

## **Blazing the Trail**

**Matthew 3:1-3** Now in those days John the Baptist \*came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” <sup>3</sup>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 paths straight!’”

Repentance prepares the way for the coming of the Lord. It is a sign of true faith, and it gives us the keys to the kingdom.

**Think about the actual moment of salvation... What are we believing in that moment?**

The same repentance that invites Jesus into our lives also keeps our spirits fit for His Holy Spirit.

Do we practice repenting to man and to God?

**Ecclesiastes 7:20** <sup>20</sup> Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins.

**Matthew 3:4-12** <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; <sup>6</sup> and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

There was only one way to make yourself ready for the coming Messiah and His Kingdom. You had to confess and take responsibility for all the wrong things in your life and submit yourself in humility to a public cleansing.

**So John came preaching...**

**Isaiah 40:3-8** <sup>3</sup> A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> “Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; <sup>5</sup> Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, And all flesh will see *it* together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” <sup>6</sup> A voice says, “Call out.” Then he answered, “What shall I call out?” All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the Lord blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

**Matthew 3:7-12** <sup>7</sup> 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? <sup>8</sup> Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; <sup>9</sup> and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> “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. <sup>12</sup> 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.”

The fire of the Holy Spirit was never just spiritually-charged enthusiasm. It is a literal burning away of sin, uncleanness, illicit desires, impure motives, religious facades, etc.

After the fire has burned away the dross, THEN comes the enthusiasm, the peace, and the joy.

The only universal proof that we are real with God is not our heritage or our reputation, but the FRUIT we bear.

<https://americasbestpics.com/picture/the-holy-spirit-doesn-t-just-make-you-dance-speak-iQNzgt6x8>

God wanted everyone (even the Pharisees) to understand the seriousness of sin and to repent before it was too late.

**Psalms 7:11-12** <sup>11</sup> God is a righteous judge, And a God who has indignation every day. <sup>12</sup> If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready.

**Matthew 3:13-17** <sup>13</sup> Then Jesus \*arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” <sup>15</sup> 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.

All our repentance would be tied forever to the future event this baptism symbolizes: the Cross and the Resurrection.

Jesus did not have sin, but we could not save ourselves, so Jesus agreed to die the sinner's death in our place.

Salvation comes as we agree with God the Holy Spirit about sin, righteousness, and judgment.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** <sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Thankfully, the baptismal picture does not end in a death, but in a resurrection! This new life begins with the Holy Spirit.

<sup>16</sup> 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, <sup>17</sup> and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

As Jesus symbolically rose to new life, the Holy Spirit was poured out on Him and He was affirmed as a Son of God!

**Isaiah 33:14-17** <sup>14</sup> Sinners in Zion are terrified; Trembling has seized the godless. "Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning?" <sup>15</sup> He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity, He who rejects unjust gain And shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe; He who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed And shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; <sup>16</sup> He will dwell on the heights, His refuge will be the impregnable rock; His bread will be given *him*, His water will be sure. <sup>17</sup> Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; They will behold a far-distant land.