

The Forgotten Jesus Podcast

S4E10

Who Is This King Of Glory? - (Matthew 3:1-7)

Description – We begin to look today at John The Baptist, and try to ask the question, was John an Essene?

Today we ask the question, was John the Baptist an Essene? But before we get there, we have to ask the question, what is an Essene?

Remember, after Hellenism had swept through Judea, there were 5 main Jewish religious groups

1. Pharisees
2. Sadducees
3. Herodians
4. Essenes
5. Zealots

The Essenes were a group of priests who fled the corruption of the priesthood in Jerusalem and have gone out to the dry, harsh desert wilderness. They've given up the comforts of the priesthood in the city to live devout lives to God.

Matthew 3:1-3

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!" ³ For he is the one spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, who said: A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight!

Isaiah 40:3, 5

³ A voice of one crying out: Prepare the way of the LORD in the wilderness; make a straight highway for our God in the desert. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD will appear, and all humanity together will see it, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.



Two hallmarks of the Essenes

1. Water baptism by immersion
2. Detailed copying of scriptures

Remember, Jews were baptizing before John and Jesus came on the scene. John, and then Jesus, redefined what baptism meant.

For the Jew and especially the Essenes, it was a ceremonial cleansing practice before they went into the synagogue, before they went into the presence of God.

4 areas to cleanse

1. Head - what you think
2. Heart - your emotions
3. Hands - what you do
4. Feet - where you go

They were so copious about copying scriptures that it was a 4 man process.

1. One guy was copying down the word
2. One guy made sure he heard the word properly

3. One guy would be reading in the corner from the scroll they were copying
4. One guy would be over the shoulder of the guy reading to make sure he would pronounce the word properly.

When the copyist would get to the the name of God, YHWH, they would stop copying, go outside to the Mikveh (a baptismal pool used for ceremonial baptism and cleansing) baptize themselves three times for ceremonial cleansing, and then go back in and copy down God's name.

Remember, the Essenes were doing these baptisms and copying of scriptures because they thought that in doing so they would fulfill Isaiah 40:5, and usher in the kingdom of the Messiah.

The priests would stand outside the temple and as the worshippers would come, the priests would ask a series of questions to those who were ascending the hill of the Lord (Jerusalem) to stand on the mountain with God.

Psalm 24:1-3

¹ The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the Lord; ² for he laid its foundation on the seas and established it on the rivers. ³ Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?

David wrote this psalm as the Ark of the Covenant came to enter the city of Jerusalem and be brought to the Tabernacle.

Leviticus - rules on lambs and being presented to be sacrificed.

Psalm 24:4-5

⁴ The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not appealed to what is false, and who has not sworn deceitfully. ⁵ He will receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Psalm 24:7-10

⁷ Lift up your heads, you gates! Rise up, ancient doors! Then the King of glory will come in. ⁸ Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle. ⁹ Lift up your heads, you gates! Rise up, ancient doors! Then the King of glory will come in. ¹⁰ Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD of Armies, he is the King of glory.

So they're saying this as the ark is being brought into the city, and then fast forward 1000 years later when Jesus rides into town on a Donkey. Jesus arrives at the same time that the priests are asking, "Who is this king of glory..." from Psalm 24.

Matthew 21:8-9

⁸ A very large crowd spread their clothes on the road; others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them on the road. ⁹ Then the crowds who went ahead of him and those who followed shouted: Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!

So the priests are going through their routine, crying out, “Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?”

Matthew 21:10-11

¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in an uproar, saying, “Who is this?” ¹¹ The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

The crowd was asking, “Who is this king of glory?” And they answered, “The prophet Jesus.”

They’d heard the teaching, they’d seen the miracles, they put all of it together and connected the dots. The people knew who Jesus was, but he was betrayed and killed by the religious elite, the Pharisees & Sadducees who felt Jesus was a threat to their positions of power.

(Next time, was John an Essene, part 2)