



THE KINGDOM

Opening acts get people ready for
what's getting ready to happen.

From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Matthew 4:17 NIV

The kingdom had come near
because the king had come near.

There would be no neutral ground.

Jesus' Opening Act

John the Baptist

In those days John the Baptist
came, preaching in the
wilderness of Judea

Matthew 3:1 NIV

and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Matthew 3:2 NIV

This is he who was spoken of
through the prophet Isaiah: “A
voice of one calling in the
wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for
the Lord, make straight paths for
him.’”

Matthew 3:3 NIV

Listen! It's the voice of someone shouting, "Clear the way through the wilderness for the Lord! Make a straight highway through the wasteland for our God!"

Isaiah 40:3 NLT

Fill in the valleys, and level the mountains and hills. Straighten the curves, and smooth out the rough places.

Isaiah 40:4 NLT

Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The Lord has spoken!”

Isaiah 40:5 NLT

**A voice said, “Shout!” I asked,
“What should I shout?” “Shout
that people are like the grass.
Their beauty fades as quickly as
the flowers in a field.**

Isaiah 40:6 NLT

The grass withers and the flowers
fade beneath the breath of the
Lord. And so it is with people.
The grass withers and the flowers
fade, but the word of our God
stands forever.”

Isaiah 40:7-8 NLT

O Zion, messenger of good news,
shout from the mountaintops!
Shout it louder, O Jerusalem.
Shout, and do not be afraid. Tell
the towns of Judah, “Your God is
coming!”

Isaiah 40:9 NLT

This is he who was spoken of
through the prophet Isaiah: “A
voice of one calling in the
wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for
the Lord, make straight paths for
him.’”

Matthew 3:3 NIV

*“I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.”
John beckons you away from that place called
civilization where civilized sinners are all too
easily duped into believing the lie. Leave that
place where you are easily tricked into believing
that your job is your life, your family is your life,
your possessions are your life.*

Leave that place where trivial pursuit is not just a game but a way of life. Leave that place where death masquerades as life, where the person who is “living it up” has made pleasure into a god, where the person who is said to have lived a “full life” may never have been converted,

where “real life” has nothing to do with Christ but just getting by in a dog-eat-dog world. Leave that place where people think they have civilized sin, but where, in fact, sin has transformed them into savages at heart.

Chad Bird

John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.

Matthew 3:4 NIV

People went out to him from
Jerusalem and all Judea and the
whole region of the Jordan.

Matthew 3:5 NIV

Confessing their sins, they were
baptized by him in the Jordan
River.

Matthew 3:6 NIV

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”

Matthew 3:7 NIV

Produce fruit in keeping with
repentance.

Matthew 3:8 NIV

And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

Matthew 3:9 NIV

The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

Matthew 3:10 NIV

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Matthew 3:11 NIV

His winnowing fork is in his hand,
and he will clear his threshing
floor, gathering his wheat into the
barn and burning up the chaff
with unquenchable fire.”

Matthew 3:12 NIV

**Don't confuse the religion of men
with the Kingdom of God.**

Religion says God loves you but
He doesn't like you.

Religion keeps you uncertain
about your relationship with God.

Religion uses fear as a motivator.

Religion feeds pride
through comparison.

Religion makes us more
angry and less loving.

Religion turns truth into a weapon.

Religion becomes a kingdom in
and of itself that can cause us to
miss the Kingdom of God.

And a voice from heaven said,
“This is my Son, whom I love;
with him I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3:17 NIV

The king had come to die
on the cross,
in my place,
for my sin.