

Minor adjustments and Major changes

- What are examples of...
 - Minor adjustments
 - Major changes
- When might someone be expecting a minor adjustment but actually encounter a major change?

Today we explore...

- What happened when the Son of God entered the world?
- What happens when God enters a life?
- What preparation is needed for God to enter and live?

Christmas Transformation

Matthew 3:1-12

Isaiah 40:1-5

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Highlights from Israel's History

- Patriarchs: **Abraham, Isaac, Jacob**
- Slavery then Exodus from Egypt: **Moses**
- Enter the Promised Land: **Joshua**
- Kingdom in the Promised Land: **David**
- Destruction & exile of the North → Assyria
- Isaiah 1-39: destruction is coming to South
- Isaiah 40-66: hope of restoration: “soon” and “later”
- Destruction & exile of the South → Babylon

Isaiah 40: Hope and relief for God's people

Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her

that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice of one calling:

“In the wilderness prepare
the **way for the LORD**;
make straight in the desert
a **highway for our God**.

Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

And **the glory of the LORD will be revealed**,
and all people will see it together.

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

**Hope is coming
Because God is coming
His prophet is preparing the way
The Glory of the LORD
will be revealed**

Matthew 3:1-12

1-2:

3:

4-6:

7-10:

11-12:

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Matthew 3:1-12

- 1-2: John the Baptist prepares hearts,
because the kingdom of heaven has come near
- 3: • John's message
- 4-6: • Repentance = fundamental reorientation / baptism
- 7-10: • Not: "my bad" or "sorry"
or even only deep regret/remorse
- 11-12: • Because God's presence/authority has come near
• Not just "about to come" but "it is within reach"
• God **has come** to humanity: God in the flesh
• To ignore or make light of Jesus is rebellion
• Identical to Jesus' first words: Matthew 4:17

Matthew 3:1-12

- 1-2: John the Baptist prepares hearts,
because the kingdom of heaven has come near
- 3: John is the voice preparing for the glory of the LORD
- 4-6: • Highway building is reorientation of souls
- 7-10: • Lowering the lofty: proud, powerful, self-important
- 11-12: • Raising up the low: discouraged, despairing
• Jesus is the LORD (God) who has come
• "We have beheld God's glory in Jesus"

Matthew 3:1-12

1-2: John the Baptist prepares hearts,
because the kingdom of heaven has come near

3: John is the voice preparing for the glory of the LORD

4-6: John (a prophet) leads many to baptism

7-10: • Matched the expectation of call to deep repentance

11-12: • Contrast to religious leaders, like prophets (Elijah)

• Proclaiming from outside of human power

• Broad and ongoing positive response to John's call
to repentance

• Baptism: expression of genuine, deep reorientation
(and also God's work of regeneration)

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because the kingdom of heaven has come near

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4-6: John (a prophet) leads many to baptism

7-10: John demands genuine repentance to the LORD

11-12: • John detects insincerity in the "religious"

• Curiosity? Judgment? Mere avoidance of trouble?

• John confronts insincerity

• To baptize as God's representative is
to endorse the reality of the repentance

• Lack of genuine repentance brings judgment

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11-12: Jesus is like John, yet greater by far

- More consequential grace: Holy Spirit
- More consequential judgment: unquenchable fire

The Big Idea

**God has penetrated our world personally
in the man Jesus Christ
bringing true life
to all who genuinely repent
(otherwise judgment)**



**The arrival of God in human form
requires more than remodeling
It requires an entirely new foundation**

Application

- **God in the flesh requires a fundamental reorientation**
 - Repentance is...
 - Not:
 - Remodeling
 - Us inviting God into **our world/kingdom**
 - Rather:
 - God inviting us into **His world/kingdom**
 - Sometimes: complete reconstruction
 - Always: replaced foundation
 - Baptism is a tangible expression of this fundamental change

Application

- **God in the flesh requires a fundamental reorientation**
- **To embrace this reorientation brings true joy**
 - It will include trouble in the journey
 - Unsettling
 - Humbling
 - Painful
 - Like a surgeon extracting a poison arrow from our gut
 - Yet there is great joy in the journey
 - And the certain hope of unlimited joy in the destination!

Application

- **God in the flesh requires a fundamental reorientation**
- **To embrace this reorientation brings true joy**
- **Not to embrace this reorientation brings complete disaster**
 - Like building a house on a foundation that will certainly crumble, whether now or later



The Big Idea

**God has penetrated our world personally
in the man Jesus Christ
bringing true life**

Becoming a Christian:

- genuine turning to God
- entering His Kingdom and leaving our own
- once for all replacing my soul's passport

Living as a Christian:

- embracing the project of replacing my foundation with Christ
- daily growing into this reality of having my life built on nothing less and nothing more than Jesus