

## **Lesson Three—Matthew 3**

### ***Follow Me—The Kingdom of God Is at Hand***

#### ***Introduction***

God did not allow his kingdom or his King to arrive unannounced. He called John the Baptist to announce his coming. And God himself put his stamp of approval on his Son's work. How encouraging this is to those who will bear witness to him in the future!

#### ***3:1-12 The sixth prophecy fulfilled: A voice in the wilderness***

**Verses 1,2** What is the kingdom of God? John did not need to explain what it was. Every Israelite, from the youngest to the oldest, knew. Read one or more of the following verses from the Old Testament. These verses were well-known to the Jewish people.

- Daniel chapter 2, especially  
verses 31-45
  
- Psalm 29
  
- Zephaniah 3:14-17

Was there ever a time when God did not rule over all things? If not, then what does it mean that God's kingdom, or rule, is *near* or *at hand*?

**Verse 3** Why must people repent in order to be part of the kingdom of God?

**Verse 4** Why did John live as he did?

**Verses 5,6** What success did John's preaching see?

**Verses 7-12** With success came resistance.

Read Amos 5:18-24. Why did Amos speak to the people of his day as he did?

How were the people of John's day like those of Amos' day?

How would this section have helped the disciples understand the nature of their ministry? How does this section help us understand our ministry?

### ***3:13-17 Jesus' baptism***

**Verses 13-15** Did Jesus have to be baptized for the same reason we must be baptized? Explain.

What comfort is there for us in the fact that Jesus was baptized?

**Verses 16,17** Agree or disagree: For the first time, Jesus received the Spirit of God.

What comfort is there in the fact that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus?

What comfort is there for us in God's words to his Son? What encouragement is there in the work of serving others with God's Word?

#### ***Summary***

God sent John the Baptist to prepare people for the coming of the kingdom of God. The ministry of John the Baptist—proclaiming the kingdom of God by preaching law and gospel, giving pardon to the penitent, and warning to the impenitent—describes our ministry. Jesus came to be baptized by John.

We see Jesus begin his work of saving us from our sins. God the Father put his stamp of approval on Jesus' work, and the Holy Spirit empowered him to begin his public ministry.

#### ***For next time***

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 4 several times.