

The Forerunner of Jesus

John 1:19-28

19 ¶ And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? 20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. 21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. 22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? 23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. 24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. 28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. NKJV

In the Apostle John's gospel, he tells us things about John the Baptist that no one else does. But he never refers to him as John the Baptist but always as John. That is because in John's gospel he never refers to himself by name.

- I. He said: "I am
 - A. They came to ask who he was
 - 1. he drew large crowds
 - 2. all went to be baptized by him
 - 3. the Jewish leaders wanted to keep this new movement under control
 - 4. in their minds it was always about the person
 - 5. but John's purpose had little to do with him
 - 6. he came to point to another
 - 7. his message had to do with the Christ and not with who he was
 - 8. sad to say, most of the time what we say has more to do with us than Jesus
- II. 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
 - A. In this he fulfills the prophecy of Mal 4
 - 1. Mal 4:5-6 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. 6 And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." NKJV
 - 2. There was a time in which John fulfilled that passage and a time in which he did not.

- B. This is more than pulling a passage out of the OT to explain what John is doing
 - 1. This is John's commission, his authority for his mission as well as his message.
 - 2. The apostle has all ready told us John was sent from God
 - 3. He has also introduced his mission
 - a. (1:6) There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. (1:7) This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.

III. "Make straight the way of the LORD,"

- A. His message was plain.
 - 1. Repent, make the crooked ways straight.
 - 2. Repent implies that we are headed in the wrong direction and need to be turned around.
 - a. You heard about the man who bought a horse from the old time preacher. Well the preacher had trained the horse differently. So he explained it its new owner that if you wanted the horse to go forward you would say praise the Lord. And the more you said it the faster it would go. He then told the man that the way to get the horse to stop was to say Amen. Well he bought the horse and was ridding along when the horse got spooked by a snake. And away it ran. But the fella for the life of him could not remember the word the preacher had given him to make the silly horse stop. And ans the horse was running he noticed it was heading for a cliff. When just in time he remembered the word and yelled out a big Amen. And the horse stopped. Well the man was so ecstatic that he had gotten the horse to stop right on the edge of the cliff that he forgot was he was doing and said, "Well praise the Lord"
 - b. We folks most people are headed for the cliff of eternal destruction and they don't have a clue on how to stop and most would not want to.
 - c. But John's message to them and our message to them should be repent. Because unless this we turn from our sinful ways we are headed to eternal destruction.
- B. His message was also not about him.
 - 1. Paul's message was not about Paul, or even the people to whom he preached.
 - a. He preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
 - 2. Listen to a preacher to find out what his messages are about. Are they

about him, his ministry, his family, his goals and aspirations.

a. Or are his messages always about the congregation. How they can become something, have something, achieve something.

3. John did not come to tell everyone how great he was or the special commission that he had been given, or how God spoke to him. He came to proclaim Jesus.

a. He did not preach about how to spend 30 days to a happier you.

b. This world does not need to learn how to improve their situation they need to forsake everything and run to the cross.

c. He did not preach about how to become successful in business by giving to the John the Baptist Ministries.

d. He preached about people's greatest need. He told them to repent for the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

4. Repentance is always our greatest need, to turn away from self-serving sin to Christ-serving righteousness.

IV. Jesus does not have the answer, He is the answer.

A. People are trying to get by with \$2 worth of God, that is all that they need.

B. But God will not be trifled with like that.

C. Paul says that God commands all men everywhere to repent.

D. What is your message?