

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: The Fruits Of Repentance - Part 2

Text: Matthew 3:9-12

INTRODUCTION: As John continues to preach the message of repentance, he now begins to address the area which an area that has been largely ignored by modern day pastors, a doctrine that is very much a part of God's nature as love, wrath and judgement.

POINT 1 - NO FAMILY HERITAGE GUARANTEES HEAVEN. Many Jews simply believed by being decedents of Abraham that it guaranteed them spiritual security. Many still believe that today, and many American church goers assume good works, baptism, church membership and helping out is enough for heaven too, cf. John 8:31-40.

Concerning the statement of "from these stones" the Jews considered Gentiles "dead stones" occupants of hell, spiritually lifeless and hopeless, cf. Matthew 8:10-12. And Abraham believed God. He had faith imputed to him.

POINT 2 - THE JUDGEMENT OF GOD. We find the message of hell, wrath and judgment are often vacant from modern day pulpits. Every Christian will face judgement too. The believer is not exempt from this. We will give an account to God. We see this in this life, suffering, death, pain, troubles, cf. Romans 2:5-11.

John assumed judgement was here at the coming of Jesus. Most understood at the end of a harvest a farmer goes through and removes unproductive vines. This is to make room for productive ones. Jesus said in John 15:6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned."

Fire is a frequent symbol of judgement and torture. Genesis 19:24 "Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." Cf. Numbers 16:31-35, Malachi 4:1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch." Cf. Matthew 5:22, 29, John was referring to the unrepentant Pharisees who were relying upon their external righteousness for heaven. NOTE: Salvation isn't verified by a past act but a present fruitfulness.

POINT 3 - THE CONSOLATION. Baptism was a ritual used by the Jews when a Gentile accepted the God of Israel. It means the outward expression of an inner change. Acts 19:4

The Gospel of Matthew

"John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him." Then John mentions one who is coming after him, who is mightier than he was. One task of a servant was to remove the shoes and wash the feet of his master and guests. Jesus taught this in John 13:5-15. One way He was mightier than John was He would baptize with the Holy Spirit. This is not some second blessing or something you receive after you are redeemed, cf. John 14:16-17. At Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and during the initial formation of the church, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and the believers. Without such dramatic and attending signs, every believer since that time is baptized in the church by Christ with the Holy Spirit at conversion. 1 Corinthians 12:13 "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." Furthermore, Joel 2:28 prophesied God would "pour out His Spirit".

When John uses the phrase being baptized with fire which has created a few different interpretations. However, fire in the context of the passage has been used to define judgment of God. Thus, we conclude it continues. I view the passage as those who have believed being baptized by Christ in His Spirit, and the fire here still means those who don't believe. In other words, those who don't believe are baptized with the fire of God's judgment.

As John's message closes, he issues a final warning of God's judgement. Matthew 25 closes like this "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Furthermore, we have the parable of the wheat and the tares. Both illustrate a separation of the good and the bad.