

“The Witness of John”

Luke 3:1-20

Pastor John Miller

I. Introduction

- A. We come to a new section of the Gospel of Luke
 - 1. The introduction of the Son of Man (it runs from Luke 3:1 to Luke 4:13)
 - 2. Luke introduces the Son of Man in four ways:
 - a) Through John the Baptist
 - b) By His baptism
 - c) By His genealogy
 - d) By His temptation
 - 3. We look today at the witness of John the Baptist (Luke 3:1-20)
 - a) Jesus said of John, “Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist” (Matthew 11:11).
 - b) John was the last of the Old Testament prophets and the first New Testament preacher
 - c) John was “the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness...Prepare ye the way of the Lord” (Isaiah 40:3).
 - 1) Four hundred silent years
 - d) John’s mission was simple:
 - 1) Prepare the way of the Lord
 - 2) Point people to the Lord
 - 3) Get out of the way of the Lord

II. John’s Preparation (Luke 3:1-2)

- A. His home
 - 1. “The son of Zacharias” (v. 2)
 - a) Mother- Elizabeth (a godly home)
 - b) His father was a priest, and both his father and mother were “righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:5-6).
- B. His consecration
 - 1. The angel’s words to Zacharias (Luke 1:13-15)
 - a) “Great in the sight of the Lord”
 - b) “Wont drink wine or strong drink”
 - c) “Filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb”
- C. His preparation
 - 1. “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel” (Luke 1:80).
 - 2. Illustration- Moses, David, Jesus
- D. His calling
 - 1. Its time (vv. 1-2a)
 - a) It was a dark time
 - 2. Its method (v. 2)

- a) “The word of God came unto John” (v. 2)
- b) God’s Word came not to the wicked rulers of the world, but to God’s chosen man
- c) The greatest need in our world today is for:
 - 1) Men of God
 - 2) Called by God
 - 3) Preaching the Word of God
- d) Jesus said, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few” (Luke 10:2).

III. John’s Preaching (Luke 3:3-14)

- A. John’s preaching was preparatory (vv. 3-6)
 - 1. Jews baptized Gentiles Proselytes
 - 2. Baptism, salvation, repentance
 - 3. Have you removed all hindrances from your heart and life?
- B. John’s preaching was powerful (vv. 7-9)
 - 1. Paul’s charge to pastors (2 Timothy 4:1-5)
 - 2. *“Imagine you are the chairperson of a steering committee for a new ministry, and someone from the “Build-n-Grow” ministry marketing firm outlines the following plan of action based on five governing rules: 1. Don’t go to where the people are; make them come to you. 2. Dress unattractively. 3. Speak offensively. 4. Rail against high-ranking officials who don’t have integrity. 5. Encourage your followers to follow a worthier leader. You may not consider this strategy very competent, but the five-point plan comes straight out of John the Baptist’s manual.”* – Charles R. Swindoll
- C. John’s preaching was practical (vv. 10-14)
 - 1. We are not saved by good works
 - 2. Our good works are the fruit, or results, of true repentance and salvation
 - 3. Does your life show the fruit of true repentance?

IV. John’s Promise (Luke 3:15-18)

- A. John promised a mightier person (vv. 15-16a)
 - 1. *“We learn from this text that a faithful minister will always exalt Christ.”* – J.C. Ryle
 - 2. Illustration- E.V. Hill- Pastor of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles
 - 3. John’s preaching exalted Christ:
 - a) “He is mightier than I”
 - b) “He is to be preferred before me; for He was before me”
 - c) “He must increase, but I must decrease”
 - d) “Behold the Lamb of God who...”
- B. John promised a mighty power (v. 16b)
 - 1. The power of the Holy Spirit
 - a) (Acts 1:5)
 - b) (1 Corinthians 12:13)
 - c) For the believer
 - d) Regenerated you

- e) Indwelt you
- f) Sealed you
- g) Baptizes you
- h) Fills you

C. John promises a mighty purge (vv. 17-18)

1. John preached a future judgment of sin and sinners
2. “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

V. John’s Imprisonment (Luke 3:19-20)

A. John’s fearless preaching (v. 19)

1. John’s faithful preaching (v. 19)
2. He reproved Herod’s sin (v. 19)
3. The sanctity of marriage
 - a) “Marriage is honorable in all...” (Hebrews 13:4)
4. This world is not our home

VI. Conclusion

A. We need more John the Baptists today! (fearless preachers)

B. We need to lift Jesus up!

1. Ask yourself- “Have I repented of my sin and trusted Christ?”