

## *The Forerunner Messenger (part 2): The Lifestyle*

### I. REVIEW: THE PREPARATION MINISTRY

- A. **The messenger calling:** to prepare people spiritually to receive the Lord's leadership by making straight a "spiritual highway of truth" for God—is applicable at Jesus' first and second comings. God is raising up messengers—via speaking, singing, writing, sharing, social media, acting, etc.
- 3Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (Isa. 40:3-5)*
- 17 ... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (Lk 1:17)*
- 10 For this is he of whom it is written: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You." (Mt 11:10)*
- B. **Optimum environment:** God is establishing the optimum environment for His people to walk in love and purity. God uses the least severe means to bring the greatest number of people to the deepest level of love. What the devil means for evil, God will use for good to train His people.
- C. **John the Baptist:** John the Baptist was raised up by God as a messenger to proclaim the coming of the Lamb of God, repentance of sins, and turning hearts of the fathers to their children *to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Lk 1:17)*. He was the downpayment of the Old Testament prophecy in Isaiah 40 and Mal 3 and 4 and a model for what the Lord wants from messengers before His return.
- D. We want to look at the word of God to see what it says regarding John the Baptist. We will use *Matthew 3 and 11, John 1 and 3, Luke 1,3, and 7, and Mark 1* to answer 5 questions.
1. What is said about John the Baptist's lifestyle?
  2. What does Jesus say about John the Baptist?
  3. What do others say about John the Baptist?
  4. What does John the Baptist say about himself?
  5. What is the message of John the Baptist?
- E. **He came preaching in the wilderness:** (Mt 3:1) He fulfilled the Isaiah 40 prophecy and was the "voice crying out in the wilderness." The wilderness in biblical times was the place of testing, *encounter with God*, and dependence on Him. It stripped away human supports and revealed both human weakness and God's provision. That's why so many key biblical figures—Moses, Israel, Elijah, John the Baptist, and Jesus—had defining moments there.

- F. **Clothed in camels hair and a belt around his waist:** (Mt 3:4) (Mk 1:6) His clothing was in direct contrast to those of the Pharisees. The Pharisees made their tassels longer, bigger, or more noticeable than ordinary people's, as a way of showing off supposed superior devotion. Instead of wearing them as a humble reminder of God's commands, they exaggerated them to attract attention and gain religious status in the eyes of others.

***5 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. (Mt 23:5)***

- G. **He ate locust and honey:** (Mt 3:4) (Mk 1:6) John the Baptist ate locusts and wild honey because they were simple wilderness foods provided directly by God. His diet was an expression of his dependence on the Lord and a separation from worldly excess. It was his "*daily bread*" or "*manna from heaven.*"

## II. THE LULLABY OF BUSINESS AS USUAL

- A. Jesus has told us that the generation He returns will be like the days of Noah. Specifically, Jesus highlights the "*eating and drinking and marrying...*" that will take place in that generation. These activities are not bad in and of themselves but Jesus is highlighting the folly of doing life as normal when the hour of trial approaches.

***37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until they day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Mt 24:37-39)***

- B. In a moment, what seemed to be ~100 years of foolishness walked out by Noah was seen as wisdom. The "suddenly" of the change of season comes quickly. After ~100 years of building there was a day Noah and his family entered the ark and it began to rain. What seemed so foolish in the eyes of many, in an instant, was seen as profoundly wise.
- C. Jesus has told us that we should "take heed" that our hearts not get weighed down with the *cares of this life*... Jesus is not, too extreme in His messaging, nor is He unaware of family dynamics, the need to pay bills, the need to eat and drink... etc. However, he is clear we are not to get weighed down by such things.

***34 But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly 35 For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Lk 21:34-36)***

- D. Jesus has told us that cares, riches, and pleasures of life will be like thorns in the soil of our hearts that will ultimately choke out the seed sown by the word of God.

***14 Now the one that fell among the thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. (Lk 8:14)***

- E. John the Baptist was a man who was good soil. His lifestyle was an expression of His inner life. He avoids the heart that gets choked out by the cares of this life but voluntarily embracing a lifestyle of fasting, weakness, and dependence upon the Lord. Much like Noah, the wisdom of John the Baptist and His choices will be justified in the end.

***18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say “He has a demon,”....but wisdom is justified by their children. (Mt 11:18-19)***

### **III. THE BATTLEGROUND: MONEY COMFORT AND HONOR**

- A. Seduction is not only the the enticement into sin for sensual pleasure but also the allure and drawing into sin for the lust of money, comfort, and honor. The forerunner (John the Baptist) sees and understands the battle for the soul is waged on the battlefield of appetite and desire. The fasted lifestyle is a way to align the heart with the superior pleasure of Jesus avoiding the devil’s schemes to gain a foothold in our lives with temporary pleasure.
- B. Food was at the center of the temptation of Eve in the garden. (*Gen 3*) Esau sells his birthright for a bowl of stew. (*Gen 25*) Daniel purposed in his heart not to succumb to the seduction of the Nebuchadnezzar’s delicacies. (*Dan 1*). Satan even tries the same strategy of temptation, appealing to appetite, with Jesus in the wilderness. (*Mt 4:1-4*)
- C. When tempted in the wilderness Jesus declares, “*Man does not live by bread alone but by every word the proceeds from the mouth of God.*” John the Baptist, joy is full, because he walks out this reality by standing in the wilderness eating locust and honey but hearing the voice of the bridegroom.
- D. Jesus regarding money/mammon: ***24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Mt 6:24)***
- E. Jesus regarding comfort: ***20 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nest, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” (Mt 8:20)***
- F. Jesus regarding honor: ***20 Remember the word that I said to you, “A servant is not greater than his master; if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you...” (Jn 15:20)***

#### IV. THE HARLOT'S SEDUCTION

*1 Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication"...3 I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet Beast (Antichrist)...4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. 5 On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth. 6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints...15 He said to me, "The waters...where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. (Rev. 17:1-6, 15)*

*3 For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. (Rev 18:3)*

- A. Babylon will include a religious (Rev. 17) and economic (Rev. 18) network. The nations will become drunk or intoxicated with her seductive promise to bring great benefit to the nations, including compassionate humanitarian aid, a unified religion (that minimizes wars), and a prosperous world economy.
- B. Rev. 17:1-6 gives us details about the emergence of the harlot Babylon as a one-world religion, describing her evil seductions and cruel persecutions.
- C. The voluntary harlot Babylon religion will be replaced by a mandatory Antichrist religion. Firstly, people will voluntarily join the harlot Babylon one-world religion of tolerance (Rev. 17). Secondly, all will be forced to be Satan worshipers in the Antichrist religion (Rev. 13:4, 8, 15).

#### V. CONCLUSION

- A. In context to the great harlot, a voice cries out from heaven, ***"Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues..."*** (Rev 18:4) The forerunner lifestyle is a spiritually violent (Mt 11) way of living as to not be seduced by the luxuries the harlot has to offer.
- B. John the Baptist was in the wilderness, eating locust, and clothed in camel's hair. He was not weighed down with the "cares of this life." John the Baptist is a model for us to embrace simple living, giving generously, living before the eyes of the Lord and hearing His voice as our reward.
- C. All throughout history men and women have been seduced and weighed down at the allure of more money, comfort, and honor. However, the coming global seduction is unlike any other in human history. Like John the Baptist, we must embrace the forerunner lifestyle as to not partake in the coming seduction.