

"The Interrogation of John the Baptist"

Part 2

John 1:19-28

Introduction: Last week in our study of John we were looking at the witness of John the Baptist. John was a man filled with the Spirit, and he was full of boldness as he proclaimed the arrival of the Messiah.

Notice John 1:19-24

The Pharisees had sent some of their people out to interrogate John because they saw him as a threat to their authority and power over the people.

Mark 1:14-15

⁴ John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

⁵ And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

➤ **The Questioning**

Notice John 1:25

The religious leaders were asking John from whom and when had he received the authority to baptize these people.

We must raise a question here, "What was John's baptism all about?" We know that it was not the same as the baptism we practice in which we publicly identify with Jesus Christ.

Acts 19:1-5

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

² He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

³ And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

⁴ Then said Paul, **John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance**, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

⁵ When they heard this, **they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**.

From these verses we see that there was a difference in the two baptisms.

John called for the people of Israel to repent and to turn to God. They were called to turn away from sin and to turn to the Lord and this was preparation for the coming of the Messiah, whose day was upon them. Those who accepted John's message were called on to make it public. As John preached repentance, those who went into the waters to be baptized acknowledged their sins and made a commitment to live their lives separated from sin. John was very straight forward and expected them to live in obedience to the Word of God.

Matthew 3:7-9

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, *O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

⁸ Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

⁹ And think not to say within yourselves, **We have Abraham to our father**: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

I bolded and underlined what John said here because we needed to see who John was speaking to. He was calling upon the Jews to repent and to be baptized. This was like a slap in the face to these religious leaders and many of the Jews. Notice the words of Morris to better help us to understand why the religious leaders were struggling with John's ministry.

"Baptism was not a new practice in Judaism. It was the regular rite in the admission of converts from other religions. When such a conversion took place, the males of the family were circumcised and all, of both sexes, were baptized. This was seen as the ceremonial removal of all the pollutions contracted in the Gentile world. The novelty in John's case and the sting in his practice was that he applied to Jews the ceremony that was held to be appropriate in the case of Gentiles coming newly into the faith. All Jews were prepared to accept the view that Gentiles were defiled and needed cleansing. But to put Jews in the same class was horrifying. The Jews were God's people already. It is true that on the basis

of certain Old Testament passages some people expected that there would be baptizing when the Messianic age dawned. But John had denied being the Messiah. It was all very perplexing, and the Pharisees wanted to know more about it."

In calling for the baptism of Jews John is declaring that there is something wrong with the religion that was being taught by the religious leaders. This was why they were so set against John.

Getting back to the verse, the religious leaders were questioning John's authority to baptize and call upon the Jews to repent.

Notice John 1:26

This is John's reply to their question of his authority. He does not get into a debate or argument about his authority, but he instead speaks of the Messiah that he had come to prepare the way for. We are not to think that John did not see his baptism as important because he did, but his baptism was pointing to the Messiah and John wanted his audience to know about Jesus and then his baptism.

John tells the Jews that there was ONE standing among them that they did not know. This statement is so sad. The Jews looked forward to the coming of the Promised Messiah and when He came most of them missed Him because He did not fit the picture which they had in their minds of what He would be like and what He would do.

Application:

When I read this, I am reminded of the people that go to church on Sunday to a church that preaches the True Gospel. They sit in the church every week and they do not know the ONE who stands among them. Some miss Him because they have a picture in their minds of what their life would be like if they were to come to Him and they do not like the picture. You see they love their sin, and they see Jesus coming into their life and taking away the sin that they enjoy thus making life miserable for them. He will take the sin away but what they do not understand is that life will be much more enjoyable. They do not realize that they are slaves to their sin and Jesus would set them free.

Notice John 1:27-28

Here again we see the humility of John. We see it in these two statements that he makes. First of all, John was the elder of the two, but Jesus ranked far above John. How far above him did Jesus rank? To the point that John saw himself as being too low to even

loosen the latchet on Jesus' sandal. To better understand this statement, notice the words of Morris.

"The statement, "whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose" means that John is probably referring to the rabbinical saying that "Every service which a slave performs for his master shall a disciple do for his teacher except the loosing of his sandal thong."

The loosening of the sandal latchet was below a disciple to do for his master. This was the duty of a slave. So, when John says that he is not worthy to loosen the latchet John was putting himself below a slave. This is the reverence that John had for Jesus Christ.

Application:

I am convinced that this is what is missing in many churches and in the lives of many believers today. There is very little reverence for the Lord. Many people do not understand the holiness of our Lord.

Revelation 1:12-17

¹² And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

¹³ And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

¹⁴ His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

¹⁵ And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

¹⁶ And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

¹⁷ And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

Paul has a great reminder for each of us in 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 5:10-11

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

¹¹ Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

The "terror" spoken of here works in two ways.

1. It motivated Paul to do all he could to persuade men to be saved. He understood the **TERROR** the unsaved would experience as they will stand in their sin before a Holy Righteous God of judgment
2. It motivated Paul with a reverential fear to be sure to serve the Lord. He knew that one day he would stand before the Lord and answer for how he had used what God had entrusted to him.

➤ **Jesus comes to John the Baptist**

Notice John 1:29

This verse opens up a series of events that happen on consecutive days.

Notice John 1:35, 43, 2:1

Now we need to understand what has taken place before we get into verse 29. Jesus has already been baptized by this time.

Notice John 1:31-33

Here we see that John had already baptized Jesus. Let us notice that account.

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

¹⁴ But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

¹⁵ And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

¹⁶ And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Why was Jesus baptized? We know that He was sinless and had no need of repentance. He was baptized to identify with sinners. He had come to take our place upon the cross so He therefore would identify with sinful man as He would take part in John's baptism.

Not only was Jesus baptized before John 1:29 but it is believed that he had also spent 40 days in the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. Notice the words of Henry Morris.

"This may have been about six weeks after Jesus' baptism following the forty-day testing in the wilderness (Mark 1:11-12), and shortly before Passover (John 2:13), when the people would be thinking about the coming slaying of the Passover lambs."

Conclusion:

Notice the words of an unnamed writer.

"Nothing is more natural than that, with this design, He should return to the presence of John. Was not he the one who had been sent to open the way for Him to Israel? Was it not at his hands that He could hope to receive the instruments which were indispensable to Him for the accomplishment of His task? Jesus Himself (John 10:3) designates John as the porter who opens to the Shepherd the door of the sheepfold, so that He does not have to climb over the wall of the enclosure like the robber, but can enter without violence into the sheepfold."

Next week we will look at the title that John gives Jesus in verse 29, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.