

Bible Readings

Isaiah 42:1-9

The Servant of the LORD

42 "Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will bring justice to the nations.

² He will not shout or cry out,
or raise his voice in the streets.

³ A bruised reed he will not break,
and a soldering wick he will not snuff out.

In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

⁴ he will not falter or be discouraged
till he establishes justice on earth.

In his teaching the islands will put their hope."

⁵ This is what God the LORD says—

the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out,
who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it,
who gives breath to its people,
and life to those who walk on it:

⁶ "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.

I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles,

⁷ to open eyes that are blind,
to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

⁸ "I am the LORD; that is my name!
I will not yield my glory to another
or my praise to idols.

⁹ See, the former things have taken place,
and new things I declare;
before they spring into being
I announce them to you."

Matthew 3:1-17

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"

⁴ John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees,

and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Sermon

31-Jan-21

The King's Credentials (Isaiah 42:1-9 and Matthew 3:1-17)Intro/Context

- We're looking at **Isaiah 42** and **Matthew 3**
- It would be good to have your **Bibles** turned to **Isaiah 42** initially.
- Let me pray first...
- When you **apply** for a **job** or some sort of **position**
- It's **handy** to have a **resume** (CV) which lists all your **qualifications** and **experience**
- And it's **helpful** if you have a **few people listed** who can give you a **reference**
- and verify your credentials
- That's what's going on in **Isaiah 42** and **Matthew 3**
- We are **given** some **credentials** about a special King

[PowerPoint 1-Special King]

- We're **beginning** a **series** on **Matthew's Gospel** this morning
- And we're **starting** at **Matthew 3**
- We looked at **Matthew 1** and **2** over Christmas

- **Back in chapter 2** we heard that the **wise men (Magi)** followed a **special star - to Bethlehem** - and they came to **King Herod** and asked **“Where is the one born king of the Jews?”**
- **What credentials should a King have?**
 - **Remember Israel's first King**
 - **King Saul - His credentials** were (1 Sam 9):
 - He was **young**
 - He was **handsome**
 - He was **head and shoulders taller than anyone else**
 - But we also found out - **He hid in the supplies** when it came to **His anointing as King** (1 Sam 10) and he was **often indecisive** (1 Sam 9) and at other times **disregarded what God had told him to do** - and as he ruled, he **became quite unhinged!**
 - **Hardly ideal credentials for a King**
 - **Saul's successor - David - what about his credentials?**
 - Also, **very young** - a shepherd boy
 - But he was described as **a man after God's own heart** (1 Sam 13:14)
 - That's good!
 - Yet we know he **did some terrible things too** - committed **adultery** - and **had a man killed**
 - **Many kings followed - some good - some bad - some terrible!**

- The King - the wise men came to see - was of course **Jesus** - and He is **no ordinary King**
- **Matthew** spends many chapters describing who Jesus is, why He came and lays out Jesus' credentials
- In our Old Testament reading from Isaiah 42 and new testament reading from chapter 3 of Matthew - we discover **Jesus' credentials**

King Jesus' Credentials Foretold (Isaiah 42:1-9)

In Isaiah 42 [Please turn there now]

[PowerPoint 2]

- God promises to send a servant king - the Hebrew word (*eded*) - can refer to a slave
- That's **surprising!**
- Normally Kings have many servants and **people running after them**
- But this promised King - King Jesus - will not be like that
- As **Jesus Himself says** in Matthew 20:28: ... **the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**
- **Jesus is the kind of king** who will mix with his subjects - relate to his subjects - meet them at their level - he will care about the lost, the vulnerable, the weak, the oppressed, the disadvantaged, and those on the outer

- Not only that, He will **sacrifice** his life for his subjects - so that they don't have to be punished for their sins!
- There are not too many earthly kings who will do that? If any?
- And that's because King **Jesus** is **not from Earth**
- He's **from Heaven** and **chosen by God** (v1) to **come to Earth** on a **special mission**
- And He's **part of a triple-act - Father, Son and Holy Spirit** - the **Trinity of God**. And the Spirit of God will be with King Jesus (v1) throughout His ministry - and the Father will delight in Jesus' work (v1)
- And **Jesus will bring** justice - real justice - because He's the real King of Heaven and Earth - **He'll give people a way to be right with God** - and **He'll judge all people** - and those who don't put their faith in Him - will be judged as not right with God - and cast aside forever.
- V2 - He **won't make a huge spectacle** of His time on Earth - **no pomp and ceremony** - **no fancy clothes or palace** to live in - His **palace is in Heaven** - instead **he'll go around Israel calling people to believe** in God and turn away from their sins - **not with bluster and loud overwhelming talk but by the Spirit of God**
- V3 - He **won't cast aside the vulnerable** and **won't turn away anyone who has a glimmer of faith in Him**. He will handle the fragile (bruised reed) with care until they grow strong. He **will not quench the person who has a**

flickering flame of faith - He will gentle blow on it until it fans into a flame of faith. He will treat all people as equal

- **V4 - He won't give up when He meets objections or when He is misunderstood. Even when He is rejected - He won't quit. His teaching will go beyond Israel - and spread to even remote Islands**
- **V5 - It's God the Father Himself - the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth - who has called and sent His Son**
- **V6 - It's God Himself - who endorses the Son's mission - and it will be a mission of righteousness (describe) - He will be with His Son throughout His Mission - and a new covenant (explain) will be made with people**
- **Still V6 - The Son will be a light (explain) not just to God's people - Israel - but to the Gentiles (all non-Jews) - all the world can be part of His family**
- **V7 - He will open the eyes of those who have been blinded by their sin and rebellion against God - those held captive by their sins - and in the darkness of their sin - He will bring them into His glorious light - offer them forgiveness and life with God forever**
- **V8 - How do we know all these promises will come true - because the one making them is YHWH - the Holy God. No one else can fulfil these promises because YHWH will not share His glory with anyone else**
- **V9 - God is able to make these promises - because He is the master of the past and the future - and the present!**
- **All these promises were made about 700 years before Jesus**

- So, we fast forward 700 years - to Jesus' time - to Matthew 3

And we see King Jesus' credentials verified - by 3 witnesses

[PowerPoint 3-Heading]

John The Baptist

God - The Holy Spirit

And God - The Father

Witnesses of King Jesus' Credentials (Matthew 3:1-17)

[PowerPoint 3a-John]

John The Baptist (Matthew 3:1-15)

- So, the 1st witness then - John the Baptist
- John the Baptist and Jesus are second cousins - their mother's Elizabeth and Mary are cousins
- And we find John preaching in the wilderness saying "Repent the Kingdom of Heaven is near"
- Repent means to change our life by doing a complete "U" turn
- Instead of living a life disobeying God and ignoring Him and going our own way
- We turn around and say sorry to God for our disobedience and rebellion and commit our lives to God's way
- In V3 - We're told that John is actually fulfilling a prophecy from Isaiah 40:3 - that God had said He would send someone one day - who would be a

voice calling in the wilderness - preparing the way for the Lord himself - and here he is!

- V4 - It seems **John** is an **unusual character** - wearing clothes made of camel hair and a leather belt around his waist - and he's **diet is worse than a Jenny Craig diet - locusts (grasshoppers) and wild honey**. His clothing and diet showed his focus was on **God and His message** and not on himself. He's a **similar character** to a major prophet in the OT - **Elijah** - who dressed similarly and also preached in the wilderness (2 Kings 1:8) - It's like John is the new Elijah
- V5 - **People came from Jerusalem and all Judea (Southern Israel) to the river Jordan** - and then did exactly what John had called people to do - **they repented**
- See v6 - they **confessed their sins and were baptized** in the River Jordan
- **Baptism** is an outward sign of what is going on inside these **people as they confess their sins**
- As they are **immersed or dipped in the river Jordan** - it's a picture of their **sins being washed away**
- Inside as they **repent** - their **hearts are been washed clean of their disobedience and rebellion - against God**
- But there's another bunch of **people who came out to the wilderness to see John** - see v7

- There were the **Pharisees and Sadducees** - they represented the leadership of the religion of Israel - **Judaism**
- *The Pharisees were a social movement and school of thought that believed: a) a person was made right with God by keeping the law, b) they often misinterpreted the law; c) they held that many traditions were equal in authority to the Scriptures; d) they were **often hypocrites in their practices, neglecting the core and spirit of the law for outward observances** - but inside they had hard hearts.*
- *The Sadducees were a Jewish sect or party that a) denied the resurrection of the dead, and the existence of spirits and supernatural; b) denied the obligation of traditions; and c) accepted the written Law alone.*
- **John's not keen on these guys**
- He calls them "a brood of vipers" and asked "Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath" - see v7. He calls them vipers because they are like slippery snakes - very deceitful in how they behave
- See v8 - The Pharisees and Sadducees - give the appearance they are ready to meet the Messiah, King Jesus - and give the impression they've repented and confessed their sins - but inside they haven't repented and in fact they have hard hearts [and will later reject Jesus]. **John is not fooled**.
- You see **repentance is a matter of living it - not just talking about it!**

- John even says in v9 - they can't use the fact that they are a descendant of Abraham as a way of getting right with God and getting into Heaven. It was widely taught at the time that being a descendant of Abraham meant a Jewish person would not miss out on Heaven. But John's saying to them - you're **actually from the serpent's family** (the Devil's family) - and v10 - **judgment** (ax on the root of the tree) is coming your way
- Then in v11 John puts his ministry in perspective
- John baptises people with water - a symbol of cleaning up people
- But he says - He is a witness to someone coming after him - that someone is King Jesus - He is someone greater and more powerful than John and whom John says he is not worthy to carry his sandals
- John goes on to say - that Jesus - the one coming after him - comes with a different baptism
- **Jesus baptism** sorts out the inside of a person
- Because when a person genuinely repents and puts their trust in the Lord - They are baptised by God's Holy Spirit - who does a spring cleaning on the inside - that's what we all need - and unfortunately the Pharisees and Sadducees - think it's just the outward appearances that matters
- **Jesus will baptise people with the Holy Spirit** - when they genuinely believe that Jesus is the ONLY one who can actually remove the dirt and filth of our sin. **Baptism of water** is only showing what needs to happen

inside - and this clean up inside can only happen by believing Jesus died for our sins to be forgiven - and believing Jesus cleans up our sins - because we can't stop sinning and we can't fix our sin ourselves

- **John also says end of v11 - Jesus will baptise with fire**
- This is a picture of judgement - which is neatly described in v12 - where a winnowing fork is used to lift up the harvested wheat - the wind blows away the chaff (the outside husk which is useless) and the heavy grain falls to the floor. The scattered chaff was swept up and burnt in the fire. Here we have a picture of God's judgment - those who genuinely believe (grain) will be saved - those who don't (the chaff) will get burnt.
- Then amazingly v13 - King Jesus shows up to be baptized by John
- V14 - John can't believe it - how can he baptize - the King of Heaven and Earth - that's not right - Jesus should be baptizing him!
- But V15 - Jesus insists on being baptized by John. Why?
 - Because - *it showed Jesus gave approval to John's baptism of repentance; as repenting is the first step in becoming a believer!*
 - And because - *It showed Jesus identified himself with publicans, tax collectors and "sinners"; these were the very people Jesus came to save!*

- And because - **Jesus' baptism is a picture of His future baptism on the cross, when all the waves of God the Father's judgment for sin would go over Him** (Psalm 42:7; Jonah 2:3)
- And Jesus also said in v15 - it was **proper to do this to fulfill all righteousness. It wasn't that this one act in itself fulfilled all righteousness, but it was another important step in the overall mission of Jesus to identify with fallen and sinful people, a mission that would only finally be fulfilled at the cross.**
- So, there we have the 1st witness - **John the Baptist - to King Jesus' credentials**

God - The Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16)

The 2nd witness is in v16

[PowerPoint 3b-Holy Spirit]

- As Jesus came out of the water
- At that moment the **Heavens (skies) opened** and **Jesus saw the Holy Spirit** descend upon Him **in the form of a dove**
- This **Holy Spirit** - is the **3rd person of the Trinity** - confirming this is King Jesus - the **2nd person of the Trinity.**
- It's like the **Holy Spirit** is saying - "**I confirm King Jesus' credentials**" - "And I, the Holy Spirit - will be with Jesus in His ministry and I the Holy Spirit will baptise genuine believers on the inside!"
- Why does the Holy Spirit appear as a dove?

- *The Holy Spirit descending like a dove - identified Jesus to John (see John 1:31-34 where John explains this).*
- *The dove is a symbol of purity and peace. Jesus is pure and He brings peace between God and humans*

God -The Father (Matthew 3:17)

The 3rd witness is in v17

[PowerPoint 3c-Father]

- The 1st person of the Trinity - God the Father - spoke from Heaven
- "This is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased"
- Here God the Father is approving of Jesus' ministry and identifying Him as God's Son
- All three persons of the Trinity are involved here - Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

What do we learn about Jesus' credentials here?

- Jesus fulfils the prophecy of the Old Testament
- Jesus is the **Son of God**
- He is **part of the Trinity** and therefore fully God - not just an incredible human being
- He is **sinless** - otherwise He couldn't remove our sins
- He is the **only ONE** who can remove our sins and **give us forgiveness**
- He **has the Holy Spirit with Him** in His Ministry

- He is a **servant sacrificial King**

So, what can we take home this morning and apply to our lives?

[PowerPoint 4-Heading]

Application

[PowerPoint 4a-Water Baptism]

1. #1 - Water baptism is a symbol of washing away our sins - but it doesn't get rid of our sins and gives us forgiveness. Water baptism doesn't make us a Christian - no more than standing in a carpark makes you a car. Even coming to church each week doesn't make us a Christian. **Genuinely believing Jesus died for our sins to be forgiven makes us a Christian** - and then when we believe we are **baptised internally with the Holy Spirit** - which is like our life coach. Teaching, correcting and rebuking us - and revealing the Bible to us!

[PowerPoint 4b-Servant]

2. #2 - Jesus being a **servant** is not just an example to us to be servant hearted. He is also our servant - He **serves us** - not only in what He did on the cross and in His resurrection - but He serves us every day through His constant love, care, guidance and intercession. Jesus did not stop serving when He ascended to Heaven; He serves us from Heaven now.

[PowerPoint 4c-John's commitment]

3. **#3 - We can learn from John's commitment to the Lord - he focused on the Lord and not on himself! Also, John prepared people to meet King Jesus - we must do that too!**

[PowerPoint 4d-Chosen]

4. **#4 - When God the Father chose Jesus for this rescue mission - He delighted In Him - He was well pleased with Him. Jesus is the ultimate Chosen One - but as Christians we are chosen too - the Apostle Paul says in Eph 1:4 - He chose us before the creation of the world - and He delights in us too (Psalm 18:19, Zeph 3:17). We need to understand this is a gift (grace) - we can't earn God's delight - He gives it to us freely**

[PowerPoint 4e-Descedants]

5. **#5 - The Pharisees and Sadducees relied on being an ancestor of Abraham as making them right with God - instead of trusting God. They didn't want to genuinely look at their hearts and repent and confess their sins. It was all about looking good and all about outward appearances - when inside they had hard hearts. We can't rely on the fact that our Grandfather, Grandmother, Father or Mother were Christians, we have to have a personal relationship with King Jesus. We have to personally repent and put our personal trust in Him.**

Let's pray...