

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 11:10-14.**
- B. John the baptizer, as he is called played an important role in the ministry of Jesus.
- C. Let us consider four points about John the Baptist:
 - 1. As the fulfillment of prophecy.
 - 2. As Elijah who was to come.
 - 3. His preaching and mission.
 - 4. Lessons for our learning.

I. JOHN THE BAPTIST--THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY.

- A. Isaiah 40:3 is listed by Matthew to show how John was the object of prophecy. John is the prophet and forerunner of the Messiah.
- B. John is viewed as more than a prophet in Mt. 11:9 because he not only spoke of Jesus to come but was able to identify X in the flesh (Mt. 11:9).
"But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet."
- C. Malachi mentions the coming of John before Jesus and Christ confirms that this John is the fulfillment of the prophecy (Mal. 3:1; Mt. 11:10).
(**Mal 3:1**) "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.
(**Mt 11:10**) "This is the one about whom it is written, 'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER BEFORE YOUR FACE, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'"
- D. Even at the announcement of the approaching birth of John, he is spoken of as the fulfillment of Malachi's words (Mal. 4:6; Lk. 1:15-17).
(**Mal 4:6**) "And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."
(**Lk 1:15-17**) "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb. **16** "And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. **17** "And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."
- E. The gospel according to Luke gives a longer account of Isaiah 40. Matthew, in Mt. 3:3 quotes Isa. 40:3; while Luke, in Lk. 3:4-6 quotes Isa. 40:3-5.

II. JOHN THE BAPTIST--THE ELIJAH TO COME.

- A. Malachi predicted that Elijah would come before the "great and terrible day of the Lord." By looking at the next verse we understand more about this Elijah (Mal. 4:5-6). Even John's clothing was very similar to Elijah's (Mt. 3:4; 2Kgs. 1:8).
(**Mal 4:5-6**) "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. **6** "And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."
(**Mt 3:4**) Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt about his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.
(**2Kgs 1:8**) And they answered him, "He was a hairy man with a leather girdle bound about his loins." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."
- B. Luke says that John the Baptist is the fulfillment of this prophecy (Lk. 1:16-17).
"And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. **17** "And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."
- C. Jesus also affirms this fact in Mt. 11:14; 17:11-13.
(**Mt 11:14**) "And if you care to accept it, he himself is Elijah, who was to come."
(**Mt 17:11**) And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; **12** but I say to you, that

Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” **13** Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

- D. John’s statement in Jn. 1:21 is sometimes confusing because he denied being Elijah.
And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”
John said “no” for two reasons:
1. He may not have known that he was the fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy.
 2. If he did know, he did not want the Jews to believe in a literal prophecy fulfillment.
- E. Prophecy has spiritual fulfillment in the Messianic times:
1. David returned--in Christ (Hos. 3:5; Ezek. 34:23; 37:24; Jer. 30:9).
(**Hos 3:5**) Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days.
(**Ezek 34:23**) “Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd.
(**Ezek 37:24**) “And My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them.
(**Jer 30:9**) ‘But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.
 2. The everlasting kingdom--in the church (Dan. 2:44; Mt. 16:18).
(**Dan 2:44**) “And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.
(**Mt 16:18**) “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.
 3. Elijah returned--in John the Baptist (Mk. 9:11-13).
And they asked Him, saying, “Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” **12** And He said to them, “Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? **13** “But I say to you, that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.”
- F. Elijah did return in the transfiguration of Mt. 17:3.
And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

III. JOHN THE BAPTIST--HIS TEACHING AND MISSION.

- A. First, he said to repent, and then administered baptism (Mk. 1:1-4) which did three things:
The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. **2** As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER BEFORE YOUR FACE, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY; **3** THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.’” **4** John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
1. Gave faith (after 400 years of no revelation) which is a change of mind or heart.
 2. Gave repentance, which is a change of the will.
 3. Gave baptism which changed the status (or state).
- B. Second, John said he was not the X who was to come, and pointed people to follow Jesus (Jn. 1:20; Mk. 1:7-8; Mt. 3:11).
(**Jn 1:20**) And he confessed, and did not deny, and he confessed, “I am not the Christ.”
(**Mk 1:7-8**) And he was preaching, and saying, “After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. [8] “I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
(**Mt 3:11**) “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
- C. Third, John not only preached X, but he obeyed the commands of Jesus by baptizing Him in the Jordan River (Mt. 3:13-17).
Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him. **14** But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” **15** But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he

permitted Him. **16** After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, **17** and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

IV. JOHN THE BAPTIST--**LESSONS FOR OUR LEARNING (CONCLUSION).**

- A. Our mission as Xians is similar to that of John in the following ways;
1. As members of the church we are what God has desired from the beginning, hence, we are the fulfillment of prophecy (Eph. 1:3; Dan. 2:44).
(**Eph 1:3**) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,
(**Dan 2:44**) “And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.
 2. We point to Jesus as the “pioneer and perfecter of our faith” and not to ourselves (Heb. 12:2).
fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
 3. We obey the commands of the Messiah to be pleasing to Him (Mt. 7:21).
“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.”
- B. John was executed because his stand for righteousness, and died as a martyr (see Mt. 14:1-12).

INVITATION.

- A. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.