



MONDAY 8th FEB 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: Matthew 3:1-3 & Isaiah 40

Plug In...

Any Jew, any person with knowledge of the Old Testament message, should have been anticipating God future establishment of His kingdom (whether near or far). Jewish ears would have pricked up hearing someone say it is "near".

Chew It Over...

Look at Isaiah 40 and think through: What is the essence of the announcement from the wilderness? What significance comes from it being heard in the wilderness? Think further: Given John The Baptist could have planted himself in the city of Jerusalem, or any city in Israel, what is John The Baptist subversively communicating to Israel by the location the Wilderness of Judea?

Prayer Suggestion

Humble yourself before God, for He causes us to recognise that comparable to Him we are an imperceptible dot on the universe, a mere blip within history. Thank Him that despite our relative status before Him,

Jesus lovingly considers us significant and by his great mercy has transferred us from the desolate/dead world, to the promise of an inheritance that never dries up or perishes (1 Peter 1:3-4).



TUESDAY 9th FEB 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: Matthew 3:4-12 & Malachi 4

Plug In...

There is a stop-down here by Matthew to describe the look of John the Baptist. Matthew doesn't normally stop to take us inside a character's wardrobe, or kitchen. So why the description? While, we might just think kooky hobo, someone more familiar with the Old Testament might have some things triggered by this apparel.

Chew It Over...

Read Malachi 4 and 2 Kings 1:8. Why does Matthew slow us down to notice John the Baptist? What does he not want us to miss?

Prayer Suggestion

Thank God that in His mercy He has sent people to warn us about the state of things. Praise God that the warning turns us to Jesus. Think through and thank God for recent specific warnings where He has turned you back to trust Him.



WEDNESDAY 10th FEB 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: Matthew 3:4-12 & Isaiah 1

Plug In...

Lots of people are coming to be baptised by John the Baptist. It appears that some from the religious classes (Pharisees and Sadducees) came to be baptised also. Verse 7 indicates that the Pharisees and Sadducees were not there just to gawk, but were doing this with the aim to flee from wrath.

Chew It Over...

Why then is John the Baptist so harsh? Matthew is very conscious of Isaiah throughout this baptism scene, how does the very beginning of Isaiah help us understand what John the Baptist was deducing?

Prayer Suggestion

Ask God to produce the fruit of repentance within our lives. Ask Him to extend our relationship with Him to beyond merely holding an insurance policy against impending wrath.



THURSDAY 11th FEB 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: Matthew 3:13-17

Plug In...

[Peter Bolt](#) explains that while we think of repentance primarily as a turning *away* from sin, the Bible speaks of it primarily as a turning *towards* God. Understood this way it makes sense of Jesus' baptism of repentance. Jesus is saying something like: "I want to do the will of God more than anything else because I love God".

Chew It Over...

Reflect on how you've been holding the good news of Jesus? Is it merely a golden-ticket? Or, is it a deep, sold-out relationship with your Creator God?

Prayer Suggestion

The words of Psalm 51 – a desire for a new covenant existence – may be helpful words to pray from today.



FRIDAY 12th FEB 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: Matthew 3:13-17 & 2 Samuel 7

Plug In...

Clearly the voice from heaven is God Himself. After this strange ritual of plunging into water, God actually breaks through and commentates using words that show He's got a birds-eye view of the whole Bible.

Chew It Over...

Who is God saying Jesus *is* by calling him 'my Son'? [NB: More than Jesus' divinity is being communicated. For further ideas scan: Exodus 4, Psalm 2, Isaiah 42, 52:13 – 53:12].

Prayer Suggestion

Thank God that He provided Jesus for us. Thank God that He has placed us under the kingship of His Son in whom He is well pleased. Thank God that we as sinners God now counts as saints.



WEEKEND 13-14th FEB 2016

SERIES: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Read: Isaiah 40-45 & 53

Plug In...

Matthew, in various ways, is conscious of the message of Isaiah. Isaiah is a book that juxtaposes a dead land with a new land teeming with life. It is the Old Testament book that most explicitly speaks of a new creation (e.g., Isa. 43:18-19). It links the arrival of the new creation with the work of the Spirit (Isa. 32:15-17) through the Servant (Isa. 42:1).

Chew It Over...

Read these chapters of Isaiah that paint the picture of the Servant whom God will anoint by the Spirit to bring about this new creation. Absorb more fully exactly who Jesus the Servant, the 'Son', is and what he does.

Prayer Suggestion

Praise Jesus for bringing you into connection with God's Spirit whom cleans, renews, unites you to the Son and guarantees placement in the new creation.