

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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The Kind of Preachers We Need and The Kind of Preacher I Want To Be (Part 8)

Luke 1:13-17

We now come to the third and final main point of this message. John the Baptist not only was Powered by the Spirit, and was a man who Pointed out Sin, but he also **Proclaimed the Savior**. As I tried to make it clear throughout the message, these truths about John all flow from one another. If a man is powered by the Spirit, he will point out sin and proclaim the Savior. However, if he is not powered by the Spirit, then he will neither point out sin nor proclaim the Savior. Also, the Savior cannot be faithfully and truthfully proclaimed without pointing out sin. Until one truly acknowledges his need of a Savior because he is sinful, then he will not call upon Jesus. That is the situation that we find ourselves in today, even in our Fundamental, Independent Baptist churches. We are scared to declare how sinful men are. We do not want to offend them or upset them, so we try to coddle them by ignoring or skipping over their sin. None of the prophets in Scripture did that in either the Old or New Testaments. Jesus did not ignore sin in his ministry. We must not ignore sin either.

John proclaimed the Savior. Several passages could be observed, but notice what he said in John 1:29—*“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”* He repeats the same thought in John 1:36—*“And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!”* John had the unique privilege of being the forerunner of Jesus the Messiah. During his ministry he was often asked, “Are you the Messiah?” He quickly dismissed that notion and said that the Messiah was coming, but that he (John) was preparing the way. When Jesus did make himself known, John identified Jesus as the

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One that they had been looking for. Jesus was the Messiah. He was the Savior that the world desperately needed. John let everyone know that Jesus had come.

Notice three things about this proclaiming of the Savior. John had the wonderful privilege of doing it first, but we can still proclaim the Savior. We do not proclaim that He is coming, but that He has come, provided salvation, and is coming again. In this statement of John, we see The Awareness. John said, *“Behold.”* This word is used of one pointing out or showing. I can only imagine the excitement of John when he saw Jesus. I know that they were cousins, humanly speaking, but the Bible does not indicate that they were together much growing up. In fact, we do know that Jesus grew up in Nazareth in the region of Galilee which was northern Israel. History says that Zacharias and Elisabeth lived south of Jerusalem when Zacharias was not on duty in the temple. John and Jesus could possibly have seen one another only on rare occasions growing up because of the distance between their homes. Regardless of how much they saw one another in their childhood, John was extremely excited when he saw Jesus and wanted everyone to know that the Messiah had come.

As mentioned in the beginning of the message, we have just a brief account of John’s ministry. If he began ministering at the age of 30, his ministry lasted only about six months. Once Jesus came, John’s ministry began to cease and then he was put in prison. But during those six months, John was constantly preparing the way for Jesus. I do not know how much John fully comprehended his ministry. No doubt, Zacharias told him many times what Gabriel had told him in the temple when the announcement was given that John would be born. Perhaps God personally prepared John in the wilderness before he came out and started preaching. We do not know many of the details, but we do know that John was constantly preaching, “The Messiah is coming.” In Matthew 3:11, John said, *“But he that cometh after me is mightier than I.”* The same message is recorded in Mark 1:7, Luke 3:16, and John 1:27. I cannot help but

think that John faithfully and consistently said that the Messiah is coming. He may not have known the exact time, but he knew that he was to prepare the way, and John faithfully did so.

But one day, Jesus was made known to John. That is where we find ourselves in John 1:29. John had been faithfully preaching that the Messiah would come. That day came in John 1:29. Jesus, of course, had been born 30 years before, but it was not until that day that he was made known to everyone as the Messiah. On this particular day, it was time for Israel and the world to know that the Messiah had come. John wanted to grab the attention of everyone. He cried out, “Behold.” This was an attention grabber. It was said so that everyone would pay attention to what was being said. John was saying, “Listen up! I have something very important to say! Stop everything and listen! It is the most important news that you have ever heard!” John wanted everyone to know what he had to say.

After getting their attention, John said that Jesus was “*the Lamb of God.*” What a wonderful description of Jesus! John could have called Jesus many things. He could have said, “Behold the Messiah!” He could have said, “Behold your King!” He could have said, “Behold the Son of Abraham!” He could have said, “Behold the Son of David!” He could have said, “Behold the Branch!” He could have said, “Behold the Son of Man!,” or “Behold the Son of God!” All of these would have been correct and appropriate. He could have used a host of other titles or symbols such as the bullock or goat or turtle dove. But he used, I believe as directed by the Holy Ghost who was in control of John, the phrase, “*the Lamb of God.*”

Every Jew who heard that phrase knew what John was talking about. The lamb was perhaps the most common animal used in sacrifices. The other animals, the bullock, goat, or turtle dove, all had their symbolism, but none were mentioned as often as the lamb. From the time of Abel’s sacrifice of a lamb in Genesis 4:4, to the time of Abraham prophesying of the lamb in Genesis 22:8, to the time of

the lamb being slain as the passover in Exodus 12, the lamb pictured a future salvation. That salvation would now be provided in Jesus Christ. There had been millions of lambs slain down through the years, but they all pointed to Jesus Christ.

Notice that John was particular about Jesus when he said, “*The.*” This was not just another lamb or another way of salvation. This was the fulfillment of all prophecy and the only way of salvation. Jesus would carry the same message during His ministry when He called Himself “*the bread of life,*” “*the light of the world,*” “*the door,*” “*the good shepherd,*” “*the resurrection and the life,*” “*the way, the truth, and the life,*” and “*the true vine.*” I emphasize all of those definite articles because Jesus is the only one. He is the only One that can save. He is the only One that can give life. God had said that He would send the Savior. He did send the Savior—His own Son, Jesus Christ. But He is the only Savior.

John finished the identification of Jesus with the phrase “*of God.*” This was not just any lamb, this was the One that God had told Adam and Eve about in Genesis 3:15. He was the same One that Isaiah described in Isaiah 53:7. God had prophesied over and over again that He would provide salvation. John said that God had kept His word. Jesus was not just a lamb, He was “*the Lamb of God.*” He was the very One that God had said would come. He was sent from God, but He was more than just sent, He was God Himself. He was the second person of the Godhead, the Son of God. He was God incarnate in human flesh. The Father loved us enough to send the Son, and the Son loved us enough to become man, that we might be saved. John made it known to everyone that God had sent the Lamb. God’s word had been fulfilled! Man can now be saved! God did what He said that He would do! Rejoice Israel! Rejoice Gentiles! The Lamb has come!

The final clause of John’s proclamation will be the reason for our eternal adoration of God. John said that this is the Lamb “*which taketh away the sin of the world.*” There are no sweeter words for us

poor sinners to hear. I do not know how many of the Jews of John's day understood what John was saying, but I am glad that I understood it and believe it. Hallelujah! Our sins are taken away! Notice the words that John used—*"taketh away."* Those words mean "to lift up; to carry off; to bear; to remove; to remove the guilt and punishment of sin." The lambs that had been sacrificed in the Old Testament simply covered the sins of the people. The sacrifice had to be repeated. Every day burnt offerings and other sacrifices were offered in the tabernacle and temple. Every year the passover was performed to remind the people of what God had done in delivering them from Egypt and would do in sending a Savior. But now One had come that would not just cover sin. He would take it away—forever. As one writer said, "My sins are gone—under the blood of Jesus." Another said, "Jesus washed my sins away." Hallelujah! Praise to the Lamb that was slain!

Consider also *"the sin of the world."* This probably blew the minds of the Jews of that day. They were God's chosen people, but Jesus did not just come to take away the sins of the Jews. He came to take away the sins of us Gentile dogs, too. Praise God for His mercy and grace that extends to the whole world!

John the Baptist was a great preacher and mightily used of God. He was Powered by the Spirit, He Pointed out Sin, and He Proclaimed the Savior. May we follow his example and be that kind of preacher.