

“John and Jesus: Similar but Not the Same”

Luke 7:29-30

Read **Luke 7:26-28**... For the past few weeks we have been studying how, John the Baptizer is the greatest person to be born of a woman, in the natural way; whereas, Jesus was born of Holy Spirit, as the Son of the most High God.

Today we'll compare the ministries of John and Jesus, for although they had similar missions, the results were quite different.

John fulfilled his purpose as the forerunner of the Messiah, calling people to baptism of repentance. Whether a person accepted or rejected John's baptism, had a polarizing effect in the nation of Israel, just as the angel of the Lord had told Zacharias at the temple, concerning the son to be born to his barren wife Elizabeth (**Luke 1:15-17**), "For he [John the Baptizer] will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. It is he who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Read **Luke 7:29-30**... Many of the common people of Israel, along with some tax collectors, hearing John's call to repent and be baptized, they came repenting of their sins, being baptized by John, as a public testimony of their confession.

Baptism was uncommon for Jews, and was normally for Gentiles, those outside the kingdom of God, who but desired to turn from their pagan gods, beliefs and practices, to worship the God of Israel and practice Jewish culture.

For a Jew to be baptized, like a Gentile, was basically a confession of being outside of God's kingdom, acknowledging that their ancestry, covenants, traditions, and rituals, could not save them; they must repent of their sins, trusting in the Lord for salvation like all other people, or remain outside of God's kingdom.

The Pharisees and the lawyers [experts in the Mosaic Law] rejected the very thought that they were sinners, outside of God's kingdom; so they refused to repent and be baptized by John. Being self-righteous law keepers, they considered themselves ceremonially clean before God and spiritually superior to everyone else.

Most of the common people in Israel were excited to have John, a prophet of God, among them, for there had been 400 years of silence since God departed Israel, and no prophet had come from God; not until John came preaching, as the forerunner of the Messiah, just as Isaiah and Malachi had prophesied.

Matthew 3:7-12, "But when [John] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.' As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

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John had made it clear that the One coming after him, the Messiah [Jesus Christ,] would declare a similar message, saving all who repent and believe, while bringing judgement on all who reject His message.

Luke 3:10-14, “And the crowds were questioning him, saying, ‘Then what shall we do?’ And he would answer and say to them, ‘The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.’ And *some* tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’. And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.’ *Some* soldiers were questioning him, saying, ‘And *what about us*, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse *anyone* falsely, and be content with your wages.’”

John, the forerunner of the Messiah, was telling the people what kingdom behavior looks like, for it had been written (**Deuteronomy 6:4-5**), “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might,” (**Leviticus 19:18**), “You shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.”

John’s preaching in **Luke 3** was a preview and a practical application to what Jesus would teach and the Bible declares (**Matthew 22:36-40**), “‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. ‘This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ‘On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets,” (**Luke 6:31**), “Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.”

Most of the religious leaders of Israel weren’t happy with the attention that John had received; they were glad that he was now in prison, unable to publicly proclaim his message that all of Israel needed to repent of sin and change their ways, or suffer the consequences of God’s judgement. The religious elite of Israel would soon turn their attention to Jesus, seeking how to silence Him.

Both John and Jesus openly rebuked the Pharisees and scribes for their insolent and prideful indifference toward their sinfulness (**Matthew 3:7**), “When [John] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, ‘You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’”

Jesus called them hypocrites (**Matthew 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29**), blind guides (**Matthew 23:16, 24**), sons of hell (**Matthew 23:15**), fools (**Matthew 23:17**), whitewashed tombs (**Matthew 23:27**), serpents and a brood of vipers (**Matthew 23:33**).

The ministries and styles of preaching were quite different between John and Jesus; although, in the beginning of both their ministries, they were popular; but as time went by many of the people who heard them were offended by what they had to say, and some of their enemies became hostile.

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Hostility toward John led to his own execution.

Matthew 14:3-5, “When Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. For John had been saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.” Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet. But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Having been prompted by her mother, she said, ‘Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.’ Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests. He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.”

After Jesus had begun His ministry and John had been beheaded, Herod so closely linked the ministry of Jesus with that of John, that he thought Jesus was John resurrected from the dead.

Matthew 14:1-2, “At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus, and said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.”

Hostility toward Jesus led to His own execution, but then, He didn’t stay dead.

Luke 4:16-22, “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.’ And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, ‘Is this not Joseph’s son?’”

Luke 4:28-30, “And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, He went His way.”

Many attempts were made to arrest, capture, and kill Jesus, but it would only happen when God ordained it to happen, as Peter declares (**Acts 2:22-24**), “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.”

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The religious leaders of Israel refused to confess their sin, let alone would they repent and be baptized. They rejected the authority of John as a prophet of God; they rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and they held contempt for anyone who would receive the teachings of either John or Jesus.

Both John (**Matthew 3:7**) and Jesus (**Matthew 23:33**), called the Pharisees, “a brood of vipers,” and they also condemned them (John in **Matthew 3:7**; Jesus in **John 8:24**) for their unwillingness to repent and be saved.

Israel’s religious leaders considered themselves to be righteous [right with God], because as Israel they considered themselves God’s chosen, God’s people of the covenants made through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David.

Israel’s religious elite were superficially/outwardly keeping the law, and so, in their corrupted thinking they had no need to repent, let alone to be baptized. Truth be told, they had no need for John the Baptizer or Jesus of Nazareth, for they considered them to be enemies of Judaism and therefore enemies of God.

John’s baptism of repentance was a one-time public declaration of a person’s awareness of being outside of the kingdom God, it was a statement of the condition of one’s conscience to which, at that time, there was no remedy, for Jesus had not yet been crucified.

Earlier we read from **Matthew 3:11** where John said, “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

Water symbolizes a desire for a clean conscience, i.e., to acknowledge your sins, to publicly state that you have offended God and are seeking God’s forgiveness.

Holy Spirit symbolizes spiritual birth (**John 1:12-13; 3:5-8**) of each genuine believer (**Ephesians 1:13-14**, marked and protected by God’s Spirit; **1Corinthians 12:13**, baptized [placed, immersed] into one body, the Church; **Colossians 1:18**, of which Christ is the Head).

Fire symbolizes judgment, those who reject Christ do not have the Holy Spirit in them, and are therefore doomed to a fiery destruction (**Matthew 3:10, 12**).

True repentance [the turning away from sin to salvation, from loving self to loving God] involves a deep sorrow brought on by the realization that you are a sinner, separated from the love and life of God, until you repent of our sin and believe in God’s Son for salvation, placing you in Christ.

2Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

True repentance that leads to eternal life will bring about obvious, verifiable, observable, undeniable changes in the way you think, speak, and act; this teaching is reiterated throughout the New Testament, which declares that salvation, the eternal forgiveness for sins, is granted only to those who repent and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Mark 1:15, Jesus said, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

February 19th, 2023 – (full notes)

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Peter at Pentecost preached (**Acts 2:21**), “And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,” (**Acts 2:38**), “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Peter, standing before the rulers and the elders of the people (**Acts 4:12**) declared, “there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 10:34-43, “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)— you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

1Timothy 1:15, “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

John came calling Israel to acknowledge their sins, repent, and change the way they live, by treating others the way they themselves want to be treated.

Jesus came calling all people to repent of their sins and believe in Him for forgiveness, so that we might be forever changed by God’s Spirit living in us.

1John 5:11-13, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Pastor Mike

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