



Calvary of Albuquerque

The Greatest Man Meets the Greatest Lamb - John 1:19-34

From the Series, Believe:879

By Pastor Skip Heitzig

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Everyone is good at something, maybe even great at something. Maybe you're a great artist or a great mom or even a great leader. Jesus said that John the Baptizer was the greatest man who had ever lived (Matt. 11:11). But John knew Jesus to be the greatest One ever—past, present and future - the Sacrificial Lamb sent to remove sin. Today we discover from John the Baptist how to witness for Christ and we look at the identity and the activity of this most unusual man.

OUTLINE

Read John's Profile on Believe879.com

I. The Identity of John the Baptist (vss. 19-23)

A. Negatively:

1. Not Messiah
2. Not Elijah
3. Not "The Prophet"

B. Positively: "*The voice of one crying...*"

II. The Activity of John the Baptist (vss. 24-34)

A. Putting People Under Water

B. Pointing People to the Savior



For Home Fellowships:

1. How does one go about discovering the purpose of his/her life? Can you say why you are here on this earth based on the gifts and callings of God?
2. Why is knowing what you are *not* as important as knowing what you *are*?
3. How do you witness to others around you? How vocal are you? In what ways does your life specifically point to Jesus?

DETAILED NOTES

Everyone is good at something, maybe even great at something. Maybe you're a great artist or a great mom or even a great leader. Jesus said that John the Baptizer was the *greatest man who had ever lived* (Matt. 11:11). But John knew Jesus to be the greatest One ever—past, present and future—the Sacrificial Lamb sent to remove sin. Today we discover from John the Baptist how to witness for Christ and we look at the identity and the activity of this most unusual man.

Great means considerably above average, remarkable, one who stands out from the crowd. While we may think of John as eccentric, odd, unconventional, out of the ordinary, Jesus says none is greater than John the Baptist. The way he lived and the choices he made made John great. Great people decide what is important and put their focus on that.

How can we represent Christ in an unbelieving world? What can we do to promote Christ?

- I. The Identity of John the Baptist (vss. 19-23)- A delegation is sent from the Sanhedrin (70 leaders in charge of the nation's spiritual welfare) to find out who John is. They want to protect the people from false messiahs. Multitudes were going to John for baptism and that drew lots of interest. The term "Jews" is used 71 times by John, more than the other 3 gospels combined. He refers to them legally not

racially, as a group of leaders hostile toward Jesus. Priests and Levites made up the delegation. John's father, Zacharias, was a priest, so John was a "pk" - a preacher's kid. He was a "pk" gone rogue. He didn't just perform rituals he preached. So the delegation came to find out who he was.

A. Negatively:

1. Not Messiah- the delegation thought he may be the messiah, because of the heightened expectation for the messiah's imminent arrival. According to Abba Hillel Silver in the book "The History of Messianic Speculation in Israel," the messiah was expected in the second quarter of the first century CE.
2. Not Elijah- The way he looked and the way he acted made them think of 2 Kings 8 and Malachi 4. There was a prediction that Elijah would come before the Messiah. Even at the Passover there is still a chair left empty for Elijah. The problem of Matthew 11, Jesus said "this is Elijah", but John said he is not. The angel told Zacharias he would come in the "spirit and power of Elijah." John came in the spirit and power of Elijah, and Elijah-like forerunner. Partially fulfilled the prophecy, but the real Elijah will come before the great tribulation, possibly one of the two witnesses of Revelation 11.
3. Not "The Prophet"- According to Ancient Jewish writings Isaiah or Jeremiah would come to restore the ark of the covenant, or could refer to Deuteronomy 18: 15, "another prophet like Moses", the Messiah himself.

B. Positively: *"The voice of one crying..."* - "I am the voice, not the word, the voice; a nobody telling you about a somebody; a road worker, getting the path straight for you to walk on. He could have said, "I'm the son of Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb, the greatest guy who ever lived," but he did not, he just said "I'm the messenger."

1. Early years- John was the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, a miraculous birth. On the day the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias and announced his birth, he asked for a sign and couldn't speak for those 9 months. When Mary visited Elizabeth while pregnant, John the Baptist leapt for joy in her womb.
2. Teenager, later years- John took a Nazarite vow, uncut hair, didn't touch defiled things, consumed nothing of the vine. John lived an uncontaminated life so the message could be preached clearly.

II. The Activity of John the Baptist (vss. 24-34)

1. Putting People under Water - baptism. Not a Christian ritual, but rooted in Judaism. When a gentile converted they had to receive instruction, circumcision and baptism. It was ritualistic cleansing, a sign of leaving the old life to become Jewish. Baptizing those who were Jews was an outward sign of repentance.
2. Pointing People to the Savior - John put the spotlight on Jesus. He was in essence saying, "I am not the issue, He is the issue." John and Jesus were cousins, and because of their family relationship we can place even more weight on his witness for Christ. He was saying Jesus is God. He existed before He came to earth. He was referred to as the Son of God, a name for deity. John called him the Lamb of God, but the people were looking for a lion-like king. People don't use lambs to protect themselves. As the son of a priest using the term lamb spoke of sacrifice. (Lambs to the slaughter, Isaiah 53, and the Passover.) People say Jesus is a good teacher, but that is not why he came, a miracle worker, but that is not why he came, the ultimate example, but not why He came. Jesus was not what they wanted, but what they needed.

How can we make our lives count?

1. Be aware - know who you are, and who you are not. You are not the messiah, you are not the answer, but you can take people to the one who is.
2. Be vocal - be a voice. Tell people the gospel, don't be just an example the word needs a voice, the message needs a messenger.
3. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist was filled from the womb, he was bold and faithful.
4. Be a signpost pointing people to Jesus. It's not about me, point people to the real Jesus, the lamb who died for our sins.

Publications Referenced: "The History of Messianic Speculation in Israel," by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver.

Cross References: Deuteronomy 18:15, 2 Kings 8, Isaiah, 53, Malachi 4, Matthew 17:10, Luke 1:15, John 1:6,7,15, Revelation 11