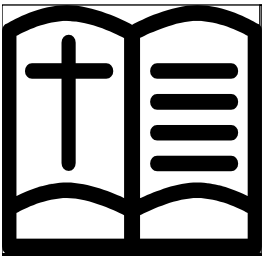


“BITTERSWEET”

Mat 3:7-12; Luk 3:1-18; Rev 10:8-11

I. JOHN’S MESSAGE TO PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY ARE ALRIGHT

- A. Happy with their discussion groups but missing the point; redefining God’s word to them*
- B. Not taking the message of judgment seriously*
- C. Friends with political structure and the powers but not friends with God; desiring to be admired by the people but losing the esteem of God*
- D. John’s message is bittersweet: Sweet is the good news that the kingdom is at hand; the bitter is that a burning judgment precedes it*
 - 1. He warns of the wrath to come*
 - 2. He exposes that nothing in their lives had indicated they had repented*
 - 3. He tells them that the axe of God was already cutting at the roots of the tree of their lives; Israel the nation was being pruned*
 - 4. He is separating the grain from the chaff and the destiny of the chaff is the unquenchable fire.*
 - 5. Messiah is coming, indeed is here, who will baptize with the Holy Spirit as promised by the new covenant and the prophet Joel*
 - 6. Therefore, they must prepare the way of the Lord, repent, for His kingdom is coming now*
- E. John’s message was only partly fulfilled*



II. JOHN'S MESSAGE TODAY; ELIJAH STILL TO COME AND MESSIAH STILL TO COME

- A. *Elijah did come and Messiah came and both were cut off and rejected; but both are to come again!*
- B. *The axe was put to the national tree roots and cut off; but the nation would rise again*
- C. *Peter understood at Pentecost that the promise of the Holy Spirit was happening then, but it was only partly fulfilled and the nation was cut off*
Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:14-21 But the nation would come again...and so would the entire miracle of the Holy Spirit to His chosen people and the nations
- D. *This message of the coming of the Holy Spirit in power was also bittersweet for the sweetness of the Holy Spirit would be followed by the bitterness of the great and terrible day of the LORD and culminate in Armageddon!*
- E. *The next forerunner (Elijah) will have the same message to Israel and all who will hear! Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand! Messiah is coming! God will be looking for genuine repentance and the hearts of Israel to be turned back to the covenant*

III. IS WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ISRAEL NOW THE BEGINNING OF THIS PROPHETIC END?

- A. *It depends on who gets involved next!*
- B. *It may be retaliatory with Hamas only OR it could be the start of the Psalm 83 prayer! Faith of Israel key*
- C. *It is NOT Ezekiel 38-39 fulfillment: Israel is not dwelling safely until the enemies of Psalm 83 are neutralized or converted*