

A voice crying in the wilderness

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Mat 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
Mat 3:2 and saying, Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

Mat 3:3 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."

Mat 3:4 And the same John had his clothing of camel's hair and a leather girdle about his loins. And his food was locusts and wild honey.

Jesus said that of all those born of women, there's none as great as he, yet the smallest in heaven is greater than he (Matt 11:11). One might wonder what it meant, for surely Abraham, the father of believers, or Moses or Elijah was greater than he? In what does his greatness lie?

In the Old Testament it ends with the prophet Malachi, after which there was silence for 400 years until John arrived on the scene. God sent John. It is said that he grew up in the wilderness of Judea. There were only five or six small villages in Judea. We're not told exactly where he grew up. We read of the Lord Jesus in Jerusalem, but nothing of John the baptist. He was all the while in the wilderness. Even his birth was miraculous, in that he was filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb!

Mothers, while you expect your child, what spirit do you impart to them? Do you pray for your child?

What a pity when pregnant women get so irritated and frustrated at the smallest thing. The way you behave is like an injection into your child and the way it will one day act. Maybe you as a mother drinks alcohol while pregnant and imparts that to the child. Or you as the father uses drugs, and that is the spirit the child gets.

If you realise your sinful ways, confess and forsake those ways that that curse might be removed.

John's first words to those coming to him in the wilderness were, "repent". Repentance means a thorough conversion, changing direction 180 degrees, not a slight change of direction. When God commands you to repent, you need to obey His command and not pray for Him to do a miracle. Obey His command and turn from your wicked ways.

He grew up in the grace of God, until God's time arrived for him and he told those who came to him to repent. You might say that he made a great error for the Kingdom hasn't arrived then and not now either. But the Kingdom of Heaven is there where God rules, and if you accept the Lord Jesus as your Lord and King, then the Kingdom of Heaven has arrived in your life! John was speaking of the coming and revelation of Jesus.

They came and asked him whether he was the promised Messiah, or one of the great prophets, but he denied it. They asked him who he was and he answered that he was "a voice in the wilderness". He never claimed divinity, but God spoke through him, preparing the way for Jesus. When Jesus came to him in the wilderness to be baptised of him, he answered that he couldn't baptise Jesus, but that he needed to be baptised by Jesus. He said that he wasn't even worthy of untying the shoelaces of Jesus. There was not a trace of pride or self-consciousness in him. If God works through you there should not be the slightest trace of pride, it is utter foolishness. In saying that he wasn't worthy of untying His shoelaces, he said in effect that he wasn't even worthy of being the slave of Jesus. There wasn't any pride in him.

How wonderful if you would bring up children such as John the baptist instead of children full of pride and arrogancy, the scum of the earth.

John was indeed a prophet of prophets. Jesus first words were also, "repent". This is a command.

We pray and sing that the Lord must come, but how will that happen if we haven't prepared the way? If you had ears to hear you would hear the Lord say, "how can I come down, for you have not prepared the way?" If you have obstacles in your life, how can you expect the Lord to come if you don't deal with them and remove them?

So if you cry to the Lord to work in your family, in your children or husband or wife, if you had ears to hear then you would hear Him say, "there is no way, for you haven't prepared the way; your sins are in the way and

you must repent and turn from them!â€™™

Get things right and sort them out. Ask the Lord to show you what hinders Him from working and sort them out and get rid of those things.

Once I visited a family and spoke on this very text. After the service the father of the family disappeared for a few hours. When he returned I asked him where he went and he related to me how the Lord convicted him of something he had to make right with a brother against whom he had sinned. He drove many kilometers to make it right and then returned.

We read also of the clothing he wore. What does that have to do with us? John Bunyan said that God doesnâ€™™t need to look at your clothes to see the heart, but we human beings do see what the state of a personâ€™™s heart is by what he or she wears. Itâ€™™s not difficult to know if a lady is moral or immoral; you just need to look at what she wears. This doesnâ€™™t mean that a girl must dress like a granny, but that you dress appropriately. Remember you are the temple of the Holy Spirit - dress accordingly.

He didnâ€™™t speak the way we speak, but spoke straight, â€˜brood of vipers, you confess your sins but donâ€™™t part with it. Bring forth fruit of repentance.â€™™

The return of the Lord is near. We must live accordingly. What if He comes unexpectedly? It should not even be necessary to speak like this if the Holy Spirit is in you, unless you have another spirit.