



the coming kingdom

a prophetic message for our universe

APRIL - MAY 2010

This Book Belongs to _____

The Coming Kingdom Reading

Jesus said, “.... **The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.... for the kingdom of heaven is near.**”

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

“I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

.... Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. And this *good news* of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations... The time has come.... The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

**“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.
For Thine is the Kingdom and the glory
forever and ever,
Amen.”**

*Matthew 4:23 Luke 17:21 Matthew 4:16-17 Matthew 13:44-46 Mark 10:15
Matthew 7:21 Matthew 5:19 Matthew 24:14 Mark 1:15 Matthew 6:9-13*



APRIL 25

John's Baptism & John's Message

Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-18;
Matthew 11:1-19; John 3:22-36; Acts 19:1-7

Sermon Notes

John preached a two-part sermon to people: _____
and _____. He preached these messages because
the _____ was _____.

John's goal was to make Jesus _____ (similar to an
_____).

He emphasized that our lives should _____
consistent with repentance. (Matthew 3:1-12)

John baptized repentant people for the purpose of _____ . (Mark 1:1-8; Acts 19:1-7) His baptism _____ the Kingdom from a _____ .

Like the 8th Century Prophets, John came preaching a message of _____ and _____. (Luke 8:1-18)

John the Baptist was driven by one aspiration: Jesus must _____ and I must _____. (John 3:22-36)

Jesus wanted John to know one thing when he was facing death: _____. (Matthew 11:1-19)

Introduction

John the Baptist. John “the Baptizer.” What a name. Baptism—the act of being immersed in water to symbolically wash a person clean—had been practiced for centuries. Known in Hebrew as mikvah (ceremonial washing), immersion in water was utilized for conversion and ritual cleansing. John’s baptism was a call to repentance to prepare for the coming Kingdom. Jesus never baptized anyone but changed the meaning of baptism forever.

John baptized Jesus. Jesus had no sin: had no need for repentance, had no need for cleansing. However, Jesus desired obedience to God’s will and God’s teaching. Ironically, had Jesus not been baptized—had He not been obedient –He would have needed baptismal cleansing.

If John baptized repentant people for the forgiveness of sin, then what changed for followers of Christ who were being baptized on and after the Day of Pentecost? What changed is the content of their hearts. Before baptism their hearts believed in the deity of Jesus and desired His Lordship. In

baptism they were completed through the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' baptism is often misunderstood. Some think of baptism in terms of a conversional event rather than a lifetime of immersive existence in Christ. If we can live an immersed life—fully submerged in Jesus, His Spirit and His teachings—that's when we experience true baptism. I believe this is one of those “both/ and” teachings. Some press for the importance of the immersion moment, others demean the immersion moment and press only for immersive living. Both the moment of immersion into Christ and the submerged lifestyle are taught as vital to the Christian experience. It's not “either/or” but “both/and.”

Reflection

What thoughts and reflections do you have about John the Baptist based on Sunday's message and/or your readings?

Heart

Repentance (turning your life in a different direction) is a matter of the heart. John called people to repent. We often have a negative way of hearing the word repent (something a preacher self-righteously shouts). Turning onto a better path is a positive, not a negative. What is one new direction or path you'd like to take your heart down to better align with the Lord?

Soul

Getting our hearts right with God is impacted by our placement of Christ in our lives. For example, if Christ is placed as a low priority, our motivation to change is limited. However, if we place Christ on the throne of our lives, our motivation for Godliness increases. John stated that Jesus “must increase and

I must decrease.” How does this work? What does it mean for Christ to increase in your life? What does it mean for you to decrease?

Mind

The assigned reading this week gives you an overview of John’s ministry and his ushering in of the Kingdom. John seems to connect the coming of the Kingdom with the coming of social consciousness and social justice. How is the Kingdom of God related to the issues of social justice?

Strength

John’s overall purpose was to make a straight path to Jesus (a clear way to find Jesus). Churches are notorious for over-complicating conversion. Brainstorm with your group five ways Christians can simplify the path for finding Jesus.

15555 15th Avenue NE
Shoreline, WA 98155
www.nwchurch.net
206.364.2275



NORTHWEST
CHURCH

*embracing **real** life*