

Weaving the Word

John the "Elijah" Baptist

January 21, 2018

Welcome to where we're learning to stand firm in our faith!

What are you most passionate about in life?



Which passion do you *most sacrifice* other passions for; and, *least sacrifice* for other passions? *That's your greatest passion.* So if that's a *ten* on a scale of one-to-ten, how passionate are you for the voice of God?



When we left off, Jesus sent the Twelve into Judea, while He visits the towns of Galilee being made ready by His 72 junior disciples. And *this* is when John the Baptist, imprisoned for almost two years, sends his messengers to ask Jesus if He's the One that was to come.



As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? – Mt 11:7; Lk 7:24 NIV



To which they would've yelled: "Elijah!" Thirty-four years before, John's dad was burning incense all alone in the Temple when Gabriel appeared.



The *whole multitude of the people* were praying outside ... [Inside] the angel [Gabriel] said to [Zechariah] ... your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John ... and *many will rejoice at his birth* ... and he will go before [the Lord] in the *spirit and power of Elijah* ... [Outside, the multitude of] the people were waiting ... wondering ... And when he came out ... they realized that he had seen a vision ... Elizabeth became pregnant and ... *remained in seclusion* [Why? The multitude] ... *all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea ... Everyone who heard this wondered about it* ... and [John] was [also in seclusion] in the wilderness until *the day* of his *public appearance* ... The *whole Judean countryside* and *all the people of Jerusalem* and *the whole region of the Jordan* went out to him. – Lk 1:10, 13-14, 17, 21-22, 24 (NIV), 65, 66 (NIV), 80; Mk 1:5; Mt 3:5 ESV



[So, Jesus says to the crowd] "What did you go out into the desert to see? ["Elijah!" The faithful weren't waiting for the Messiah. They were waiting for Elijah; because, Malachi wrote that Elijah comes before Him] *A reed swayed by the wind?* ["carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men" (Eph 4:14); "No!"] If not, what did you go out to see? ["An unwavering warrior sent from God to set us straight!"] – Lk 7:24 NIV

The angel Gabriel (which is Hebrew for “Warrior of God”) had told John’s dad that ...

Many of the people of Israel will [John] bring back to the Lord their God ... in the spirit and power of Elijah ... to turn the hearts **of the fathers** to **their children** and [put another way] the **disobedient** [fathers (i.e. religious rulers)] to **the wisdom of the righteous** [among their children] – to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” – Luke 1:16-17 NIV

But, now that King Herod has John imprisoned, and the religious “fathers” reject him as Elijah, they’re not sure *what* John was. So, Jesus continues ...

... what did you go out to see? **A man dressed in fine clothes?** [“No! A hairy cloak and leather belt like *Elijah* wore!” (2 Kings 1:7-8); and that’s what *John* wore (Mt 3:4)] No, those who wear **fine** expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in **kings’** palaces. [“Like Annas and Caiaphas, our disobedient, Roman-appointed, High Priests, and our ruling counsel of Sadducees and Pharisee”] But what did you go out to see? [“A Prophet!”] A prophet? Yes, I tell you, [even though they reject him] and more than a prophet. [“Just as you believed!”] This **is** the one about whom it is written: [in Malachi 3:1] ‘I will send my messenger ahead of **you**, who will prepare your way before **you**.’ – Mt 11:8-10; Lk 7:25-27 NIV

The “You” refers to Jesus. But, in Malachi, God says, “I (Jehovah of Warfare) will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before **ME**.” So, **Jesus just called himself God; and, not just God, but the God of Warfare!**

But, **we can only see it if we seek it.** That’s kind of His thing. **So, scale of 1-10, what’s your passion for seeking the Lord?** Because, **that’s the only way we stand firm in the long run.**



What do you come to church or go to His Word to see?

A leap of faith isn’t like jumping off a cliff in the dark and hoping for the best. It’s like bungee jumping. **You need to examine the equipment and get firmly strapped in, so you can then trust what you know to be true.**

[Jesus goes on] I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone **greater** [stronger; mightier] **than John the Baptist**; [even Elijah ran and hid] yet **the one who is least in the kingdom of God** [having been reborn of the Spirit] **is greater than he.** [Because, he was of the spirit and power of the old covenant] **From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.** [The tag-team of John and Jesus; but, John prepared the people like Elijah did when he single-handedly challenged and defeated 850 false prophets; and called down fire on God’s enemies] **For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.** [Something new is coming] And if you are willing to accept it, **he is the Elijah** [of Malachi 4:5] **who was to come.** He who has ears, let him hear. – Mt 11:11-15; Lk 7:28 NIV

Why do you suppose they named him John and not Elijah?



... they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, “No! **He is to be called John.**” [As instructed] They said to her, “**There is no one among your relatives who has that name.**” [You sure about that?] – Luke 1:59-60 NIV



Every Priest and High Priest is from Aaron’s bloodline. (2 Chron 13:10-11) And, the last recorded High Priest in the OT is named John. (Neh 12:23)

Jesus uses the name “**John the Baptist**” all but once here. When He says, “**all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John**”. *That’s when* the OT was finished, and where it left off ... and where the NT begins:

There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. – John 1:6 NIV

When John was asked if he was Elijah, he said no.

Malachi prophesied as the OT was sealed, while John was High Priest. He says **the messenger will purge the priests as Elijah did**; but, **the messenger is a High Priest in the line of Aaron**. (Mal 2:4-7)

The Law of Moses requires a new High Priest to wear the garments of his predecessor. (Ex 29:29-30) So, although “John” is a High Priest in the bloodline of Aaron, he comes dressed in the spirit Elijah!

... there was a priest named Zechariah ... his wife Elizabeth **was also a descendant of Aaron** ... **observing all the Lord’s commandments and regulations blamelessly**. [How can he in a corrupt system? By doing it secretly, like those in hiding in Elijah’s day] ... they were both **well along in years**. [Scripture forbids men to work in the Temple after 50; except for the High Priest (Num 8:23-26; 35:25, 32)] ... he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, **to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense**. [Only the High Priest, on the Day of Atonement went into the Temple alone (Lev 16:17); to burn incense in the presence of God] ... **all the assembled worshipers were praying outside**. [Which they did on the Day of Atonement] Then an angel of the Lord appeared ... Zechariah; **your prayer has been heard**. [What prayer? On the Day of Atonement the High Priest prayed for the sins of his people to be removed] Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, [not such a miracle if they’re in their 40s] and you are to give him the name John. ... he will be **great** in the sight of the Lord. **He is never to take wine or other fermented drink**, [That is verbatim the vow of a High Priest¹ (Lev 10:8-9)] ... **And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah** [to single-handedly confront an entire corrupt system; to call the nation to repentance and restoration] ... **to make ready a people prepared for** [a new power, a covenant, and Spirit of] **the Lord.**” ... “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this **good news**. – Luke 1:5-19 NIV

¹ It’s often assumed to be a Nazarite vow; but, it’s only one third of the Nazarite vow. (Numbers 6)

Among those born under the old covenant; none were greater than the last High Priest and prophet, appointed by God himself!

“The time is coming ... when I will make **a new covenant** with the house of Israel ... I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” – Jeremiah 31:31, 34 NIV

I will **sprinkle clean water on you** ... I will cleanse you from all your impurities ... I will give you **a new heart** and put **a new spirit** in you ... **I will put my Spirit in you** ... – Ezekiel 36:25-27a NIV

Remember how Jesus refers to His body as the Temple? (Jn 2:19-21)

[In Malachi, the God of Warfare says] “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before **me**. Then **suddenly** the **Lord** you are seeking will come to his temple ...” **says the Lord Almighty [i.e. of warfare]**. – Malachi 3:1 NIV

[And, He did] ... just as [Jesus] came up from the water, **suddenly** the heavens were opened to him and **he [John]** saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. – Mat 3:16-17 NRS

Aaron established the priesthood; and, Elijah re-established it by force; but, **John came to shut it down, close it out, and transfer it to the eternal (Melchizedek) priesthood of Jesus.** (Heb 5:1-7:28)

All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus’ words, **acknowledged that God’s way was right**, [it was time to stop bowing to religion and start standing up and standing firm in their faith] **because they had been baptized by John.** [For the national sin of putting up with corruption that had no place among God’s children] **But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God’s purpose for themselves,** [the Lord barely registered on their passion scale] **because** [they rejected the whole whole-hearted thing, so] **they had not been baptized by John.** [Jesus finished by saying] “To what, then, can I compare **the people of this generation** [who are unwilling to accept the authority of Scripture; and instead, go back and forth like reeds in the wind]? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other: ‘**We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry.**’ For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and “sinners.”’ **But** [remember how John came to turn the hearts of the disobedient religious fathers to the wisdom of their righteous children? **Well!**] **wisdom is proved right by all her children.**” – Lk 7:29-35 NIV

What did you come out to see: same ol’ same ol’?

Or, is it time to passionately examine your faith and embrace God’s Word and grace?

If you call yourself a bungee jumper, but you’ve never actually made the leap ... you can’t really call yourself a bungee jumper. So, jump!

And live boldly according to what you know to be true!