

Passing on the baton

The new man, new message, and the new method

Reading John 3:16-31

I'm going to take the second part first. The overlapping of John's ministry and the ministry of Jesus.

An argument about ceremonial washing.

A certain Jew asked, "why should I join John's group, and be baptised by him and not another group"?

The Essene's had a lot of ceremonial washing – as did the **Pharisees**.

The disciples of John said, everyone is going to Jesus' baptism.

John the Baptist was a phenomenal preacher, prophet, reformer.

Before he was conceived.

The announcement by the angel to Zacarias

Luke 1:14-17

He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. 16 And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. 17 He will be a man with the spirit and power of **Elijah**. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly."

Zacarias prophetic word after his tongue was loosed.

Luke 1:76-80

"And you, my little son,
will be called the prophet of the Most High
because you will prepare the way for the Lord.
You will tell his people how to find salvation,
through forgiveness of their sins. 78 Because of God's tender mercy,

the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace."80 John grew up and became strong in spirit. And he lived in the wilderness until he began his public ministry to Israel.

Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest Old Testament prophet.

The power of Elijah = Mt. Carmel etc. Thousands followed John.

His message = repent and make amends.

Luke 3:7-14

7 When the crowds came to John for baptism, he said, (to the Pharisees and Sadducee's) "You brood of snakes! Who warned you to flee God's coming wrath? 8 Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. 9 Even now the axe of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire."

10 **The crowds** asked, "What should we do?"

11 John replied, "If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry."

12 Even corrupt **tax collectors** came to be baptized and asked, "Teacher, what should we do?"

13 He replied, "Collect no more taxes than the government requires."

14 "What should we do?" asked **some soldiers**.

John replied, "Don't extort money or make false accusations. And be content with your pay."

John's disciples said, now, everyone is going to Jesus.

John 3:27-36

John replied, "No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.' 29 It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the best man is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. 30 He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.

31 "He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else. 32 He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! 33 Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. 34 For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands. 36 And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."

John's greatness is seen in these words. I must decrease he must increase. I will lay down my fame, popularity, my reputation, even my ministry. So that he will increase.

The man, the message, and the method, of John the Baptist is being phased out.

There is a new man, new message, and new way of delivering it.

Jesus interview with Nicodemus.

John 3:16-17

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. NKJV

Millions have come to Christ by accepting the truth in this one verse.

This verse contains.

- **The greatest love** – God so loved.

Could we with ink the ocean fill
And where the skies of parchment made
And every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry.
nor could the scroll Contain the whole?
Though stretched from sky to sky

O love of God
So rich and pure
So measureless and strong
It shall for evermore endure.
The saints and angels' song.

Paul trying to compare God's love with that of others said,

Rom 5:7-8

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. NKJV

Eph 2:4-10

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

- **The greatest sacrifice –**

Rom 8:32-33

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Giving is seen not in what we give but in what we withhold.

Jesus died on the cross for us as our representative. Paying the price.

Adam = our representative – disobeyed in a perfect environment.

Christ = as our representative – obeyed unto death even death on the cross.

- **The greatest invitation** – whosever – invitations are usually limited i.e. weddings, parties etc. This invitation is for everyone. Put your name there.
- **The greatest secret** – whoever believes –
Rom 4:5-6
But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.
- **The greatest gift** – everlasting life – in Christ was life (eternal) we share that life for ever in bliss and love and joy, and fellowship with almighty God.
- **The greatest tragedy** – Perish – to miss heaven, Christ, perish to die, to be lost.

Some people will be lost –

John 3:18-22

"There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. 19 And the judgment is based on this fact: **God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light**, for their actions were evil. 20 All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. 21 But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."

All may come – today.

John 3:16-17

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Questions

Please don't feel that you must go through every question.
Pick the ones that are most helpful to your group.

1. **John the Baptist said, He must become greater and greater, I must become less and less.**
 - a. Do you think that John's disciples were angry or jealous because Jesus was becoming more popular than John?
 - b. How do you feel about relinquishing doing something that you love - if its Gods will.
 - c. How do you feel about giving way to someone who may be better at something than you are?
 - d. How do you know when a ministry is coming to an end.
2. For God so loved the world etc.
 - a. Discuss the six greatest things mentioned in the message. You don't have to discuss them all, just the ones that impressed you the most.
 - i. Greatest love
 - ii. Greatest Sacrifice
 - iii. Greatest invitation
 - iv. Greatest secret
 - v. Greatest gift
 - vi. Greatest Tragedy
3. Discuss the question – light is come into the world, but men (and women) loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.