

John 02 – Understanding John *Baptist* and Prophet

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John 1:19-28

Johns Are Related to Jesus Q&A

- Elisabeth, mother of John Baptist, was cousin (degree unknown) to Mary, mother of Jesus
 - Gabriel explains this to Mary, and us, during his announcement of Mary's coming conception of Messiah
- Salome, Mary's sister, was very probably mother of John Apostle making him also a cousin of Jesus
 - Explains why Jesus entrusted Mary to John's care

<http://www.keps.org.ca/html2004/20041022.htm>

John's Birth Miraculous Also

- Gabriel announced to Zechariah during his offering of incense in the Holy Place, that Elisabeth his wife would become pregnant though postmenopausal Q&A 1:6-20
 - Zechariah, in good Old Testament fashion, asked for a sign: struck with dumbness until circumcision of child HC= 1:22
 - When he agreed to Elisabeth's naming of child he was able to speak, prophesying John's purpose: preparing people for the coming Messiah Q&A 1:76-79

Removing the Myths

- Many believe John Baptist was an Essene because he lived in the wilderness apart from general society
 - No evidence John doctrine followed Essene beliefs
- Many believe John Baptist was a Nazarite because of the prohibition to abstain from alcohol (Other rules)
 - Priests commanded to avoid alcohol during their service; John's mission would be continual

<http://www.satanpeople.com/essenes>

John Baptist Peculiarities

- He lived in the wilderness across the Jordan (Mt 3:10)
 - He wore coarse burlap with a leather belt Reminiscent of Elijah
 - He ate locusts and honey
- His ministry attracted large crowds of believers (Mk 1:4-5)
 - Taught repentance to enter the coming kingdom
 - Performed baptisms of those who claimed repentance

Messianic Expectations

- Ever since the visions and teachings of the prophet Zechariah people looked for Messiah (See Lessons)
- Because of history of oppression since Diaspora people believed only Messiah(s) could bring independence and hope
- Partisan (terrorism) warfare became common: Zealots

John's Ministry Attracted Attention

- John's message of repentance attracted large crowds
 - This would have come to the notice of the Romans
 - This did attract the attention of Jewish Sanhedrin
- Envoys were sent to determine:
 - John's intent: Religious, rebellion, both?
 - John's message: What did he mean by repentance?

Envoy's Question

- "Who are you?" they asked. Implication: Messiah?
 - John answers their indirect question directly - No.
- Their next questions span cultic Jewish history
 - "Are you the Prophet?" (Dt 18:12-18)
 - "Are you Elijah?" (Mal 4:5)
- John denies both of these identities

John's Testimony of Himself

- Envoy asked John to define himself since he has denied traditional Jewish eschatological identities
- John identifies himself as, "...the voice of one crying out in the wilderness..." (Jn 1:6-8)
 - John identifies himself simply as *the voice* or the herald
 - John heralds the coming of one who is *beyond greatness*

The Voice: Conduit for God's message - Inspiration

Origin of Baptism?

- Our question is: Where did baptism come from?
 - Some attribute it to Proselyte Baptism
 - Ushered Gentiles into Jewish faith; doubtful Jews would have accepted this since John not teaching a new faith
 - Ablations for the priests; however, not for everyone else
 - Practiced by Essences; true, but they rejected sacrificial system making their beliefs self-righteous works also

<http://www.satapatpeople.com/essenes>

Why are you baptizing?

- Real issue: What does this baptism mean? Repentance
- John claims nothing *special* in his baptism: Only water
- John speaks of Messiah's baptism of Spirit (Lk 3:15-17)
 - Matthew also writes: "...who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit..." meaning Jesus (Mt 3:11)
 - Paul contrasts John's water & Christ's Spirit baptisms (Ac 19:1-7)

John Describes His Baptism

- Baptism of Repentance (Lk 3:1-8)
 - The Mosaic Law has no basis for baptismal repentance
 - John has not linked baptism to cultic rituals or claims
 - John's & Christ's baptisms admit spiritual repentance (1Pe 3:18-22)
- There is Old Testament foundation for repentance apart from the Mosaic cultic sacrificial ritual from David (Ps 51:16-17)

What is Repentance?

- Repentance is described but not defined in OT (Is 55:6-7)
 - It is a *turning away* from sin by turning to the Lord
- The Law produced condemnation, not repentance (Ro 7:7-13)
 - Godly repentance begins where the Law stops (He 5:1; 10:17)
 - But being *sorry* is not godly repentance (2Co 7:10)
 - Natural man cannot seek godly repentance (Ro 7:10-18)

Repentance is Gift from God

- Law took 1400 years preparing mankind to *hear* the message of salvation which must begin with repentance
 - His baptism was a public admission of one's repentance
 - This was John's *preparing the people* to hear the Christ
- However, until Pentecost, there was no New Covenant, new creation; i.e., baptism of the Holy Spirit by Christ (2Co 5:17-19)

One Crying Out

- This is what Isaiah meant by "...prepare the way of the Lord..." (Is 40:3-5)
 - John is crying out repent; i.e., understand you are sinful before holy God: prepare your hearts to meet Him
 - In true prophetic fashion there is a near view (First Advent) and a far view (Second Advent)
 - Lowly Messiah - Baptize with Spirit
 - Kingly Messiah - Winnow people with fire (Tribulation)

Reinforces Opening Hymn (Jn 1:6-8, 19)

- John *Apostle* carefully writes that John *Baptist* testifies that he is merely the witness to the coming Messiah
 - He is not the *Light* no matter how the question phrased
 - He is the herald to the *Light* who is coming into world
- John *Baptist* announces fulfillment of the Law in Jesus
- Thus, John *Baptist* presages the end of his ministry

Elijah Confusion

- Did John *Baptist* lie when he denied being Elijah?
 - The envoy asked him if he was Elijah (Resurrected)
 - John *Baptist* truthfully stated he was *not* that Elijah
- Christ stated John *Baptist* came in the *spirit* of Elijah (Mt 17:9-13)
 - Precedent: Elisha received *spirit* of Elijah but remained Elisha (2K 2:19)

What If...

- What if John *Baptist* claimed to be Elijah, how could he prove his claim?
 - He would need two or more witnesses; no signs (Jn 9:15)
 - He would be the *focus* of attention not Messiah
- This could be understood as a temptation [testing] of John *Baptist* faithfulness to God's mission for him

Testimony of Christ to John

- Not only did Christ say John Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah (like Elisha he kept his own self-awareness)
 - He also said John was the greatest of all born of women, including Cain, raised as man's original savior
 - Yet, everyone who is born of the Spirit is greater than John Baptist pointing to the New Covenant and its attendant new nature based on Messiah's sacrifice
(Jc 3:31-34; He 11:13-16)

John Baptist as Levite

- John Baptist fulfills two roles heralding Christ's coming
 - As a Levite in line for the priesthood and recognizing the superiority of Christ's ministry he symbolizes the completion of the Levitical priesthood
 - Thus this ends the cultic Law which pointed people to the One who fulfilled the Law, & their failure to do so
(Ge 4:6-7; Ro 4:13-15)
 - Repentance then leads to salvation in Christ with the baptism of the Holy Spirit - New Covenant

Repentance is Submission

- There is another facet to repentance not considered
- Repentance, turning from sin to God is submission
 - Admission of one's sin *proves* Law is just and everyone's failure to provide own holiness
 - Old Testament goal of the Law; repentance, for without repentance there is no forgiveness of sin (Le 10:10-11)