in the garden.

[ 20 : 40 ] Adam's in paradise. I mean, literally, he's just there hanging out in paradise, right? And then God brings all the animals to Adam and he lets Adam name all the animals. I mean, that's really cool. That's really fitting, too, because God told Adam that he was to rule over creation.

And part of rulership is naming. So if you name it, you rule it in biblical theology, right? So if I proclaim its name, that means I have rulership over it. And since God told Adam he was going to rule, he brings all the animals before Adam.

In our mind, it seems kind of confusing. Like, oh, yeah, like that really ever happened. Well, it did. The Bible says it did, and I believe it. Now, if you don't want to believe it, that's up to you, but I believe it. It says so, I think so, I believe so, and I live like it so.

So, there, okay? So anyway, they all come before him, and Adam starts naming them. He starts naming them. He starts naming them. Like, oh, that's this. That's this. That's this. And then it says that they were coming in all these droves.

And here's the whole point to it. The reason God let him name them is because, but there was no helper found for Adam. And now all of a sudden, Adam has this void he didn't have before.

[ 21 : 41 ] I mean, think of, okay, wives don't laugh too hard. Mothers of boys don't laugh too hard. Think of a young man put in paradise and told he could just run a while. Right?

Not hindered by clothes. Not hindered by shoes. Not hindered by anything. Don't want to give you a bad visual here. No shame. No guilt. Live in paradise. Have fun. Rule over creation.

That guy would probably be content for a long time. Until God created a need. And the way God created a need is he showed him he couldn't do it alone.

And the way he showed him he couldn't do it alone is he brought everything before him. And it says, and there was no helper found suitable for Adam. And now all of a sudden, Adam realizes I'm lacking something. Paradise isn't paradise without a helpmate.

Right? Paradise isn't good without someone to complete me. Paradise isn't good just because I can, I'm not hindered by sin. I'm not hindered by shame. I'm not hindered by any of these things. I need something else.

[ 22 : 37 ] And once God creates that need, then it says God puts him asleep. And then he takes his rib. And he makes Eve. And then he brings Eve and says, and then Adam goes, that's what I needed right there. Right? I needed her.

And he said, I didn't know that, but that's what I needed. So what we find, because God shows this at the very beginning, God creates the need before he provides the solution. Because until you know you need it, you're not looking for it.

And what John the Baptist did is he awakened the people to their need for forgiveness. If you never hear the reality that you, at the very core of your being, have a sin nature, if a prophet has never

arisen, not only in your life, but in your great, great, great grandparents' life, and no one has ever talked to you about the soon coming judgment of God, and if no one has declared to you the sin nature that you inherited from your family, you don't know you need anything.

And you're not looking for anything. He awakens the people to the reality of their sin. And they begin to confess their sin.

Because here's something, here's the application we need to get from this. Before the king has his rightful place in our life, we need to know who we are without him. We need to agree with what he says about us before he could ever rule over us.

[ 24 : 08 ] We need to be awakened to our desperate position on our own before we'll ever allow him to dethrone us and set and rule over our lives.

The people were awakened. Third, we see the problem is addressed. Because maybe you say, well, maybe they just need to be a little bit more religious.

Maybe they need to be a little bit more contemporary. Maybe they just need to blend a little bit more with society. Well, we're going to address that problem. Because it says, as John the Baptist is here and the people are coming and they're being baptized, then he looks up and he sees the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

And he looks at them and they're coming to him to be baptized. And he said, well, glory, hallelujah. Well, wait just a moment. Because it did not say that they came proclaiming their sins and professing their sins. They just said, well, if everybody else is doing it, we're going to do it too. Because if anything else, they didn't want anybody to be isolated from them. Because they were really jealous, not in a good way, jealous of their crowds and their multitudes. So they want to make sure they didn't lose their position or lose their authority with this group of people.

[ 25 : 10 ] So they said, well, if so many of these people are doing it, we better join the ranks and we better go along. But one thing we stand amazed at the fact is that the Pharisees and the Sadducees came and John addressed them as one group.

Now, if there were two people who did not get along in the time of Christ, it would be the Pharisees and the Sadducees. As a matter of fact, their theology was so different from one another that they often fought one another and they wanted nothing to do with each other.

The only times we find them not only in biblical terminology but also in history getting along is at the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. Anytime they are opposing Christ, they come together, which means the enemy will unite with anybody to oppose the true king, right?

But we see here the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Now, the Pharisees show up. The Pharisees are the religious elite. I mean, they are the law-keeping, law-abiding, law-writing, law-interpreting people.

If you want to talk about conservatives, it's the Pharisees. By the way, these are the only religious groups still in existence today. There are still Pharisees today. That would be your true, strict Jewish individuals.

[ 26 : 16 ] Because the Pharisees were concerned about doing everything right. I mean, don't carry anything over the weight of a coffee cup more than a certain amount of steps on the Sabbath. Make sure you don't do any work on the Sabbath.

Make sure you don't run your hand through a head of grain and eat because that's called reaping on the Sabbath. Make sure you wash the hands every time you come in. Make sure you do everything right.

I mean, they were legalistic. They took ten commandments and made 634 laws. And they had a way of breaking it down. Now, some of us know some churches like that, right? Can take ten commandments and make 6,000 laws and regulations and rules we need to keep by.

Because man likes to put a check next to a box. I mean, let's just be honest. You would rather someone tell you what to do and what not to do rather than having to live in relationship with the Savior and just trusting Him. It's so much easier if somebody just give me a checklist and I can check it, check it, check it, check it, check it, and I feel good about myself.

And Christ doesn't do that. He just says, live with me. But the Pharisees, they were religious. They were conservative.

[ 27 : 18 ] And they were those who worked in the temple. Now, the Sadducees are the opposite end of that spectrum. They were contemporary. They were liberal. They were a little bit more relaxed.

So much more relaxed. They didn't believe in angels. They didn't believe in demons. And they didn't believe in hell. And they didn't believe in the resurrection. They literally believed you live your best life now. And if you want to live your best life now, you become friends of the Romans who rule over us.

You buy your way into the high priesthood. By the way, Sadducees earned the position of the high priesthood during the times of Christ because they had more money. And the reason they had more money than the Pharisees is because when in Rome, do as the Romans, right?

So they traded with the Romans. And they lived with the Romans. They would be what we call loose theology. They're like, we love Jesus. We love God. We love the law. We love that. But you know what? It doesn't have to affect everything we do every day.

They were very liberal. They didn't have all these rules and regulations. It was a come as you are, stay as you are theology. Yeah, do business, live your life, do it good, make a lot of money, buy a good position.

[ 28 : 18 ] It's okay. Fit God in where you can. Use Him when He sees your advantage. We got the Pharisees, the legalists. And we have the Sadducees, the liberals. And everywhere in between.

What's good here is this representation is every religion you can ever think of and every religious exercise you can ever do fits somewhere between these two. And John the Baptist addresses them as one.

He says, you brood of vipers. So it doesn't matter if you're a legalist, super hyper conservative, or if you're hyper liberal. You brood of vipers.

See, what he is doing is he's addressing the true problem. It's not what you do. It's who you are.

He said, you brood of vipers. Do not say that we are descendants of Abraham because God can raise up descendants of Abraham out of these stones. Both of them would point back to the Pentateuch. Now they both had different interpretations of the Old Testament.

[ 29 : 22 ] They both had different interpretations of what Abraham was. They both had different interpretations of the law of Moses. The Sadducees didn't do anything after the Pentateuch. They didn't look at the prophets.

They didn't look at any of these things. The Pharisees, they lived there. They loved it. They held on to these things. But both of them would look back, had different interpretations. And they were both resting their security on the fact they were descendants of Abraham.

They were living in a heritage faith, not a personal encounter. The sad reality is that many of our churches today are filled with heritage believers, not personal followers. And what John says is that God can raise up a follower out of a rock.

It's not so important of who our heritage is. It's where we as individuals are. He calls them a brood of vipers. And I know that sounds harsh, but this is a prophet giving a warning, right?

And he's correcting and rebuking. He's doing what he needs to do here. And then he says, you know, get ready. Show fruit that is worthy of repentance. What he's saying is, if you want to be genuine, then genuinely repent from your sins.

[ 30 : 31 ] Confess your sins and live your life on display like you did, right? Don't keep living the same way. And then he makes this striking statement. He says, the ax is already laid to the root. I believe it was Warren Wearsby who said, many of us try to change the fruit when the problem is really at the root.

We see bad fruit and we're too consumed about trying to pick fruit off of the bad tree when reality is the tree just has to be cut down. See, friend, here's the problem. Here's the problem that John the Baptist addresses.

The problem is not the fruit of our lives. It's not those bad things we do. That's the fruit. The things we do, that's the fruit. The problem's not in the fruit.

The core problem is always the root. It's who we are at our very core. Who we are to the depth of our being.

And until the root is right, the fruit will never be right. And that was striking. Shook them to their core.

[ 31 : 42 ] All of this, do you see where we're going now? Preparing the way for the king. Because all of a sudden a prophet has arisen.

I realize I'm a sinner. And I realize my sin is not just the bad things I do. It's who I am to the very core of my being. I can't do anything about my roots. I've yet to see a tree in the field change roots.

I've yet. It is what it is. I've yet to cut down a cedar tree and see an oak tree root at the bottom of it. Because it is what it is.

It's always a root problem. And they're going, how do we change that? Look at what it says.

Because it doesn't stop there.

Then Jesus arrived. Here's the gospel. The good news. Is when these things are made obvious.

[ 32 : 46 ] Then Jesus arrived. When man realizes someone's here with the authority of God telling me things about myself I don't like. That I can't change.

That I have no authority over. That I can't do anything about. And he says if I don't do anything about them. Then I'm going to be cut down and thrown into the unquenchable fire. Then Jesus arrives.

Arise. And we step back. We take a deep breath. And we literally say. Thank the Lord God Almighty.

For his perfect timing. Because then Jesus arrives. And he came from Galilee. At the Jordan.

Coming to John to be baptized by him.

And John has the same response that we would have. I think John and Peter have a lot in common.

Because remember when Jesus is washing the feet of the disciples. Peter says you're not washing my feet. Here we see John saying I'm not baptizing you.

[ 33 : 44 ] And both of them tried to stop what Jesus is doing. I kind of find that humorous a little bit.

Like yeah. Like they really thought they could stop what Jesus was going to do. I think that's humorous until I stop a lot of times. And think about myself. And realize that I too tried to stop what Jesus is doing.

John says I'm not going to baptize you. I'm not going to do it. Do you come to me to be baptized? I need to be baptized by you. And that's a true statement. Because what he's saying is Jesus what's going on here.

Everyone is identifying with the fact that they are sinners. And they are admitting their sin nature.

And therefore they are identifying with my message. And they're being baptized to demonstrate to everybody else they have this sin nature.

And John says you don't have a sin nature. You don't need to do this. And that's true. And Jesus says permit it to be so for us to fulfill all righteousness. Now us includes John the Baptist there right. He says permit it to be so. Now what does that mean? What he's saying is this is exactly what God has told me to do. This is exactly what the Father has told me to do. One thing we need to understand what Jesus is doing here. Jesus is identifying with the people he's come to rescue.

[ 34 : 47 ] Jesus is going to identify himself with the people he's come to rescue. The great news of the gospel is that the king meets the people where they're at.

And he identifies with them. Now does he proclaim he's a sinner? No. But these are sinful people he's coming to reach. So he's going to identify with them. And he's going to show his identity with them.

And his commitment to them through going through baptism. And it says in verse 16. Because now we're looking at the presented king. The fourth one is the presented king.

It says after being baptized. Jesus came up immediately from the water. And behold the heavens were opened. And he that is John the Baptist. Saw the spirit of God descending. As a dove and lighting on him.

And behold a voice out of the heavens said. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

Three times in the gospel accounts do we have heaven itself proclaiming who Jesus is.

[ 35 : 49 ] Here at the Mount of Transfiguration. And in Jerusalem immediately before his death or his betrayal and death. Three times heaven opens up. And gives a bold public declaration that other people hear.

But what we see is the presented king. When the prophet has come. The people have been awakened. And the problem is addressed. When everyone knows the situation they're in.

Then the king is presented. He comes. He follows in baptism. And we don't know. Probably the only ones who saw it were John and Jesus.

The heavens are opened up. The spirit comes down as a dove. And lights upon him. That's just symbolizing God's approval of his ministry. That is the father's approval and union with him in his ministry.

And then there is this bold declaration. One thing you find when you study the Old Testament. Is every time a king is anointed. Some of you are following the reading plan. And you've been going through those great books.

[ 36 : 45 ] First and second kings. You ever notice that every time a new king is anointed. Something happens. Right? Or when somebody wants to become king. Something happens. They anoint him. Or they pour the oil upon his head.

Or they put the crown on his head. And then they stand up. And they proclaim. Here is the king. Right? They make this proclamation. And everybody bows down to worship. Because there is always the herald who announces the king has come.

No one was fit to herald the arrival of the king other than God himself. And the heavens open up. And the father declares. Behold. This is my beloved son.

In whom I will please. He presents the king. We put this together with the other gospel accounts. And John the Baptist begins to fade out.

And he tells them. There is the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Who has come to take away the sin of the world. One thing in particular we see there.

[ 37 : 44 ] When John makes this declaration. That Jesus is the lamb that takes the sin out of the world. He uses the word sin singular. He's not referring to sins.

He's not referring to fruit. Right? He says sin. There is the lamb that takes the root problem out of the world. Because when man is fully prepared.

The king shows up. And man realizes. Here's the one I need. The only question we have to ask ourselves in closing is.

To what extent has God went to prepare me? When I think about my own life. And I think back. About how God drew me to himself.

I think of sleepless nights. I think of restless heart. I think of a restless mind. I think of the word of God penetrating. And I think of. I came to Christ from reading the book of Romans. Okay? I was studying God just so ordained.

[ 38 : 41 ] I was reading through the book of Romans. And man there was all these sleepless nights. And restless mind. Restless heart. And all this anxiety. And this nervousness. And I began to see myself as I really was. And I began to see who I was at the very core of my being.

And then I had this great, great problem. Because if this is who I am at the core of my being. If I, like Paul said. And I said, woe am I. You know. Who will save me from this wretched man that I am? Romans chapter 7. Right? I was just like that. Who can save me from this wretched man I am? And then Paul answers it. But praise be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Because until I realized.

I don't need to just get rid of the fruit. I need to do something about the root. Then Jesus arrives. My prayer is.

That each one of us. Have met the king in that way. That each one of us. Have met the king like that. Not just in passing.

[ 39 : 43 ] But as one that we desperately need. For such a miserable moment. Because he is the one we need. When nothing else will do. Let's pray. Lord I thank you so much.

I thank you for your word. Lord more importantly. I thank you that you have come. At the right time. For the right people. Exactly when we need it.

So we stand amazed at your timing. We stand amazed at your power and presence. I pray you have your way. With each and every one of us. Draw us closer to you for your glory.

And we ask it in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 41 : 57 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 44 : 27 ] Thank you.