



Matthew

Lesson 3

Matthew has introduced Jesus as the Messiah from God by identifying his genealogical record and His fulfillment of multiple prophecies in the details of His birth. This was necessary information for any student of the Torah that was looking for the promise of God's deliverance in identifying whether or not Jesus would even be considered as a possible Savior. The Apostle John, on the other hand, identified Jesus' credentials in a significantly different way. He identified Jesus' heredity and authority to be the Messiah as rooted in His existence before the world began.

This identifies both the humanity and the deity of Christ that establishes His perfect position to be the sin bearer for mankind. He is the only adequate substitute for man, as well as the only one who was perfect enough to bear the sin of the world and survive the wrath of God in the process. What an extraordinary Savior!

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, GOD WITH US.” Matthew 1:23

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as from the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:1-2, 14

Read Chapter 3

1. *From Matthew 3, Luke 1:5-17, 36 & 76, 3:2-20, Malachi 3:1, who was John the Baptist and what was the purpose of his life?*
2. *How did Jesus later identify John the Baptist? Matthew 11:13-14; Malachi 4:5-6*

3. *What was John's simple message, and what do you think it meant to his listeners?*

"Regret is not a proactive feeling. It is situated in disappointment, sorrow, even remorse. It merely wishes things were different without an act to cause a difference. However, repentance is different. Repentance is an admission of, hatred of, and turning away from sin before God."

~Monica Johnson



The definition of the "Kingdom of Heaven" or "Kingdom of God" from the Zondervan Encyclopedia is "The sovereign activity of God as king in saving men and overcoming evil, and the new order which is thus established."

4. *From the following verses give some information about the Kingdom of Heaven (Kingdom of God) and discuss their possible meanings in your group.*

Matthew 4:23

Matthew 5:3, 10, 19-20

Matthew 6:33

Matthew 7:21

Matthew 13:44-47

Mark 4:11

Mark 10:14-15

Luke 17:20-22



There were three dominant religious sects during the time of Jesus that opposed His authority and ministry. The most important of the three were the Pharisees who were considered to be spiritual fathers of modern Judaism. Their main tenet was a belief in an Oral Law that God gave to Moses along with the Torah, or Written Law. The Torah was akin to the U.S. Constitution in the sense that it set down a series of laws that were open to interpretation. The Pharisees believed that God also gave Moses the knowledge of what these laws meant and how they should be applied. This oral tradition was codified and written down roughly three centuries later in what is known as the Talmud. The Pharisees believed in an after-life, and that God would punish the wicked and reward the righteous in the world to



come. They also believed that a Messiah would eventually come and herald an era of world peace. They were in a sense blue-collar Jews who adhered to the tenets developed after the destruction of the Temple such as individual prayer and assembly in synagogues.

The Sadducees were wealthy elitists who wanted to maintain the priestly caste but were also liberal in the incorporation of Hellenism into their lives, something the Pharisees opposed. The Sadducees rejected the Oral Law and only considered the literal interpretation of the Written Law. They did not believe in an afterlife, since it is not mentioned in the Torah. The focal point of Sadducee life was rituals associated with the Temple. The Sadducees disappeared around 70 A.D., after the destruction of the Second Temple. None of the writings of the Sadducees has survived, so what little is known about them comes from their Pharisaic opponents. These two “parties” served in the Great Sanhedrin, a kind of Jewish Supreme Court made up of 71 members whose responsibility was to interpret civil and religious laws.

The Essenes were a third faction that emerged out of disgust with the other two. This sect believed the others had corrupted the city and the Temple. They moved out of Jerusalem and lived a monastic life in the desert, adopting strict dietary laws and a commitment to celibacy. The Essenes are believed to be an offshoot of the group that lived in Qumran near the Dead Sea. In 1947, a shepherd stumbled into a cave containing various ancient artifacts and jars containing copies of the Old Testament and manuscripts describing the beliefs of the sect and events of the time. (Jewish Virtual Library)

5. *Why did John respond so negatively to the Pharisees and Sadducees? 3:7-10 What specific accusations and warnings did he give them that identifies what he thought about them?*

6. *Explain what you think is the difference between being baptized for repentance or being baptized with the Holy Spirit. 3:11; Acts 2:38*

7. *If John’s baptism was an act of public repentance, why did Jesus insist on being baptized? How was His baptism different from any other? 3:13-17*

8. *What does God declare about Jesus in v. 17? Look up Matthew 17:5, Mark 9:7, and Luke 9:35. At what other important event did God make this declaration?*

Prayer requests:

Group time notes:
