

Matthew 3:1-6 The King's Advance Man (The King and His Kingdom)

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.'"

4 Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him 6 and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

Today we RESUME The King and His Kingdom SERIES

A) Many of us have grown up with a fascination about Kings and Kingdoms

B) King Arthur and his Knights of the round table.

C) The three musketeers – stories set in France during the reign of King Louis 13th

1) How many of you guys as kids pretended to be D'Artagnan?

Then of course there is Robin Hood – and his merry men who seek to counteract the evil of prince John by robbing rich and giving to the poor –

A) While waiting for King Richard the Lion heart to return

B) These stories – captivated our hearts – topics of many GREAT movies

C) Even the fairy tales we learned as kids and passed on to our own

1) Cinderella – Sleeping beauty – Snow White – Little Mermaid { All stories – Kings and Kingdoms

D) AS well as the Block Busters like Star Wars – Kings and kingdoms

But not just fantasy and fiction - History is full of the story of Emperors and Kings and Kingdoms

A) The Bible is full of stories of Kings and Kingdoms – 1,2 Kings and 1,2 Chronicles –

Highlight those stories – King Saul David – Hezekiah – Uzziah

B) Pharaohs of Egypt - Kings of Babylon Nebuchadnezzar – Assyria – and Persia – Darius and Artaxerxes

C) More recent history: Charlemagne, King Tut – Napoleon/ Alexander the great and the various Caesars of Rome

NOW Often times it is the same story just a different stage – different country- Different name and place -

A) A king coming on the scene resorting to brute force and extreme taxation and intimidation

B) to protect HIS OWN personal interest and power.

Bb) Nowhere in any story of a king or kingdom do we read about the ruler himself sacrificing his own greatest treasure simply for the benefit of others.

1) Sure, sacrifices were made. Lives were lost.

C) But it was always toward the aim of preserving power, rather than yielding it.

That is, except for the one true King the Bible presents to us: Jesus the son of God

A) Who left everything and gave up everything – including His own life – when He invaded this planet to RESCUE MAN –

B) MAN had forfeited everything WHEN HE sinned- Given into hands of Satan

1) Satan given the title – the god of this world – the prince and power of the air. – His Kingdom is a kingdom of darkness – marked by rebellion

C) Jesus left His throne in Heaven and came to EARTH to lay hold of what had been forfeited by man – and to invite us to be a part of His Kingdom.

Colossians 1:13,14 ESV "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

D) Transferred – Rescued – taken out of one kingdom and placed into ANOTHER

IN THIS SERIES OF STUDIES: We want to occupy ourselves with answering the questions:

A) What does it mean to be a part of His Kingdom
➤ What should it look like to live as a member of his kingdom on a daily basis?

B) In order to answer those questions we need to understand the characteristics of HIS KINGDOM.

C) Seen thus far – his Kingdom is an upside down Kingdom – In other words It is the opposite of earthly kingdoms

Upside down Kingdom

A) **Unusual Kingdom** - Jesus spoke of it plainly when He spoke to Pilate before the crucifixion: Pilate asked him Plainly are you the King of the Jews

Aa) See that was the accusation: Jesus' enemies saying: He claims to be our King – NOT CAESER: - PILATE IS THAT TRUE: Jesus' response: **“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm” (John 18:36).**

B) Different from this world. – Different realm

C) But that Realm had invaded this: Seeking to influence – this one

1) King Reigning in Hearts – lives

“When His Disciples asked who will be the greatest in this very unusual kingdom,

A) Jesus pulled a child close to Him and replied, **“Whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”**
Humility is a key ingredient

B) Significance, in this unusual kingdom, is connected to service. **He who wishes to be the greatest must become the servant of all!**

C) In His kingdom, power goes to the ones who recognize their weakness and humbly looks to Him.

1) Forgiveness reigns preeminently, and the amount of money given matters less than the heart that offers it,

In our opening studies we saw the upside down nature of the this King and his Kingdom – How He came into the world

A) Born as a Baby – Born in a Manager – born into Poverty – hard working family.

B) And at the end of our Last Wed night study in Matthew chapter 2 we left the King in Nazareth –

1) His family fled to Egypt for several years awaiting for King Herod to die – happened in 4 BC

C) They come back when Jesus is 5-6 yrs old –

1) and get this – don't miss this there is a 25 year gap in time between Chapters 2-3 of the gospel of Matthew

For 25 years Jesus has been living in obscurity – living in a small village called Nazareth – reputation for being a lousy place to grow up.

A) He has worked most of this time in Joseph, his earthly father's carpenter Shop –

B) AND he has been known – NOT A KING NOT AS THE SON OF GOD – but as the carpenters son!

C) And aside from 11 verses in Luke's gospel that describe a time in the life of Jesus when he was 12 years old – he traveled with his family to Jerusalem

1) We know nothing of HIS EARLY LIFE!

D) Jesus the son of God – God in Human flesh – has been living in obscurity for 25 years – **THAT JUST BLOWS MY MIND**

BUT at the age of 30 Jesus puts down his apron, HIS hammer and walks out of the carpenter shop to begin his public ministry –

A) Introduce the world to His Kingdom!

B) Here in Matthew Ch.3 Matthew introduces us to THE KING'S advance man –

1) who signals the beginning of something new W/ these words: **The Kingdom of heaven is at hand!**

C) **The Kings advance man { John the Baptist**

In biblical times when a King, a Prince or a Governor desires to visit his people,

A) a high official is sent out in advance to announce his coming and to make preparation for the proposed visit.

B) The Role of the advance man is to get things ready for the arrival of the King or Governor.

C) That is John's role – Advance man Forerunner

4 Things we want to Consider:

#1 His Appearance

#2 His Background

#3 His Announcement

#4 His Exhortation

#1 His Appearance

A) When you think about a guy like John the Baptist? What words come to your mind

B) Eccentric – Unconventional – Odd - 1st century Hippie

C) Dressed in Camel hair jacket – big leather belt - diet of locust and wild honey –

1) Locust, like big grasshopper – grasshopper legs in his beard

D) He Makes the boys in Duck Dynasty look tame

Political season: Election – city to city

A) Imagine a Political Candidate – sending John the Baptist as His front runner? Spokesperson

B) Interviews on Fox and CNN – Not even Bernie would have picked John the Baptist

1) You want someone who is going to be a good Rep

C) JR. High or High School – liked that girl –

1) You don't send your most geeky friend to go and talk to her for you?

D) Johnny wanted me to tell you he likes you and wants to know if you will go to the Dance with him

1) You pick your coolest friend – her coolest girlfriend hoping she will think you are cool too

TO many people John would seem like an odd Choice – to be the front runner for Jesus!

A) Jesus referred to John the Baptist as the greatest man who ever lived – ever born to women.

B) John understood his place in the Kingdom – His Role –

"Great men have but a few minutes to be great and what makes a person great is their ability to find out what is most important and to focus in on that which is most important." Skip H

C) That is a good description of John the Baptist. He knew what was most important.

1) His role was to point people to Jesus – I need to decrease so he can increase.

#2 His Background

A) John the Baptist was the cousin of Jesus.

B) We know that His mother Mary and John the Baptist's mother Elizabeth were first cousins.

1) That made John the Baptist and Jesus second cousins.

C) No doubt spent time together growing up and they were only a few months apart in age.

1) Wonder if they ever had conversations about the mission?

Skipped rocks – played hide n seek

John the Baptist was also a PK.

A) Now, we know a PK is a Pastor's Kid but in those days a PK was a Priest's Kid

B) John's dad Zacharias was a Priest!

1) He served in the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem.

C) John would be trained to follow in his father's footsteps to join the priesthood and serve in the temple.

D) Priests were trained at a very early age.

1) By age 20, they would often be engaged in some priestly duties

E) by age 30, they were fully engaged in the priesthood, in their functions in Jerusalem in the temple.

But John was a PK gone rogue.

A) He didn't follow the typical protocol that priest would follow. He went out to the desert.

B) Rather than going to Jerusalem, he has Jerusalem come to him.

1) He goes 20, 30 miles out of the way in the wilderness of Judea and he was baptizing people there.

C) All Judea went out to see him

D) After 400 years of silence in Israel – No prophetic voice.

1) John is the voice of God crying in the wilderness!

#3 His Announcement:

A) In verse 1, "He came preaching," and the Greek word there is "to herald," "to announce," "to proclaim,"

B) **The Kingdom of heaven is at Hand!**

C) **The Kingdom of heaven is a popular theme in Matthew's gospel**

1) Matthew uses the term "kingdom of heaven" 32 times; and he is the only gospel writer that ever uses it.

What is the kingdom of heaven?

A) What does John mean by it? Basically, it's an Old Testament concept.

B) The precise phrase, "the kingdom of heaven," is not found in the Old Testament;

1) But the concept is seen.

C) The Hebrew word for kingdom is *malkut* and its Greek counterpart is *basileia*.

1) Both terms primarily mean "rule" or "reign."

D) Both terms have a dynamic or active meaning, and refer to the **exercise of God's power, dominion, or sovereignty.**

This is clear in the Old Testament, particularly in the poetry of the Psalms

A) Where parallel lines clarify what the term "kingdom" means.

B) For example, Psalm 22:28 says, "**For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over all.**"

1) Similarly, Psalm 103:19 states, "**The Lord has established His throne [kingdom] in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.**"

C) Psalm 145:11 declares, "**They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and talk of your power.**"

D) In each example the kingdom is associated with the ideas of God's rule, sovereignty, and power.

E) A simple Definition would be God's Rule and Reign among Men!

Everybody, it seems, has an agenda today.

A) People have plans, programs, things they want to accomplish, and specific ways they want to accomplish them.

B) God has an agenda, too; something He wants to accomplish in His way.

1) The Bible calls this agenda God's kingdom.

C) **See, As God's people, we are not limited by the choices this world offers us.**

1) God has an alternative plan for us—His kingdom.

D) So when John the Baptist announced that the Kingdom of God was at hand,

1) **he meant that God's rule was just about to break into the world through the Messiah.**

4 Phases to the Kingdom of Heaven among men

A) **1st Present phase:** The Kingdom introduced – John was doing – introducing the Kingdom – The King had showed up.

B) The Kingdom of heaven was at hand – because the King from heaven invaded our planet – became one of us.

C) **2nd Internal Phase:** The king is rejected –

1) His Kingdom is going to begin in the hearts of those who follow him

He is a King of Hearts – first and foremost.

D) **3rd Manifest Phase:** 2nd Coming – the millennial reign

E) **4th Eternal Phase:** New heaven new earth – reign forever

John is introducing the 1st Phase: The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!

A) The King has shown up – The King is here!

B) John as the advance man is here to pave the way: prepare the people to receive the King.

1) That was the Job of the advance man –

C)But another function of the advance man in that first century culture – was to prepare the road.

1) **Make travel easy for the King to get to the city**
So obstacles would be removed – Debris would be taken out of the way. Boulders pushed aside.

A)Sometimes it would involve smoothing out the road or cutting a path through a forest.

B)In other words – REMOVING ANYTHING that would impede the Kings progress.

1)Anything that would keep him from getting to the city – HIS DESTINATION.

C)That brings us – to our final point today.

#4 His Exhortation:- Which was 2 fold

- Repent –V.2
- ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.- V.3

Take the 2nd one first:

A)Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.’ ”

B)The people living in Bible times would remove everything that would impede the progress of the king – from getting to their city

C)Well, we need to remove everything that would impede Jesus from ruling and reigning in our hearts

1)Anything that would hinder Him from being the King in your life?

I Ask you to consider your heart today!

A)Is there anything in the way of Jesus making progress in your life.

B)Wrong Priorities: - Take our focus off of the Lord

C)Carnality: Compromise: Things we know He has been speaking to us about. – LONG TIME

D)Pride: Thinking we know Best about a certain area or situation – resistant to Him

E)Fear or Guilt ?

Is there anything impeding the progress of Jesus in your heart – Full access? Rule and Reign ?

A)Prepare the way of the Lord –Make His paths

straight. DEAL WITH IT –

B) How do we do that? – Answer is found in the first thing that John said.

C)Repent: The word repent means to have a change of mind – TO THINK DIFFERENTLY

1)Think differently about my sin – See it the way God does.

D)More than Sorrow - Sorrow that leads to action that results in a change of Action.

Repentance is a Key to spiritual progress!

A)Key to preparing the path for Jesus to REIGN in your heart.

B)Starts at Salvation:

A)Change of mind is necessary – See, Culture tells us – I am ok you are ok – The truth says: NO, we’re sinners –

C)So Change of mind about my condition

1)I am a Sinner – need a savior

C)Religion says: My good works are going to make me right with God

1)Truth says No – my righteousness is like filthy rags

D)Never do enough or be good enough – to make myself right with God

1)I need a savior – Change of mind – I am lost

The change of mind – that is needed for salvation is I am a sinner – Only Jesus can save me.

A)Action: I come to Christ – Receive the gospel

Repentance is Key in our ongoing Sanctification

A)Think differently about my priorities – I realize I exist for Him – HIS AGENDA – HIS KINGDOM

B)ACTION: I need to arrange my priorities to reflect that.

Think differently about Carnality – compromise!

A)Maybe you have been thinking – NO BIG DEAL NOT HURTING ANYONE.

B)Romans 14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, -

1) Anytime the Scripture tells what something is “not,” we must pay attention,

C)because in all likelihood, it clarifies where we can easily get off track.

The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, -

A)NOT about satisfying the flesh - Not about indulging our lust - **but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**

B)God's spirit wants us to understand: What Jesus did to make you RIGHTEOUS –

1)BRING PEACE – FILL HEART WITH JOY

C)WE were dead in Sin – Separated from God – doomed to spend eternity in Hell

1)Jesus came to the Rescue

When you put your faith in what He did – Saved

A)God declares you RIGHTEOUS – Justified

B)Position before God – Now Walk in that – seek to live RIGHTLY –

Action: Romans 6:12-14 ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

C) My life set apart for my king and His Kingdom – Jesus being able to reign in my heart

The Kingdom of God is peace:

A)Peace with God – RIGHT STANDING – He loves me – He is with me – He is for me.

B)Knowing I am at peace with God enables me to experience THE PEACE OF GOD

Isaiah 26:3

*You will keep him in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on You,
Because he trusts in You.*

The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

A)JOY – AN OVERFLOWING of gratitude that I belong to Jesus – Part of His Kingdom.

B)Think differently about CARNALITY – NOT LIVING FOR THE FLESH

1) **“A life lived for the pursuit of pleasure will always lead to emptiness within you and brokenness around you.”**

Think differently about my Priorities – Think differently about Carnality

A)Think differently about Pride: - Admit I don't know best – I need his help

B)The reason so many of us as believers are struggling is that we want God to bless our agenda
1)rather than our fulfilling His agenda.

C)We want God to okay our plans rather than our fulfilling His plans.

D)We want God to bring us glory rather than our bringing Him glory.

E)But it doesn't work that way. God has only one plan—His kingdom agenda. ”

When Jesus is allowed a straight path in my heart

A)My agenda is replaced by His agenda

B)My life is about glorifying Him

Think of it this way: When an American Olympic athlete wins the gold medal – standing on the podium

A)What song is played – National anthem –

B)They don't play his Favorite song – **We are the champions – queen**

1)**Eye of the tiger**

C)The winning athlete does not get to choose which song will be played as the flag is raised.

1)Instead, the national anthem of that individual's country plays loudly.

This is done because it is understood that while the individual was the one who sacrificed, practiced.

A)Even though he/she were ones who competed they represent something much larger than themselves

B)They are competing for their Country -

C)As a Christian, you stand as a representative of a bigger kingdom.

1)Your life is not just about you.”

Repent - Think differently about Pride: Humble myself – He will exalt me.

A)Think differently about Fear – He hasn’t given me a spirit of fear – Power love and sound mind

B)Walk in that!

C)Think differently about Guilt – Believe the word *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

Romans 8:1

D)Prepare the way of the Lord – make His paths straight – **Remove what is impeding the progress of Jesus in your life – DEAL WITH IT!**

EASIER SAID THAN DONE! – ONE LAST THING AND WE ARE DONE – I PROMISE. V.11

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

A)Jesus gives His Spirit to empower us – His commandments – are our enablements

B)He doesn’t ask us to do anything that he doesn’t give us the power to carry it out.

C)This is how it works – He meets our obedience with **STRENGTH AND POWER**

Starts though with seeing the Problem – see what is impeding – REPENT Change of mind

A)Think differently – **YOUR KINGDOM – YOUR AGENDA**

B)HE WILL MEET YOU WITH POWER – AS YOU MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION.

AMEN