

Discouraged?

In the Gospel of John, we read of this other man called John who was baptizing folks unto “repentance” in the Jordan River.

This man John (which we will from now on refer to John baptizer) states that He had been sent by God to go ahead and prepare the way for Jesus the Christ.

Several times John states that he himself is not the Christ, but was sent to prepare the hearts and minds of men to receive the Christ.

I am not He, John says, and of himself he states, “I am not worthy to latch his sandal straps.” This man who is coming after me, is preferred before me, I baptize with water, He on the other hand will baptize you with the Holy Spirit of the Living God.

Obviously, John had heard this testimony from God and was about carrying out his duties. God told him to do this.

This is the same John who when his mother Elizabeth encountered Mary the mother of Jesus while both boys were still in the womb, it is said that John “leaped” in the womb of Elizabeth when both women came in contact with one another, and John’s mother was then “filled with the Holy Spirit”

Elizabeth then cried out in a LOUD voice “blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” – as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, my baby (John) leaped in my womb for joy.” **Luke 1:41& following.**

Think about that beloved.

Anyway, back to my story – from **John chapter 1**

John the baptizer in his own testimony says in chapter 1 vs 29 “ (wonder why he said this?) seeing Jesus walking toward him he says “Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of this world.”

Evers wonder why the “lamb of God” and not the rooster from God? Why a lamb? Well what was he talking about?

Obviously the Jews were aware of sacrificing an animal in the temple for their sins in order that they be covered for another year (another lesson- another time)

Anyway, here in front of them was “the final sacrifice for all sin” – the lamb of God”

Seeing this with his eyes, and then **hearing a voice from heaven (with his ears)** state “upon whom you see the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

John the baptizer then states in verse **34 of chapter 1 of the book of John** “I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.

Wow, seen and heard with the evidence of the dove descending and remaining upon Jesus. Powerful stuff here wouldn't you say?

I had not see this before but verse 35 states; "again, the next day John the baptizer stood with 2 of his disciples, and while Jesus was walking states: "behold the lamb of God." Immediately these two disciples of John leave John and began to follow Jesus.

At this juncture, I am somewhat amazed at the steadfastness of a man called Simeon in the Gospel of **Luke 2**. Simeon had been told by God that he would not see death until his eyes would behold the Lord's Christ.

I don't know how long Simeon had been looking for this child, but it could have been a very long time. My guess he was up in age. In any case, he returned every day to the temple until he saw this child Jesus.

In any case, when he sees the Lord, he picked up the Lord Jesus as a baby and blessed God and said "now my eyes have seen Your salvation, which you have prepared before the faces of **all people** a light to be **brought to the Gentiles**, I (imagine that – gentile dogs) and **Your people Israel**."

Also along with Simeon was this 84 years old widow named Anna who was also daily in the temple awaiting the arrival of Jesus.

So when "they" had prepared the things according to the law of Lord, Mary, Joseph and Jesus returned to Nazareth.

Returning now to the "baptizer John, I do not know how long it was before he began to wonder about what he had seen and heard concerning the Lord Jesus, but I do know that doubt had begun to set in.

According to **Luke 7:19** John the baptizer called 2 of his disciples to his side to send them to Jesus saying: "are you the coming one, or do we look for another"?

Woah – Wow – What on earth –

Now I love the way Jesus addressed these guys. No slap down for their lack of faith, no rebuke for their concern, just compassion. **Vs 22**: "Go tell John the things you are seeing and hearing: the blind are seeing, the deaf are hearing, the lame are walking and the dead are raised and the poor are having the gospel preached to them.

He then calls those who are within hearing distance to listen to Him as He talks about John the baptizer,

"Among those born among women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist" It was written about him, behold I send a messenger before your face, who will prepare a way before me. John is that man.

Interesting then that Jesus compares John born among women, to those who have been born "of the Spirit of God" as being even greater than John."

Now to conclude here, I am grateful for what I see happening in our town of Livingston, Texas.

God is moving in our town.

I was so blessed by the testimony of Glenda and Kevin yesterday as they were excited over the message they had just heard from First Baptist Church here in town. The pastor, of whom I have never met, was testifying about the great work being done at the Center of Hope and what an impact it was having on the community.

He was enthused over the possibilities that are before his church and others in the community. He was quoted as saying "what if our facility was turned over on certain days to offer such things as "help to the widows by changing the oil in their cars." thereby teaching our youth about serving the community and learning positive things. What else might we be involved in, he asks.

All of a sudden Walmart has offered the Center of Hope 25 - 6 foot pallets of clothing to be distributed to the poor, and Starbucks is offering free coffee to the underprivileged as they come on Tuesday and Thursday to receive food and the new donut shop in town brought over calesches to be given to the folks that are receiving "free food"

Center of Hope partnered with Habitat for Humanity in completing home repairs for 2 families, Working with the emergency health board have helped 20 families per month with medical medications and medical bills.

In addition, the C.O.H. (center of hope) will soon be receiving a walk-in freezer from a recent grant program and is on the look out for more volunteers to help these ministries.

Volunteers help the folks get food on Tuesdays 12-3:30 and Thursdays 12-3:30 and sometimes on Saturday. Stocking the shelves, pushing the baskets, loading the cars and greeting the people. Praying for folks and greeting them with love and respect.

They are looking for someone to volunteer that has "light finance" that can take over their role as Campaign 300 treasurer and someone who can take over the coordination of available volunteers (training and scheduling).

Over 600 kids were given a "great" Christmas as thousands of dollars' worth of toys and bicycles were given away the month of December. I saw one family leave with 5 bicycles and trickles. One woman with tears running down her face said to me, "this is so wonderful, thank you Jesus for this place and these folks.

In 2022 C.O.H. fed 7,168 families (800 more than 2021) and 18,500 actual folks.

I am feeling as I once did in the early 70's when the Spirit of the Living God moved across our nation and totally changed my direction in life.

Something is happening in Livingston, Texas and I am excited at the prospect. Churches are beginning to serve the community without promoting their particular group and believe me this is a good thing.

I know folks who have been praying for a long time for the Holy Spirit to move in our community. Breaking down the barriers between us and loving Jesus.

The carrion cry coming from the Center of Hope is: "If you are looking to get involved, go where the Holy Spirit is already moving". The Center is involved in helping those with cancer find relief, those with outstanding bills getting some assistance, and the hungry being fed. Soon clothing for the needy.

All with the help of volunteers and no one getting the glory except the Lord Jesus.

Center of Hope address is 600 South Washington Avenue, Livingston, Texas 773

So, if you are a bit discouraged beloved don't be. In due time we will receive our rewards, and God is faithful to complete that which He has begun.

Come by center of Hope and see for yourself. Ball is in your court.

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