

Lighthouse Bible Church

August 5th, 2012

John 1: 19 – 28

‘The Testimony of John the Baptist’ *scripture reading Luke 3: 3 - 9*

Stand – Read – Pray

Last time we saw that the Apostle John said that the Word that was in the beginning with God and that was God, became flesh and dwelt among us. And of course he was talking about Jesus, the Son of God, God taking on human form.

John described Jesus as the only one beloved of the Father and that He had all of the character qualities and attributes of the Father summed up in being full of **grace** and **truth**.

John said that the fullness of Christ has been given to all believers so that the grace of Christ abounds in the life of all believers, non ending. John says that Jesus came to **declare** or **explain** or to **reveal** God to us because we could not find Him on our own, we could not know Him on our own.

John has been sharing about a man named John the Baptist who was sent from God to testify about Jesus. You remember that John the Baptist had a calling from God that was prophesied as far back as **Isaiah 40: 3** where it was said of him that he would be **the voice of one crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord**.

You remember his miraculous birth that Luke recorded in **Luke 1: 11 – 17** *Read and Review briefly angel Gabriel, Zacharias unbelief and not able to speak.* Well, when all was said and done **Luke 1: 65 -66** said **then fear came on all who dwelt around them and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts saying ‘what kind of child will this be?’**

Well, for about 30 years nobody knew what kind of child he would be. Then all of a sudden he comes on the scene in the wilderness dressed like Elijah the prophet crying out to the people to repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand and telling them that he is the fulfillment of what the prophet Elijah said, he was ‘one crying in the wilderness, making a path for the Lord’.

Mark writes in **Mark 1: 4** that John the Baptist **came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.** He says **all the land of Judea and Jerusalem went out to see him.**

This is around the fall of 26 AD and in the chronology of things, Jesus had already come to him and been baptized. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the baptism of Jesus and they all record that after His baptism the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended on Him like a dove and a voice from heaven said ‘this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased’. **Verse 32** says about dove..

They were coming out from all over to see and hear this man. After 400 years of silence, was this the prophet foretold by the scriptures, was this the Messiah foretold by the prophets, who is the guy? So the Apostle John writes about **the testimony of John** the Baptist in **Verse 19** **when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him that very question who are you?**

Verse 19 says **the Jews sent priests and Levites** to ask him this question. Look at **Verse 24** **now those who were sent were from the Pharisees.** This is the religious group of **Jews** known as the Sanhedrin which is made up of Sadducees and Pharisees which run the temple worship using both priests and Levites.

This was the religious group that was highly influential in the time of Christ and highly antagonistic against Christ. This was the group that Jesus always denounced, always spoke against because of their false religious works righteousness system of religion that pushed people away from heaven 2 hell.

Several times recorded in the book of John, they wanted to kill Jesus by stoning Him to death.

John 5: 16, 18

John 8: 40 – 41, 44, 48, 59

John 11: 47 – 48 at the raising of Lazarus **53**

John 12: 10 – 11

Matthew 12: 14 because of healing on the Sabbath day

Matthew 15: 7 – 9

Matthew 22: 15

Matthew 23: 1 – 5a, 13 – 15, 25 – 28, 33

These are the ones whom the apostle John says Jesus came to His own and they did not receive Him. Even before John the Baptist and Jesus began their public ministry, the Pharisees and Sadducees already had the reputation for religious hypocrisy and already had in place a man made system of religious achievement.

This is the group that came out to see and hear John and all John records here is that they ask **who are you** and **why are you baptizing?** Let's see his full response back in **Matthew 3: 7 – 12** which is similar to what was read earlier.

But in answer to their question **who are you**, he gives the following answers in Verses 20 – 24. The question, who are you, almost assumes that they believe that he could be the promised Messiah as **Luke 3: 15** says.

Verse 20: he confessed and did not deny, but confessed 'I am not the Christ'.

Like he said back in verse 8 'I am not the Light, I came to bear witness of the Light. And now he says '**I am not the Christ**, I am bearing witness of Him so that all could believe. He emphatically, by the way the sentence structure is, denies that he is the Christ, the promised Messiah.

So the next question they ask him in **Verse 21** is **What then? Are you Elijah?** Why would they ask that? Well, because the prophecy of **Malachi 4: 5** which says **behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.** You can read **Matthew 17: 10 – 13** where Jesus says that John the Baptist was the fulfillment of Elijah coming, only in the sense of his likeness and ministry and message like that of Elijah.

And John the Baptist had warned the Pharisees and Sadducees of the coming judgment of God as we read in earlier in Matthew. So maybe they think that this is Elijah come back. *Jewish Passover leaves an empty chair.*

John says **I am not Elijah.** Then they ask **are you the Prophet?** Back in **Deuteronomy 18: 15** there was a prophecy about a special man who would be raised up from among them. It says **the Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear..**

There was always that anticipation of this Prophet and some thought it may have been John the Baptist and some thought it may have been Jesus. In **John 6: 14** it says **then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said ‘this is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world’.** Later in **John 7: 40** it says **therefore many in the crowd when they hear this saying said ‘truly this is the Prophet, others said this is the Christ.**

John’s response to the question ‘are you the Prophet’ is **no.** Then in **Verse 22** **they said to him ‘who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself.** John says in Verse 23

Verse 23 **He said I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness make straight the way of the Lord as the prophet Isaiah said.**

John says, I am not the Christ, I am not Elijah and I am not the prophet and I shouldn't even be mentioned in the same sentence with them. As a matter of fact he will say in **Verse 27 I am not worthy to loose His sandal strap.**

I think that is one of the reasons why Jesus said in **Matthew 11: 11 among them that were born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist.** He recognized that his calling was from God, his gifting was from God, his message was from God and he was deserving of none of it.

He is a lot like the apostle Paul who said in **Ephesians 3: 8 I am less than the least of the saints** and in **1st Corinthians 15: 9** where he said **for I am the least of the apostles who am not worthy to be called an apostle.**

It wasn't a false humility that they had, it was a sense of unworthiness for what they had been called to do. In **Luke 17: 7 - 10** Jesus had just been teaching about answering the call to serve without any special recognition for doing it and then He says in verse 10 **so likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say 'we are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do'.**

At those times when we think we are really something because of what we are doing, we need to stop and say 'even in all that we are doing, we are unprofitable servants' not worthy of any recognition for what we are doing. That is true humility and true service for the Lord and that is the way J. the B. was.

He says I am a **nobody** preparing the way for a **somebody**. And if you think about it, his ministry was vital in preparing the hearts of the people to receive the coming Messiah by **making straight the way of the Lord**. In other words to prepare their hearts to receive the Messiah.

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Introduction and Review:

Luke 1: 11 – 17, 65 – 66, 76
Mark 1: 4

Verse 19 The Jews sent by the Pharisees

John 5: 16, 18, John 8: 40 – 41, 44, 48, 59
John 11: 47 – 48, 53
John 12: 10 – 11, Matthew 12: 14
Matthew 15: 7 – 9, Matthew 22: 15
Matthew 23: 1 – 5, 13 – 15, 25 – 28, 33
Matthew 3: 7 – 12, Luke 3: 15

Verses 20-21 Not Christ, Elijah or the Prophet

Malachi 4: 5, Matthew 17: 10 – 13
Deuteronomy 18: 15, John 6; 14
John 7: 40

Verses 22 – 23 The Humility of John the Baptist

Matthew 11: 11, Ephesians 3: 8
1st Corinthians 15: 9, Luke 17: 7 - 10

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