

***Intro:***

Main Point of Text: John the Baptist prepares people to receive the redeeming Messiah by preaching repentance.

Sermon Point: To Receive the Redeemer and His Redemption, Repent.

***Move 1: Gospel preachers must be consumed with Christ and His Kingdom.***

Last OT Prophet would prepare the way for the Messiah's coming, and get out of the way:

- Vs. 1. Mal. 3:1-2. No message since Malachi. After 400 years the last prophet before Christ, the final Prophet, is here (Lk. 16:16).
- Vs. 4. Clothes of Elijah (2 Kings 1:8) and of all humble prophets (Zech. 13:4). Rugged clothes for an unrefined, hearty life. Eats simple food. Lives a lonely wilderness life. Rejects lusts of world.
- Like OT prophets, preached to the Church and called out the religious leaders. No respecter of persons (later King Herod). Discerning (vipers). Demanding: repent and be baptized.
- Vs. 11. Isa. 9:6. John was born to prepare the way for his cousin to be his King. His baptism is repentance/symbolic, Christ's is salvation/spiritual. John is humble. John 3:30.
- Ministers must live the message of repentance. So that they will preach it.

***Move 2: Gospel preaching must begin with a call to repent from consuming the kingdom of this world.***

Wilderness the state of world/church. John like all prophets, bring the same message: Hosea 10:12; Jer. 4:3, plough the ground to receive the water. Vss. 1, 3 (Isa. 40:3-4, here Matthew makes the LORD Jesus!), 8-10, 12. Matthew has proven Christ is THE King and He is here. John the Baptist warns He is coming to conquer. He is cleaning house, so come clean before Him. Jesus is laying His axe to the root of His Church to grow a new shoot that will live. Fulfilling Isaiah 11:1-4. AD 70 is drawing close as a foreshadowing of The End! Jesus is sifting through the chaff in His Church (Rev. 1-3). Be ready to be received by Him by receiving Him. How? Repentance. Repent is the message of the Gospel! Acts. 20:21. The preaching of Jesus, His apostles, and His disciples all begin with "Repent". Mal 3:1-2 about the Messenger is followed by vss. 3-4 about the Messiah; and Mal. 4:1-5 (John the Baptist is this Elijah in spirit: see Matthew 11:14; 17:12; Mark 9:13). Preaching must be like Paul's, *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;* (2 Cor. 10:4-5)

***Move 3: The right response to Gospel preaching is to repent of your love for worldly kingdoms.***

Vss. 5-6. They repented. Confessed their sins. Were baptized to be cleansed of their sins. Baptism of repentance. Preparation for Jesus. Holy Spirit must work in your hearts so that you receive Christ there. Repent in Greek: change your mind. In Hebrew, change your direction, turn back. Leave the world. 1 Jn. 2:15-17; Rom. 12:2. For the Messiah to be Emmanuel/Jesus to you, He must be your King.

***Move 4: The wrong response to Gospel preaching is to refuse or fake repentance.***

Vss. 7, 9. Pharisees were observing, not participating. They didn't come to be judged, but to judge. Trusting in their ancestry of Abraham rather than faith like Abraham. Vipers: liars. Jesus will say the same (Mt. 12:34; 23:33; see also Jn. 8:44; Rev. 12:9). They chastised "simpletons" for believing/lecturing belief in Jesus: Jn. 7:49; 9:34. Mt. 11:18: they said John had a devil. Will later kill Jesus and try to kill the message of His resurrection. Mat 21:25ff: won't admit John's baptism is from heaven. Luke 7:29-30: *And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.* Be warned, ... *godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.* (2 Cor. 7:10) Note: repentance not only can be refused, it can be faked. Many can shed tears, few shed their sinful habits. Eph. 2:8-10. Judgment must begin at the house of God. He has given time to repent (Rev. 2:21). He is now cleaning house. Rev 3:19: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.* Jn. 12:31: *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

***Conclusion:***

Christ is threshing, NOW! When He is done it is over. To be received into His Kingdom of Righteousness, receive Him as your Righteous King.

***To Receive the Redeemer and His Redemption, Repent.***