

# *Study of Matthew 3*

by

**Marc Gravelle**

*mgravelle@shaw.ca*

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

*1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea*

What do you suppose John the Baptist was preaching, *In those days*? Well let's see, he says in *verse 2 And saying, Repent you:*

John is asking them to repent, and the question that we have to ask ourselves **IS**, Repent of **WHAT?** John wanted them **to** repent of their **SINS**, and please understand that John makes it abundantly clear in Scripture that the definition of **SIN IS**, the transgression of YHVH's Torah of Life, (*1John 3:4*), therefore John the Baptist is telling the people to repent of their transgressions of YHVH's Torah.

*For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

The words the Kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of Elohim are interchangeable terms that have this fact in common, they have the same constitution, they have the Torah of YHVH as their constitution, therefore to be part of the Commonwealth of Israel, part of those that are to inhabit the Promised Land, which is a metaphor for the kingdom of Elohim, everyone must commit to obey the constitution of the kingdom, which of course **IS** the Torah of YHVH, the very same Torah that YHVH gave to Moses at Mount Sinai, and said was to be in force forever.

*Verse 3 For this is He, the One that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah,* Isaiah prophesied in *Isaiah 40:1-5*, which was about five hundred and fifty years before Messiah arrived on the scene, that before Messiah would come and declare Himself, that there would be a person that would come before Him, to prepare the way, and that person is John the Baptist, which means that when John appeared on the scene, that yet another prophecy of YHVH has been fulfilled.

And John the Baptist was to be *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, saying, Prepare you the way of YHVH,*

What does it mean to the Way of YHVH? John is telling us to **Prepare** our Life to receive the Saviour, which means repent of your transgressions of His Torah of Life, and commit to obey it from this point on, and for the rest of your life.

*Make His path straight.*

What is the Path of YHVH, that we are to make straight in our Lives? It is His Path of Righteousness, the Ppath that YHVH Himself established for us at the beginning of time, it is

His Torah of Life, that my friends **IS** the Path that YHVH has set for us, and **IF** we love Him, then the only way to show Him that we love Him, according to YHVH's own words, **IS** to obey His Commandments, His Torah with all of our hearts, minds, souls and strength.

*Verse 4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair,  
And a leather girdle about his loins;  
And his food was locusts and wild honey.*

As you can see John the Baptist did **NOT** live the high life, for according to Wikipedia, the wearing of camel hair clothing that is mentioned in *Matthew 3* was traditionally used for tents, carpets and cloaks by the Berbers of west Africa, and in other areas where camels were kept. Its high thermostatic properties provide insulation. Camel hair has two components: *guard hair* and *undercoat*. Guard hair is the outer protective fur, which is coarse and inflexible and can be woven into haircloth. Guard hair may be made softer and plusher by blending it with another fibre, especially wool. Therefore the camel hair that John's garment was made of was very bristly, and leather underwear does **NOT** seem like a very comfortable choice, and he did all of that because he was focused on only one thing, and that is the Task that YHVH had given him, to prepare the Way for Messiah's arrival, and he did that by preparing the hearts of the people to receive Him, by having them repent of their constant and repetitious transgression of the Father's Torah of Life.

*Verse 5 Then went out to him the people Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,*

**WHY** are all these people drawn to John the Baptist? It is because they were convicted by the Holy Spirit of Elohim, to repent of their sinful lives, repent of their habitual Torah transgressions.

*Verse 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan,* (the word Baptized is Strong's Number, 907 βαπτίζω, baptizō, from a derivative of 911; to immerse, submerge; to make overwhelmed (i.e. fully wet); used only of ceremonial ablution, 909 a washing, purification effected by means of water, **it speaks of the washings prescribed in the Torah**, the very same Torah that was given to Moses at Mount Sinai, the very same Torah that YHVH said, were ordinances forever.

Therefore **IF** we ask the question, **WHERE** did John the Baptist get the idea of immersing someone in water to purify them? Then the answer is quite simple, he got the idea to immerse people in water from the Torah of YHVH, His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Directives for everlasting Life. Why would John the Baptist do that? Why would he immerse people in water? First of all we have to understand that John the Baptist's father Zacharias was a Cohen, a priest, which means that John's father is a descendant of Aaron, the First High Priest, which in turn means that John the Baptist **IS** also priest, a cohen, and as the son of a Priest, we have to understand that he was taught the Torah of Moses everyday of his life, from a very young age until he became a man, and that means he knew all the instructions that were found therein, and that he willingly and lovingly chose, to believe, follow, and obey

them. One of those instructions, is that before entering the Temple, a person had to be spiritually clean, and to do so, the people who felt they needed to be purified, chose to immerse themselves in what they called the waters of purification, before they would enter the Temple or the house of YHVH. That ritual is called a mikvah, and a mikvah is a pool of fresh flowing water that a person enters at one end, then proceeds to totally immerses themselves in the water, and then rise up out of the water and make his or her way to the other end of the pool, and exit the pool, and all of this is done under the supervision of a priest, that oversaw the event, and once the person came out of the pool, the priest would proclaim that the person was now purified and fit to enter the house of Elohim.

### *Confessing their SINS,*

As I mentioned above, in Scripture, Sin is defined as transgression of the Torah, therefore that means that this part of the *verse* should read, *confessing their Torah transgressions*, rather than confessing their sins, for according to *1John 3:4 SIN IS transgression of the Torah of YHVH.*

*Verse 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, He said unto them, O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

Because of the tasks that were assigned to him, it is safe to say that John the Baptist had a spirit that was surrendered to the Holy Spirit of YHVH, thereby allowing the Holy Spirit to fulfill His mandate to **CAUSE** all surrendered contrite obedient hearts, to believe, follow, obey and **DO** the Father's Torah of Life, every day of his life. That means that John was endowed with very good discernment, as to the character of people, and these Pharisees and Sadducees, were wicked people, and John knew it, therefore he calls them out for what they are, vipers. Vipers are snakes that hide in dark areas and attack you when you least expect it, therefore John calls them out and asks them **WHY** they are there, why they came to his baptism, since they really do **NOT** believe what he is teaching? We have to understand that there are some people in the world that don't really believe the Words, the Torah of YHVH, **BUT JUST** in case there is some **TRUTH** to what they have heard preached, they want to hedge their bets, and therefore they choose to come to John the Baptist to investigate his baptism. We have to understand, that it is **NOT** the act of being baptized that purifies a person, it is their surrendered contrite obedient heart that willingly obeys the Commandments of YHVH, that purifies them, and these Pharisees and Sadducees do **NOT** have, surrendered contrite obedient hearts to YHVH's Torah of Life, because they are committed to believe, follow, and obey the man made oral torah of their rabbis.

*Verse 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*

What are fruits worthy and deserving of repentance? They are found throughout Scripture, and one place where they are all together is in *Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no Law.*

*Verse 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father:*

Here John is telling these people that we all have to work out our own salvation and that they cannot rely on the fact that they are children of Abraham, because that fact alone **CANNOT** and **WILL NOT** save them, for YHVH has made that perfectly clear in *Ezekiel 17:12-21* which says *The Word of YHVH came again to me, saying, Son of man, when the land sins against Me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out My hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send **famine** upon it, and I will cut off man and beast from it:*

*1- And even though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver **BUT** their own souls by their **righteousness**, (their own works) says YHVH Elohim.*

*If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts:*

*2 – Though these three men were in it, as I live, says YHVH Elohim, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.*

*Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:*

*3 – Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith YHVH Elohim, they shall deliver **neither** sons **nor** daughters, but they only shall be delivered **themselves**.*

*Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out My fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast:*

*4 – Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, says YHVH Elohim, they shall deliver **neither** son **nor** daughter; they shall but deliver their **own** souls by their righteousness.*

*For thus says YHVH Elohim; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast.*

Since the beginning of time, YHVH has given all of mankind free choice, therefore it is the responsibility of each and every individual to work out their own salvation, for they are responsible to either turn to YHVH with loving surrendered contrite obedient hearts, that are willing to confess their sins, and then make a commitment to believe, follow, obey and **DO** the Father's inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life, His Directives for everlasting Life, or else they can choose to walk in and by their own understanding, or by some other fabricated false man made doctrine of any of the false man made religions of this world, that teach that the Torah of YHVH has somehow been changed and that now we are suppose to walk by some man made oral torah, that religious leaders tell us, supersedes and or replaces the Torah of Moses in whole or in part, or other religious leaders that teach that the Torah of

YHVH, has somehow been done away with, in whole or in part, or the secular world that does **NOT** believe in YHVH at all, but have dreamed up their own man made imaginary gods.

*For I say unto you, that Elohim is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

John is explaining to all people that will listen to him that the Creator of the universe is capable of creating human beings that would be willing to obey Him, from the stones that he is pointing to. He is trying to show these people, and us, that YHVH has no limitations, and that He can do whatever He wants, and that therefore, it is very detrimental for any and all people to choose **NOT** listen to, believe, follow and obey His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life.

*Verse 10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees (people):*

In Scripture, trees are often used as metaphors for men, and here John is saying that the axe is laid upon the root of the trees. The axe my friends is YHVH's Torah, and when it is obeyed, with a loving surrendered contrite heart, it will prune or chop away the deadwood in a person's life, **BUT IF** the Torah is tossed aside as something that is irrelevant in a person's life, **IF** the Torah is wilfully disobeyed, then according to Scripture, it will destroy the people that choose to take that life path, and that fact is made perfectly clear in the balance of *verse 10*, where it says, *Therefore every tree (person) which does NOT bring forth good fruit IS hewn down, and cast into the fire (hell).*

Next we see that John tells the people that have come to be baptized by him, in *verse 11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance:*

**BUT** He that comes after me is mightier than I, Whose sandals I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize (immerse you, make you walk through His waters of purification) with the Holy Spirit, and with fire:

In *Ezekiel 36:26-27* YHVH says: *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and CAUSE you to walk in My Statutes, and you shall Keep My Judgments, My Torah and do them.*

Therefore, based on the fact that Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit is given to people so that YHVH can **CAUSE** their willing hearts, to believe, follow obey and **DO** the Torah, then it is pretty obvious that when John tells us, that when we are baptized, immersed and purified by the water of the Word of YHVH, that YHVH will fill us with His Holy Spirit, and then YHVH Himself will **CAUSE** every willingly surrendered obedient heart to believe, follow, obey and **DO** the Torah of our heavenly Father, a deed that a mere man as John could **NOT** do.

*Verse 12 Whose fan (winnowing or sifting fork or shovel) is in His Hand,*

*And He will thoroughly purge His floor, And gather His wheat into the garner; **BUT** He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

Here John tells us that YHVH is ready to separate the wheat from the chaff, the tares from the wheat, and that He has His winnowing or sifting Fork, which is a metaphor for His Torah of Life, that will separate the Wheat from the Chaff, the Torah obedient people from those that have chosen to continually disobey or transgress our heavenly Father's Torah of Life, and the Torah transgressors will be tossed into the unquenchable lake of fire, which of course is a metaphor for hell, unless they choose to turn from their wicked ways, and begin to earnestly obey the Torah of YHVH and **LIVE**.

*Verse 13 Then came Yeshua from Galilee to Jordan unto John, To be baptized of him.*

Here we are told that the Living Torah made flesh, followed the same protocol that all believers **MUST** follow, **IF** they want to be counted as part of the family of Elohim, for He too came to the river's edge to be baptized, to be immersed in the waters of purification, the Mikvah, so that He could arise, as all men do, from that experience, with a pure heart, that is dedicated to believe, follow, obey and **DO** the Father's Torah of Life.

*Verse 14 But John forbade him, Saying, I have need to be baptized of You, and You come to me?*

John did **NOT** feel worthy to officiate over the immersion of Messiah, the Living Torah made flesh, in the waters of purification, for He knew in His heart that Messiah was already pure, and He told Messiah that He could **NOT** do it.

*Verse 15 And Yeshua answering said unto him, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness."*

But Messiah, the Living Torah made flesh, did **NOT** scold John for refusing to immerse Him in the waters of purification, nor was He angry with him, He simply pleaded with John the Baptist to please go ahead and immerse Him in the water, for He said it becomes us, you and I John, to fulfill, confirm, accomplish **ALL** righteousness, to fulfill what is written in the Torah of Moses.

After Messiah pleased with him, then John changed his mind and did indeed follow through with immersing Messiah in the Waters of Purification. This tells us that Messiah convinced John to go ahead with immersing Him in the waters of purification, and John willingly and lovingly complied, he obeyed the words of Messiah. It is of the utmost importance that we understand what has just happened here, for if we want the very same thing to happen to us, then we must understand the process.

*Verse 16 And Yeshua, when he was baptized, came up straight away out of the water: And, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, And He saw the Spirit of Elohim descending like a dove, And lighting upon him:*

Try and imagine this event in your mind's eye, the Creator do the universe, the Torah of our heavenly Father made flesh, came to earth, was born of a women, grew up to become a man, and at the designated time He obeyed our heavenly Father and went the way that every man and woman **MUST** go to enter the kingdom of Elohim, He obeyed our heavenly Father and willingly immersed Himself in the waters of purification, and our heavenly Father was so pleased with His obedience, that He had His Holy Spirit descend upon Yeshua, in the form of a dove, and then our heavenly Father spoke from heaven saying in *verse 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying,*  
*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Our heavenly Father **IS** pleased, when we, His children willingly choose to obey His Commandments, His Torah of Life, as Messiah willingly and lovingly did and taught us to do, to obey the Torah that our heavenly Father has put in place to benefit and give Life to **ALL** of His children, **IF** they willingly and lovingly choose to believe, follow, obey and **DO** what He instructed them to do in His Torah, **IF** they follow and obey His Directives for everlasting Life, His written Torah, the very same Torah that He gave to Moses at Mount Sinai.

We are all children of our heavenly Father, therefore **IF** any of you ever want our heavenly Father to say to **YOU**, this is My Son, or this is My Daughter in whom **I AM WELL PLEASED, THEN** you absolutely have to understand that you **MUST** to go through the very same process that Messiah did, when He turned His will over to our heavenly Father's Will, in total loving surrendered obedience to His Torah of Life. Surrendered obedience to the Father's Torah of Life is the key to everlasting Life in the Kingdom of Elohim. Amein.

*Studying and keeping Torah together as a community.*

*Have a great Elohim blessed week and may YHVH bless your every thought,  
and your every deed. Until we meet again. Shalom Alechem!*