

THE COMING KINGDOM

.Matthew 3:1-3:

*Since the kingdom of heaven has come,
we must turn from our sins and swear allegiance to Jesus, the king of heaven*

- I. Why This Sermon Series?
 - A. To introduce the Christian faith to non-Christians.
 - B. To re-introduce the Christian faith to those of you who are already Christians.
- II. Matthew 3:1-3: The Kingdom is Coming
 - A. Introduction to John the Baptist (3:1)
 - 1. "In those days..."
 - a. The Roman Superpower and Emperor Tiberius Caesar
 - b. Land of Palestine (Galilee, Samaria, Judea, Idumea) under Rome
 - c. Galilee under Herod Antipas; Samaria, Judea, Idumea under Roman governor
 - 2. "In those days, *John the Baptist* came..." (see Luke 1:16-17)
 - B. The message of John the Baptist (3:2-3)
 - 1. The message
 - a. "Repent..."
 - b. "...for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
 - c. "...*'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'*"
 - Kingdom of heaven is coming = *God* is coming
 - d. When Israel's God comes, two things will happen:
 - i. Salvation: forgiveness and restoration
 - ii. Destruction
 - 2. The impact of John's message: The Lord vs. Caesar and the rest of the world
- III. The Kingdom has Come, Therefore...
 - A. The kingdom did come—in Jesus Christ
 - B. Therefore, "*Repent*, for the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ has come."

Questions for Discussion

- 1. Who were King Herod Archelaus, Pontius Pilate, King Herod Antipas, and Emperor Tiberius Caesar? And why should we even care?
- 2. What does John mean by "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"?
- 3. How do you think John's message was received then? How do you think John's message would be received today? If John were to show up on a modern university campus, what controversies would he cause?
- 4. "The Lord will be king" (see Zechariah 14:9). How should we understand (or not understand) such a statement?
- 5. When Jesus was enthroned, "the universe entered a new political situation. It is the kingdom of Christ. Now, even as we speak, there is one who stands *above* all the leaders and all the governments of the world." How does this statement make you feel and why?
- 6. "*Repent...*"
 - a. What does "repent" mean?
 - b. Based on this definition, have you repented yet?
 - c. If not, what holds you back from repenting?
 - d. What will happen if you do not repent?
- 7. Why did Jesus die on the cross? What did he accomplish?
- 8. What was God intending to communicate when he raised Jesus from the dead (see also Romans 1:2-4)?