

**- Order of Service -**

**Call to Worship**

**Welcoming Prayer**

**Reading Matthew 3:1-3, 4:17**

- John 15:15
- 460, *What a friend we have in Jesus*
  - A prayer of Augustine
- *Knowing you, Jesus*
  - Prayer cont.
- 248, *Jesus, what a friend for sinners*
  - Prayer cont.
- 401, *No not one*

**Announcements and Prayer requests**

**Greeting**

**God sends His fore-runner of Christ, John the Baptist**

Pt-3, The nearness of the kingdom and entry into it

**Matthew 3:1-3, 4:17**

**Sending prayer**

**You may notice we don't pass an offering plate**

We invite you to participate in the ministry, and the offering box in the foyer is for your gifts and offerings for the Lord's work.

- 2 Corinthians 9:7-8, Galatians 6:6 -

**Grace Bible Fellowship**

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**GRACE**  
BIBLE FELLOWSHIP  
love. truth. grace.

We are identified with Jesus Christ in his crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and heavenly seating.

**REPENT**

**for the  
kingdom  
of heaven  
is at hand.**



Matthew 3:2

- Teaching -

**Eric Peterman**

**God sends His fore-runner of Christ, John the Baptist**

Pt-3, The nearness of the kingdom and entry into it

**Matthew 3:1-3, 4:17**

- January 14th, 2024 -

## God sends His fore-runner of Christ, John the Baptist

### **Pt-3, The nearness of the kingdom and entry into it**

#### **Matthew 3:1-3, 4:17**

*John's ministry was conducted in the Desert of Judea, barren and rugged land west of the Dead Sea. His message was forthright and had two parts: (1) a soteriological aspect, repent, and (2) an eschatological aspect, for the kingdom of heaven is near. The concept of a coming kingdom was well known in OT Scriptures. But the idea that repentance was necessary in order to enter this kingdom was something new to them and became a stumbling block to many Jews. They thought that as children of Abraham they would automatically be granted entrance into Messiah's kingdom. John's message, however, was that a change of mind and heart (μετανοεῖτε, "repent") was necessary before they could qualify for the kingdom. They did not realize how far they had drifted from God's Law and the requirements laid down by the prophets (e.g., Mal. 3:7-12).*

*The eschatological aspect of John's message provokes questions. What was John preaching? He announced a coming kingdom, which simply means "a coming rule." This rule was to be heaven's rule: "the kingdom of heaven." Does that mean God would then begin to rule in heavenly spheres? Obviously not, for God has always ruled over heavenly spheres since Creation. John must mean that God's heavenly rule was about to be extended directly to earthly spheres. God's rule over the earth had drawn near and was about to be instituted through the person of the Messiah for whom John was preparing the way. No one hearing John preach asked him what he was talking about, for the concept of Messiah's rule over the kingdom of earth was a common thread in Old Testament prophecy. The requirement for that institution, however, was that the nation repent.*

It is imperative that we are pre-qualified now to enter Jesus' Kingdom, before we die or before He returns in power, whichever comes first. There will be no second chances. Pre-registration is of critical importance. How does one enter Jesus' Kingdom?

Repentance: One must be humble enough to admit his own moral and spiritual bankruptcy before God. None of us is good enough to enter the Kingdom on our own because of our moral and spiritual shortcomings.

1) Jesus too proclaimed that repentance was necessary to enter the Kingdom. Matthew 4:17

2) Jesus announced that both repentance and faith were necessary to enter the Kingdom. Mark 1:14-15

3) There is none who is righteous. Romans 3:10-12

4) All of us have sinned and fall short of the goodness that God is. Romans 3:23

b. We must understand that, in great love for us, God sent Jesus to die for each of us, to pay the death penalty necessary to atone for our sins.

1) Romans 5:8-10

2) 1 John 4:9-10

c. If we want to enter the Kingdom, we must be born again, born from above (the concepts are interchangeable) into God's family by the power of God's Holy Spirit. John 3:1-8

d. How are we born again, or born from above? By trusting in Jesus, God's only provision for human sin. We cannot actively reject or passively ignore Jesus. We must actively receive Him.

1) All who receive Jesus are given the right to be born by the will of God into God's family, becoming His children. John 1:11-13

2) All who trust in Jesus circumvent eternal destruction and possess eternal life. John 3:16-18

3) Jesus is coming quickly! We are urged to prepare to enter His Kingdom! Revelation 22:12-16

4) I join the Holy Spirit and the Bride of Christ (the Church) in extending an invitation and a proclamation to you, to partake of the water of eternal life by trusting in Jesus.