

John 1:19-28
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"A minister was making a wooden trellis to support a climbing vine. As he was pounding away, he noticed that a little boy was watching him. The youngster didn't say a word so **the preacher kept on working, thinking the lad would leave. But he didn't. Pleased at the** thought that his work was being admired, the pastor finally said, "**Well, son, trying to pick up some pointers on gardening?**" " No" he replied. "**I'm just waiting to hear what a preacher says when he hits his thumb with a hammer!**" D.B. Oct. 1 1978

Paul said "ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men" **II Cor. 3:2**
If you are a Christian, somebody is watching you."

Once we claim the name of Jesus as our own, ("Christian") we open our lives to the scrutiny of the world. The more that we speak out on behalf of our Savior, the more the world and other Christians will begin to hold our life under a magnifying glass.

2000 years ago, "**there was a man sent from God, whose name was John.**" **Jn.1:6** .

When these words were uttered no other title or name had to be given. All who read these words then or since then have known to whom the apostle John had reference. He was speaking of **JOHN THE BAPTIST**. He was the original **NON-CONFORMER** when it came to doing things in the traditional accepted way - but that was because he was also a **true TRANSFORMER**.

That is he had allowed God to **TRANSFORM** his life and every aspect of it into a vessel fit for the performance of God's plan for him and he was in the process of **TRANSFORMING others** into vessels fit for the Kingdom of God.

The eyes of the world were upon him and the attention of every Jewish leader was focused on this man and his teaching.

Not because of his large synagogue in which he preached, for in fact he had no building which could contain his message, but rather, "**John the Baptist** came preaching in the wilderness of Judea.\

Math. 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

Not because of the **brand of three piece robe that he wore**, for in fact,"
John had his raiment of **camels hair, and a leather belt** about his waist..."

and, by the way, he wasn't recognized because he ate the trendy food of the day in all the finest restaurants, for in fact, "**his food was locusts and wild honey**" **Math.3:4**

BUT RATHER, THE EYES OF THE WORLD WERE RIVETED ON JOHN BECAUSE HE WAS A MAN WHO HAD COMPLETELY YIELDED HIS LIFE TO GOD

So much so that **Jesus** eulogized him by saying, "**For I say unto you, among men that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than JOHN THE BAPTIST.**" **Lk. 7:28.** (Or see 7:24-28a.)

Luk 7:24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, **What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?**

Luk 7:25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

Luk 7:26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

Luk 7:27 This is *he*, of whom it is written, **Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.**

Mal 3:1 "Behold, I send **My** messenger, And he will prepare the way before **Me**. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.

Luk 7:27 This is *he* of whom it is written: '**BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER BEFORE YOUR FACE, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.**'

Godet explains this change (*in pronouns*) as follows:

In the prophet's view, He who was sending, and He before whom the way was to be prepared, were one and the same person, Jehovah. Hence the *before me* in Malachi. But for Jesus, who, in speaking of Himself, never confounds Himself with the Father, a distinction became necessary. It is not Jehovah who speaks of Himself, but Jehovah speaking to Jesus; hence the form *before Thee*. From which evidence, does it not follow from this quotation that, in the prophet's idea, as well as in that of Jesus, Messiah's appearing is the appearing of Jehovah?

Luk 7:28 **For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.**

GREAT, **not in his own eyes, BUT GREAT IN THE EYES OF GOD** and a true ENIGMA to those who beheld him.

What does such a man have to say of himself?

Lets look in **Jn. 1:19ff.** to see.

I. THE WITNESS OF JOHN CONCERNING HIMSELF

A. JOHN WAS CERTAIN WHO HE WAS NOT. **Jn. 1:19-21** READ

Joh 1:19 Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

Joh 1:20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

Joh 1:21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

It is all too easy for people today to forget who they really are and what it is that God has called them to do. If someone were to **confuse me** with Billy Graham or Charles Stanley or John the Baptist it would be quite flattering. The temptation would be to not deny the mistake but rather to bask in someone else's Glory.

Rather like the Pauper in the "**Prince and the Pauper**". Everyone thought that he was the king, he was dressed like the king and almost before he knew it HE thought he really was the king. Too many people today that God desires to use in His service are deluded as to who they are and as to what it is that God wants them to do.

Chris Christian wrote a book on how to get into the Christian music industry. One of the first suggestions he gives is to determine whether God wants you to have a local ministry or a statewide ministry or national or worldwide ministry. Many who feel called of God to this ministry see themselves in the shoes of Sandi Patty or Cliff Barrows or Kieth Green or some other internationally recognized songster. And with this wrong picture of their God ordained ministry they squander their time and talent and never fulfill the local ministry that God has for them. **Not everybody is called to the limelight!!!** Some have a ministry that will never be covered in "Moody Monthly" or "Christianity Today".

But God's place for them is no less important than that of the SUPER STARS.

The ministry of John The Baptist was not one that transpired in the center of the public's attention. He was not in fine robes or towering temples. But he was God's man performing God's will for **John the Baptist and he wanted no GLORY for himself but only GLORY for the one who had sent him and who was sent to him.**

A. HE WAS CLEAR ON WHO HE WAS NOT. 19-21

Some thought that he might be the Messiah, or Elijah, or one of the other prophets raised from the dead and come to preach to the nation. But to each inquiry, John answered with a humble "no." **John did not have an identity crisis.**

B. HE WAS CLEAR ON WHO HE WAS. 22-23

There was no ambiguity in John's mind as to his call or his purpose. He knew that he was appointed of God and that that appointment carried with it the awesome responsibility of proclaiming uncompromisingly the eternal truths of God's word.

In **Lk. 3:7** when the people came to him he said

"O **generation of vipers**, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance and begin **not** to say within yourselves, we have Abraham as our father; for I say unto you, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham....."

And conviction was wrought in the hearts of the hearers. John could do this for two reasons.

- 1. He was sent from God.**
- 2. He had kept himself free from the defilement of this world.**

AND WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE WALK AS THEY OUGHT TO WALK PEOPLE WILL LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE THAT THEY BRING

"Someone has said " **it's great to be an AMEN Christian, But don't shout it louder than you live it.**"
[Thot. Nov. 12,1973 D.B.]

D.B. Nov. 12, 1973 "there is a legend telling of a great **teacher** who had a strange experience while walking through an **orchard** on a windy day. Coming to a fence which divided the grove from an adjoining forest, he imagined hearing the different types of trees talking to each other. Boastfully, a **common maple** said to a nearby fruit tree " why don't your leaves rustle in the breeze like ours so that you can be heard from a distance?" " **We don't need such useless fluttering to draw attention to our presence; OUR FRUIT SPEAKS FOR US**" was the reply."

Jesus said " **by their fruit ye shall know them**" **Math 7:15-20** And John the Baptist was known by the Fruit of his life.

II Cor. 5:17 ff. says that we are **AMBASSADORS** for Christ and that God has given to us the **MINISTRY of RECONCILIATION** so that everyone of us who name the name of Jesus are to be proclaiming the gospel message just as **FERVENTLY** and just as **FREQUENTLY** as John the Baptist.

He has made us a new creature in Christ Jesus, old things have passed away, all things have become new... **AND we should know just as clearly as John just WHO WE ARE and WHY God has put us where we are.**

There was no confusion in the mind of John as to WHO he was or as to WHY God had sent him

C. HE WAS CLEAR ON WHY HE CAME. 25-26a

John said that he came baptizing with water, the **ministry of a man.**

But that, according to **parallel passage** in **Mark 1:8**, " I indeed have baptized you with water but HE SHALL **BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.**" the **ministry of God.**

John's ministry was limited and short lived. When Christ came into the picture John said." **He must increase but I must decrease**" **Jn. 3:30.**

His ministry was temporal and would cease to be relevant in light of the ultimate and complete revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. John's ministry "**was to bear witness of THAT light**" but "**He was not that light.**"

John knew this and preformed his ministry with JOY, as the Friend of the Bridegroom.

Joh 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the **friend of the bridegroom**, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.

HE WAS CLEAR ON FOR WHOM HE CAME. 26b-27But there standeth one among you, whom you know not... Read **1:26b-27**

And so John told them Who it was that they should focus their attention on.

II. THE WITNESS OF JOHN CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST

A. HE EXHORTED MEN TO MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD. JN. 1:23 & LK.3:4

This was not mere theological philosophizing based upon a book or books which he had read but rather it was **predicated upon HIS PERSONAL DAILY WALK WITH THE LORD.** John walked and ministered in the wilderness because this was God's appointed place for him to be. God had a plan for John's life and John was determined to follow God's roadmap for his life even when it led to the prison of Herod the Tetrarch and to the chopping block. **Luke 3:16-20**

Luk 3:19 But **Herod the tetrarch**, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,
Luk 3:20 also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.

John had to show Christ as the only way of salvation and to do so it **was necessary to show the hypocrisy of the religious establishment of the day.**

B. HE POINTED OUT THE SEVERITY OF THE SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS OF THE RELIGIOUS HYPOCRITES OF HIS DAY. LK. 3:7

The Messiah was in their midst but yet they could not see Him.

John 1:26c

C. HE EXALTED CHRIST, NOT AS A MAN, BUT AS ONE WHO EXISTED PRIOR TO JOHN. Cf.1:27 and 1:15.

Elizbeth was six months pregnant with John when the newly expectant mother of Jesus came to visit and even before the birth of John or Jesus, we read that John leaped in his mothers womb when Mary the mother of Jesus entered the room.

Even though John was older and had begun his ministry before Jesus and had built up a public following and a name spoken on the lips of the entire Jewish world, when Jesus came and began his work John readily conceded that Jesus was the center of attention and in fact John must decrease in order that Jesus might increase. I wonder how many of us have such an attitude about our service for God. If the exaltation of Christ meant our abasement, would we be willing to step from the limelight.

But perhaps more to the point, are we being AMBASSADORS for Christ? When is the last time some one asked you if you were a preacher or bible teacher or religious fanatic?

Is your life-style such that others know that there is something different about you? Have you been **TRANSFORMED** by the renewing of your mind by Christ Jesus or are you **CONFORMED** to the ways of this world.

John the Baptist was a **MAN sent from God**, with a purpose in life, with a proper understanding of who he was and who God was. He spoke unto all men. The self-righteous and the self-abased. His message was the same. Walk in the ways of God or perish in your own ways. The pharisees who were the priests and leaders of the day did not recognize Jesus when he was in their midst. How many are there around us whom we have never introduced Christ to?

DO YOU KNOW JESUS?