The voice of one crying in the wilderness, on: 2013/9/16 13:13

IN Matthew 3 the Scriptures identifies John the Baptist as the one crying in the wilderness from Isa 40:3 The voice of him who cries in the wilderness, Prepare the way of Jehovah, make straight a highway in the desert for our God.

I this passage Isaiah is first of all speaking to those who dwelt in exile in Babylon. The message was to them and more specifically to those who would return to the heart of God and leave the world behind. The vast majority of exiles did not return to Jerusalem when they were free to but chose instead to continue to live in exile in a place where they had grown comfortable.

Decades before they had been taken captive by the Babylonians at the hand of God in judgement. Now, when their opportunity came to leave, by staying they were proving that their hearts had been taken captive by the Babylonian system and way of life. God's judgment always brings to light the true state of the heart. The very fact that they chose to stay, highlighted why they had been allowed to be taken captive in the first place. Men so often praise the Lord with their lips but their hearts belong to another.

Now Isaiah is speaking prophetically in this passage not only of the exiles but also of John the Baptist. Mat 3:3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." Now John has also been called to speak to a people in exile. A people who have been cut off from God despite the fact that they were not in physical exile from Jerusalem and the temple but were in exile from the presence of God. The very system and temple that had been designed to worship God and be a dwelling place, a place for God to inhabit, had become devoid of His presence. This was a judgement to bring to light the true state of the heart.

In the first judgement we see that the Babylonian system and way of life prevented most from having any desire to return to Jerusalem. Now we see that when Jesus Himself comes, most reject God in favor of their system that was indeed void of the actual presence of God. They chose instead to follow the outward expressions of empty religion which in turn allowed their hearts to remain unchanged and unchallenged thus allowing them to follow their own desires. Rather than choose the highway through the desert back to the heart of God, most simply chose the status quo, the path that would give them the least amount of trouble. Most men in any age will remain where they are comfortable, comfortable with what they are and what they know. Ask men to give up the comforts of life and control over their own destinies and head off down a road that will take them through the wilderness and they will say no.

Now I would argue that Isaiah is also speaking to us right now. The first people he spoke to in this passage were being called home. John the Baptist was speaking to people who were just about to radically encounter the Christ manifested upon the earth. And now I believe God is speaking to a generation who is making straight a path in the desert, preparing for the imminent return of the Lord. There is a voice today crying from the wilderness. Just as John was positioned outside of the system, the system that was devoid of the presence of God, then we too speak to a similar generation. In none of these examples is the prophet speaking to the un-saved world at large, he is speaking to those who carry the name and the promises of God.

This word speaks from the wilderness to a generation that has had their hearts captured and captivated by the system and way of life of Babylon. The judgement that we are now experiencing is bringing to light the true state of the heart. When God calls and beckons us to leave the world behind, to come unto Him via a highway through the desert, will we respond? The highway represents our hearts and in order to come to God, to follow God, we must be willing to come by the way of the wilderness, the way of trials and tribulations, troubles and sorrows-the way of the cross.

And just as in the days of the exiles, or when Christ came, most today will reject the offer to return to the heart of God. Most will be unwilling to pay the price after counting the cost of what this offer would entail. Yes, salvation is free, the road to God the Father opened by the actions of Jesus our Lord on Calvary, but accepting this offer will cost us everything. Those who attempt to save their lives, to live their best lives now, to live in comfort and without trials, to live a cross-less life, will lose their lives eternally. And those who willingly give up their lives, take up their crosses daily, follow Jesus down the highway that leads through the desert back to the heart of God, with live eternally. The path that we choose here in this life, always leads to our final and eternal destinations. Choose wisely, reject the finite for the infinite, keeping your eye...
es firmly fixed on what is eternal.

Re: The voice of one crying in the wilderness - posted by Jeremy221, on: 2013/9/16 21:15

It is certainly a takin of the cross daily to make every path straight and knock down the mountains of pride and raise the valleys. Amen.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2013/9/16 21:30

Quote:
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And just as in the days of the exiles, or when Christ came, most today will reject the offer to return to the heart of God.
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Amen brother an excellent word. There will coming a new gathering of saints that are of those that have seen repentance and the true Christ and are willing to bear the reproach of Christ. Such groupings will stay and understand the Lordship and Headship of Jesus Christ of His Church.

The Lord will do it before the end of the age.