

Encountering Jesus: Studies in the Gospel of Luke (2-4-18)

PREPARING FOR A DIVINE VISITATION – PART III

(Luke 3:1-18)

I. THE FORERUNNER IN THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH (LUKE 3:15-20)

- A. Series: Encountering Jesus: Studies in the Gospel of Luke. We want to passionately pursue Jesus in all the different aspects of who He is. He is the Bridegroom, King, and Judge. We cannot just pick and choose which aspects we like. We need revelation by the Holy Spirit to truly know the true Jesus of the eternal Word of God and not just a fantasy of who we think He is or should be. Jesus is more majestic and beautiful than we could ever imagine.
- B. We need clarity and precision of what Holy Spirit is saying so that we will partner with God and not be confused, offended, or ineffective in doing the will of God in the days to come. God is going to pour out His Holy Spirit and it's in light of what is on God's heart and His zeal is strong to accomplish it.
- C. In the modern Jewish Passover celebration, an empty seat is kept for Elijah and they open the door to welcome him in. Malachi prophesied it and Luke 1:16-17 affirms that God is sending John in the Spirit of Elijah as a forerunner before Jesus to turn people's hearts back to God. John is that forerunner sent by God to be a voice in the wilderness. His message is: prepare the way of the Lord.
- D. Jesus also uses the phrase "Friend of the Bridegroom" to describe John (John 3:29). The wedding day is coming. Israel needed to prepare so that when the Bridegroom (Jesus) is revealed, they would not miss the day of their visitation. The Church, the Bride is living in days of preparation for the appearance of our Bridegroom.
- E. People wonder if John could be the Christ, the Messiah, who would come to deliver them. John says he is not the Christ, but the Christ is coming after him.

II. BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE

- A. Baptism with the Holy Spirit is when Jesus baptizes us with the Holy Spirit, as John baptized his disciples with water. This was fulfilled in Acts 2, Pentecost.
- B. What is the Baptism with fire? It speaks of passion, zeal, God's love, His power, etc... There were tongues of fire that came to rest on each one in Acts 2. But there's more. In the context of Luke 3:16 and following, context is divine judgment that is to come.
- C. Even in Acts 2, at the Pentecost, there are both positive and negative aspects. The positive is that there were those who came in repentance and faith. It is also the last days outpouring of Holy Spirit. It is God's blessing, but also the end of the age, and the release of God's true justice on the earth.

1. 1 Cor. 14:22 tongues are a sign for unbelievers. It's spiritual edification for believers, but for unbelievers, it's a sign of judgment that they cannot hear the voice of God. It's like foreign languages, babbling/tongues, to them.
 2. In Luke 3/Matt. 3, baptism with Holy Spirit and fire is in context of Jesus coming to gather into His barn and burn up the chaff.
 - a. Jesus hadn't baptized with Holy Spirit yet, not until Acts 2.
 - b. Jesus hadn't fully baptized with fire yet, either. It will happen at His Second Coming.
 - c. 2 Peter 3:7 world is reserved for fire as flood waters in the days of old. Judgment is coming. At the end, there is a Lake of Fire.
- D. Holy Spirit is given to us not just for us, but so that we would be witnesses of Jesus Christ, who is the Coming King, He will come as the Bridegroom, King, and Judge. We receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and we become witnesses of the true Jesus.
- E. There is an urgency of fire that is coming, an awakening, quickening of spirit, that we would see and hear what Holy Spirit is saying in this season.
- F. The fire that is to come is related to one aspect of God's character. In light of that fire, God will call sons and daughters to Himself. He takes His enemies and adopts them and makes them co-heirs with His Son.
1. God is love. God is also just as much a God of justice. Righteousness demands that sin must be dealt with. It's not a light matter.

III. BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

- A. What is the world's view of sin? "Don't judge!" It is self-centered. Revolves around self, what others think about them. "What happens in Vegas": my life, my thoughts, my actions, it's my business. There is a moral relativism. "What's right for you...not right for me..." We are gods unto ourselves.
- B. John's message was a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.
- ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight. (Luke 3:3-4)***
- C. Sin: Greek word is used to mean forfeiting, having no part or share in something. The word is also used of an archer missing the mark. Forgiveness is: pardon, release from the penalty.
- D. Q: How do we think about sin?

1. Have I made peace with it? Or have I declared war on it like John did? Have I rationalized it? Have I made excuses for it? Or am I coming humbly and honestly to God so that I might be healed?
 - a. Do I only see it as private, personal? Self-centered: It's just a little thing, not hurting anybody..." Is it a sin against God? Jesus didn't just die for a little sin. He died because it was sin period. It separated you from God and it was grounds for your sentence of eternal death.
- E. The essence of sin is not so much what we do or don't do, but why. It's the source: our self-centeredness and self-protection out of fear. When we come before Jesus, He can cleanse and forgive us.
- F. Q: Am I pursuing God with wholehearted devotion?

IV. TRUE VS. CHEAP (FALSE) GRACE

- A. There is an unbiblical "cheap-grace" message. "Come as you are. You don't need to repent. All you need to do is believe, God will accept you just as you are." If we stop there, it's only one side of the story.
- B. This view tries to highlight God's kindness, but it disregards God's righteousness. What did it cost Jesus? The full wrath of God was upon him. That kind of grace cannot just be casually received. The False grace message makes people think they are safe. They absolutely are not. We're not doing anyone a favor by making them feel good without dealing with a serious problem. If see a friend right before imminent danger of an oncoming hurricane. I would say: "Do you see that? Change direction!" Out of love, I bring it up. If they resist, I bring it up with tears, not out of judgment. God is kind. It's His kindness that brings us to repentance.