

11/12/95

John, The Faithful Witness

Jn. 1:19-37

John the beloved in writing his gospel years after by choosing specific material that are not found in the other gospels in order to provide us with clear evidence that Jesus was the Son of God and Messiah that we may believe and have eternal life in His name. Jn. 20:31

The witness of John the Baptist is such a selection in that it clearly proves Jesus to be the Son of God in fulfillment of his calling as a faithful witness.

We want to look at three factors that contributed to John the Baptist's faithful witness of Jesus, which will in turn help us to be faithful witnesses of Jesus.

- I. John knew who he was, the voice in the wilderness. vs. 19-23
 - II. John knew what he was called to do, baptize in water. vs. 24-28
 - III. John knew who he was to point people to, Jesus. vs. 29-37
- I. John knew who he was, the voice in the wilderness. vs. 19-23**

- A. The occasion of the delegation sent by the Jews from Jerusalem gave opportunity for John the Baptist to reveal his witness. vs. 19
 - 1. John the beloved is the only one who tell us that a delegation from Jerusalem.
 - a. The delegation was made up of priests and Levites who cared for the temple sacrifices and service.
 - b. The delegation was sent by the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews, composed of the chief priests, elders and scribes, 70 in number after the Old Testament. Num. 11:16
 - 2. John the beloved tells us that this was the testimony of John the Baptist to that delegation sent by the Jews.
 - a. The word testimony or witness is a favorite word of John used in it's various forms 26 times.
 - 1) The word means a reliable source of information to something observed or known or the disclosing of a record to another, much like a witness in a court of law.
 - 2) John the Baptist was God's witness to testify to the world about Jesus that all through John might believe that Jesus was the light. vs. 6-7
 - * There had been a 400 year since the last prophet had spoken for God. Malachi.

- 2) The message was repent in view of your sinful life-style and in view of the Lord's coming to judge man.
- b.** The term "Jews" is used by John over 70 times and the majority of the time it is used as the religious leaders who opposed Jesus.
- 3.** John the Baptists was asked a single question, "Who are you?"
- a.** The multitudes were coming out to be baptized by John from Jerusalem, all Judea and all the regions around the Jordan. Matt. 3:5, Lk. 3:7
- b.** The Sanherin was religious watchdog over self appointed Messiah's.
- B.** The answer of John the Baptist reveals who he was not. vs. 20-21
- 1.** John the Baptists confessed and did not deny, "I am not the Christ". vs. 20
* The people were in expectation and all the people reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not. Lk. 3:15
- 2.** John the Baptists confessed to a second question that he was not Elijah. vs. 21a-d
- a.** Malachi had prophesied that Elijah would come before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord and he would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children's hearts to the parents. Mal. 4:5
- b.** John the Baptist certainly fit the description and likeness of Elijah.
- 1)** John was preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!". Matt. 3:1-2
- 2)** "John the Baptist was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Matt. 3:4
- 3)** John the Baptist was Elijah according to Jesus, His messenger to prepare His way in the short term fulfillment, for he came in the power and the spirit of Elijah as the prophecy of his birth. Mal. 3:1, Math. 11:9-14, Lk. 1:17, 7:25-28
- 3.** John confessed to a third question that he was not "the prophet". vs. 21e-g
* The reference is to the ultimate prophet, the Messiah spoken by Moses. Deut. 18:15
- C.** The answer of John the Baptists reveals who he was. vs. 22-23
- 1.** John the Baptist confesses, I am "The voice crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord". vs. 23, Is. 40:3

* A voice of a carrier, the focus being on his work not his person!

2. The three synoptic say, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight".
Matt. 3:3, Mk. 1:3b, Lk. 3:4b

* After the practice of announcing the arrival of a king or a dignitary by filling the holes in the road and making the road as straight as possible to assure his speedy arrival. Lk. 3:5

- a. John the Baptist was the prophet of God, sent by God as the precursor or forerunner of Jesus who broke the 400 year silence. vs. 6-7

* Jesus called him the greatest of all the prophets of the Old Testament for he closed the Old Testament Canon according to Jesus. Matt. 11:11-13, Lk. 7:28a

- b. John the Baptists was to bare witness that the "Eternal Logos" who became flesh was coming after him and was of higher rank than him. vs. 15

John was a faithful witness of Jesus because he knew who he was, the voice in the wilderness!

II. John knew what he was called to do, baptize in water. vs. 24-28

- A. The Baptist was not to be intimidated by the religious men of his day regarding his ministry of baptism. vs. 24-25.

1. The Pharisees were the ones who sent the delegation and were one of the religious groups of the Sanhedrin, the other was the Saducees. vs. 24

1) The Pharisees were the religious ritualists that epitomized hypocrisy and self-righteousness.

2) The Saducees were the wealthy aristocrats of the priestly line, who did not believe in angels, spirits or the resurrection as the Pharisees did.

* The Baptist called them "Brood of vipers" and warned them that they would not escape God's judgment to come just because they Abraham as their father.

Matt. 3:7-12, Lk. 3:7-9

2. The delegation asked why he was baptizing if he was not Messiah, Elijah or the prophet? vs. 25

- a. Baptism was only for proselytes.

1) Symbolic of cleansing.

2) Symbolic of dedication.

- b. Baptism for a Jew was an unheard thing.

1) They were the children of Abraham.

2) They were the people of God.

- B. The Baptist's was to declare the difference between his ministry and Jesus'. vs. 26-27

1. He baptized with water as the forerunner for repentance for the remission of sins an outward ritual. vs. 26a-c

* Remember that these priest were fully aware that John's dad Zachariah was of the priestly order and therefor so was John!

2. He, Jesus who stood among them whom they did not know, He who was coming after him was preferred higher than him, He would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire, an inward transformation to validate the outward ritual. vs. 26d-27c

* Matthew an Luke declare the important difference. Matt. 3:11, Lk. 3:16

3. He was called to be the Messiah's servant, though John declares he did not think himself worthy of the lowliest task of washing His feet. vs. 27d

C. The Baptist was to perform his ministry at the location that God chose. vs. 28

1. The location was not in the center of Jerusalem.
2. The location was not to be in the priesthood at the temple.
3. The location was not to be in the midst of the a select few or wealthy people.
4. The location was to be in the wilderness and into all the regions around Jordan

preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Lk. 3:3

John was a faithful witness of Jesus because he knew what he was called to do, baptize in water !

III. John knew who he was to point people to, Jesus. vs. 29-37

A. John the Baptist was to point man to "The Lamb Of God". vs. 29

1. The occasion took place the following day, Jesus was walking towards John the Baptist.

* Jesus had already defeated Satan in the wilderness forty-one days prior.

2. The proclamation identified His person in fulfillment of all the prophecies, promises and types of the Old Testament law. Gen. 22, Ex. 12, Is. 53

- a. Every Jew understood the sacrificial system for atonement.
- b. Every Jew knew that only the life of another as a substitute, could expiate for anther's sins.
- c. Every Jew knew that the atoning power was in a spotless lamb and it's blood contained the life of the flesh which was the basis of atonement. Lev. 17:11

3. The proclamation identified His mission to take away the sin of the world. 2Cor. 5:21, 1Jn. 2:2, 3:5
 - a. The phrase "Lamb of God" is unique of John, found only twice. 1:29, 1:36
 - b. The term "Lamb" a synonym for "the Lamb of God" is found once in Acts and 1Peter but 28 times in the book of Revelation. Acts 8:32, 1Pet. 1:19
 - c. The word "sin" is singular, all of rebellion and shortcoming will be atoned for.
 - d. The extent is the benefit is the world, no one is excluded. Jn. 3:16

- B.** John the Baptist was to point man to the "Baptizer of the Holy Spirit". vs. 30-33
1. "The Lamb of God" would be the Eternal One who would come after John and ranked higher than him. vs. 30. 6-8, 15
* The statement can only mean one thing, from eternity, for John was six months older than Jesus!
 2. The "Lamb of God" was not known to the Baptist to be Jesus his cousin, until he baptized Him. vs. 31-33
 - a. The purpose of John the Baptist's ministry of baptism was that "The Lamb of God", "The Eternal God" might be revealed to Israel. vs. 31

* When Jesus came to John to be baptized, John tried to prevent Him saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus said, "Permit it so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness". Matt. 3:14-15

- b. The sign given to John the Baptist by God the Father to identify the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit, was that the Spirit would descend on Jesus and remained on Him. vs. 32-33

C. John the Baptist was to point man to the Son of God. vs. 34

1. He saw that He, "The Lamb of God" was the "Son of God".
 - a. The pre-existent One.
 - b. The eternal One.
 - c. The incarnate One.
2. He testified that He, "The baptizer with the Holy Spirit" was the "Son of God".
 - a. The second person of the Trinity.
 - b. The True light that lights every man that comes into the world.
 - c. The Creator of everything.

D. John the Baptists pointed Andrew and John to Jesus. vs. 35-37

1. John the Baptist was standing with Andrew and John the beloved. vs. 35
 2. John the Baptist was looking, the word means with a penetrating gaze as Jesus walked away from him and proclaimed as he pointed to Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God". vs. 36
 3. Andrew and John the beloved were the first two disciples of Jesus to follow Jesus. vs. 37
- c. John the Baptist declared to his disciples one day as they were concerned that all the people were going to Jesus three important things. Jn. 3:25-30
- 1) He clearly told them that a man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from above. Jn. 3:27
 - 2) He clearly told them he was not the Christ but the friend of the bridegroom who rejoices when he hears the voice of the groom who has the bride. Jn. 3:28-29
 - 3) He clearly told them that he had to decrease and Jesus had to increase. Jn. 3:30

John was a faithful witness of Jesus because he knew who he was to point people to, Jesus!

Conclusion

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