

A New Man In Town

Reading: [Matthew 3:1-6](#)

Text: [Matthew 3:1-17](#)

Introduction:

Happy New Year!

- **New Years Eve Traditions**

The Italians, have a custom. As midnight on New Year's Eve approaches, the streets are clear. There is no traffic; there are no pedestrians; even the policemen take cover. Then, at the stroke of 12, the windows of the houses fly open. To the sound of laughter, music and fireworks, each member of the family pitches out old crockery, detested ornaments, hated furniture and a whole catalogue of personal possessions which remind them of something in the past year they are determined to wipe out of their minds. —House & Garden

The Koreans have a curious New Year's custom. Desiring to forget unpleasant things and make a fresh start, each person determines what bad habits he would like to eliminate and what past deeds he wants forgiven. Then he writes the names of these evils on a kite and flies it high into the air. When it is almost out of sight, he cuts the string. As the "paper bird" takes a nosedive and disappears from the sight, he thinks that all his faults and previous transgressions are forever removed. —Henry G. Bosch

- **College Test**

An ill-prepared college student taking an economics exam just before Christmas vacation wrote on his paper. "Only God knows the answers to these questions. Merry Christmas!"

The next week the professor graded the papers and wrote this note: "God gets 100, you get 0. Happy New Year!"

1. The Person of John

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[Matthew 3:1](#) "In those days, John the baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea."

- If we did not have the other gospels, we could wonder at this point, "Who is John the Baptist" and "Where did he come from?"
 1. We know he did not appear out of nowhere, because here he is!
 2. What lunatic wears camel's hair and a leather belt, and eats locusts and wild honey? John.

- Thankfully, there IS a little more information:

[Luke 1:7](#) (We read the story of John's conception and birth. It is a familiar story maybe like the story of Abraham and Sarah.): Zacharias and Elizabeth had no children because Elizabeth was barren and both were well advanced in years

- He did not invent preaching on his own!

[Luke 3:1-2](#) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, **the word of God came to John** the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

An Old Message:

- Repentance Preaching had been around for thousands of years!

[2 Peter 2:5](#) (God) did not spare the ancient world, but saved **Noah**, one of eight people, a **preacher of righteousness**, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;

[Jeremiah 25:1-7](#) **The word that came to Jeremiah** ...the Lord has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, **but you have not listened** nor inclined your ear to hear. **They said, 'Repent** now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, ...Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.' **Yet you have not listened to Me,**" says the Lord, "that you might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

2. The Preaching of John

There Was Something New About John's Preaching On Repentance!

[Matthew 3:1-2](#) In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

- What is this "The Kingdom of Heaven!" **It was something new!**
 1. Did you know that phrase is found ECLUSIVELY in the book of Matthew?
 2. It is used here for the first time and used 32 more times throughout the book!
 3. People were looking for a deliverer like in the days of the judges, Moses and the kings
 4. The kings they had lately were not what they had in mind!
- So People Listened! **That was also something new!**
 1. Do you think if I wore camel's hair wrapped with a leather belt and ate locusts and wild honey that people would listen to me better?
 2. John did that!

[Matthew 3:4-6](#) Now John himself was clothed in **camel's hair**, with a **leather belt** around his waist; and his food was **locusts and wild honey**. Then **Jerusalem**, **all** Judea, and **all** the region around the Jordan went out to him and were **baptized by him** in the Jordan, **confessing their sins**.

This Was Also More Than A Social Event!

[Matthew 3:7-12](#) Pharisees and Sadducees were rejected without proof of repentance!

1. John expected participants to change their ways!
2. REPENTANCE was not just a new word: It was a NEW WAY OF LIFE!

3. The Purpose of John

[Matthew 3:3](#) For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: '**Prepare the way of the Lord**; Make **His** paths straight.' "

- Someone was coming and John would direct everyone to HIM!

[Luke 3:11](#) He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.

[John 1:36](#) "Behold, the Lamb of God" [John 3:27-36](#) "I must decrease. **He** must Increase"

- Later we see John baptizing Jesus [v. 13-17](#)

Conclusion From that point on, the story is completely about Jesus and HIS Authority! Do WE do that? Do we step aside and point others to Christ or do we think life is all about ourselves? If you are willing to submit to Christ, repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins!