

Coming Of The Prophet, John The Baptist

Dr. Ronnie Wolfe – Isaiah #16

Isaiah 40:1-11 – December 7, 2016 – Wednesday

I. COMFORT FOR A CURSED NATION, 1

A. The Old Testament ends in a possible curse on the earth

1. Malachi 4:6 *And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*
2. During the nearly 400 years between Old and New Testaments, there was quite a conflict in Israel.
3. The Greeks ruled the world at that time, and the Jews felt great aggression and hardship from the Greeks.
4. Daniel 8:8-11 – *Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. 9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. 10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. 11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.*
5. David Elliott says “The modernization of Israel was going well. Sacrifices to Jehovah in His temple had been totally halted. Circumcision and Sabbath-keeping were being extinguished. Copies of Scriptures found were burned. Grecian beliefs and customs were taking over. The Syrian Antiochus Epiphanes was accomplishing his pagan goals.”
[\[http://insight2bp.homestead.com/147.html\]](http://insight2bp.homestead.com/147.html)
6. And further he says, “Grecian paganism, under Antiochus Epiphanes, attempted to blot out the true worship of almighty God. But God had other plans. God had chosen the children of Israel in order to bring the Messiah into the world. God had chosen Jerusalem, not only as the place for the symbolic animal sacrifices to be offered, but also as the place where the true Lamb of God would be offered. No pagan tyrant was strong enough to withstand God. The temple, the Jewish people, and Jerusalem had to all be preserved together until the glorious arrival of the King of the Jews. The situation later on in A.D. 70, after Messiah had come, would be a very different story; but in 165 B.C. the temple had to be cleansed for God to fulfill His plans. Daniel had predicted it. God fulfilled it.” [Ibid].
7. So a profaning of God’s temple and a cleansing of it were done in 2300 days from the pollution of it to the cleansing of it through a family called the Maccabees. This was from 171 BC to 165 BC, a period of about 6 1/4 years.

B. God Commands Comfort For The Jewish People, 1-2

1. Isaiah is comforting the people of Israel, because they have sinned against God.
2. Malachi 2:2 *If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.*
3. Malachi 2:8 *But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.*
4. Antiochus Epiphanes came as a result of their sin, but he could not destroy the records of

- God's word, and he could not retain his pollution of the temple.
5. God allowed the temple to be cleansed after 2300 days, Israel's having received double (or all due restitution) for their sins. "Her iniquity is pardoned," 2
 6. So, they are to be diligent to serve the Lord, because, if they do not, he may send another curse upon the earth – "lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

II. ENTER JOHN THE BAPTIST, 3-5

A. John Enters

1. Matthew 3:1-3 *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

B. John Preaches

1. John the Baptist was to bring in a new era, announcing a new covenant that was at hand and is the way to truth and life.
 - a. Matthew 11:13 *For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.*
 - b. Luke 16:16 *The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.*
 - c. Note "from that time the kingdom of God is preached . . ."
 - d. John came to preach the "kingdom of God."
 - e. When Jesus came, he preached the Gospel of the Kingdom, (Mat. 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:14)
 - f. This Gospel of the Kingdom is to be preached to the whole world (Matt. 24:14).
2. Everything is to be made level, 4
 - a. Mountains (self-righteous men) will be brought low, and valleys (weak and suppressed men) will be exalted.
 - b. The Pharisee was self-righteous when he prayed. The publican was humbled. The publican went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee. The valley was exalted, but the mountain remained high, so he was not brought low to the level of necessity and hunger for forgiveness.
3. John Preaches The Glory Of the Lord
 - a. Jesus is the glory of the Lord – John 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*
 - b. John preached that Jesus is the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29
 - c. John preached repentance – Matthew 3:2 *And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*
 - d. The whole world will see the glory of the Lord, the Savior, Jesus.
 - (1) Romans 1:18 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*
 - (2) Acts 17:27 *That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:*
 - (3) All flesh includes, not just Jews, but also Gentiles all around the world; thus, the Great commission is to preach the Gospel to every creature: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations" (Matt. 28:18-20). Mark 16:15 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

III. WHAT WAS JOHN TO PREACH?, 6-8

A. Already Noticed

1. John preached that Jesus is the Lamb of God
2. John preached repentance
3. John preached the glory of God–Jesus

B. Now John Is To Preach Depravity, 6-8a

1. John here asks “What shall I cry?”
2. He is to cry about depravity – 6
 - a. All flesh is grass (or as grass)
 - b. All goodness of flesh is grass (or as grass)
3. The Lord blows upon flesh, 7
 - a. The grass withers, because God (in his judgment) blows upon it, which shows once and for all that flesh is grass. Flesh withers in the presence of the holiness of God.
 - b. People are nothing but grass. They wither away, every one of them.
 - c. James 1:11 *For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.*
 - d. 1 Peter 1:24 *For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:*

C. John Is To Compare Flesh To The Word of God, 8

1. First part of verse 8 reminds us of what John is to preach first: depravity. The grass and the flower (the flesh) fadeth.
2. But the word of God shall stand forever, 8b
3. John the Baptist was to compare the flesh with the word of God.
 - a. The living word of God is Jesus Christ:
 - (1) John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
 - (2) John 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*
 - b. The written word of God is the Bible
 - (1) It cannot be broken – John 10:35 *If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;*
 - (2) Acts 13:44 *And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.*
 - (3) Psalm 119:89 *For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.*

IV. JOHN WAS TO PREACH ON THE HIGH MOUNTAIN, 9-11

A. This also refers to all Gospel preachers. Go onto the highest mountain, here it was probably Jerusalem, but it also refers to the proclamation of the Gospel message from a place where everyone can hear.

1. Ezra had a pulpit – Nehemiah 8:4-5 *And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. 5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:*
2. Preach upon the housetops – Matthew 10:27 *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in*

- light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.*
3. Lift Up The Voice In Strength, 9
 - a. This means in boldness and unashamed.
 - b. Acts 4:31 *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*
 - c. Acts 13:46 *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*
 - d. Philippians 1:14 *And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*
 - e. They, and we, are to preach “Behold your God!”
 - B. The Lord Will Come With Strong Hand, 10-11
 1. God will come with a “strong hand.” 10
 - a. Isaiah 59:1 *Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:*
 - b. Luke 19:10 *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*
 2. God’s arm (Jesus) shall rule for him, judge only righteous judgment and according to God’s perfect will, 10
 3. His reward is with him – This reward, as Christ comes to save the lost, is the reward of his gifts of sheep that God has given to him to save from their sins.
 - a. John 6:39 *And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*
 4. His work is before him – This is the work of his righteous life and his death, burial, and resurrection.
 - a. Jesus was born to live and to die.
 - b. John 9:4 *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*
 5. He will feed his sheep like a shepherd, 11
 - a. He feeds them through overseers, preachers – Acts 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*
 - b. But this may reach farther into the future – Rev, 7:17 *For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*
 6. He will gather the lambs with his arm –
 - a. He will be tender with new believers but will be merciful and protect them.
 - b. As they grow, he will carry them in his bosom, a close and warm place to be when we at our weakest points in our lives.
 7. He will lead us together
 - a. The young with the old, the new believer and the mature Christian. We will all be lead together
 - (1) Into the paths of righteousness – Psalm 23:3 *He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.*
 - (2) John 10:3 *To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*
 - (3) Into the Promised Land – Revelation 7:17 *For the Lamb which is in the midst of*

*the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters:
and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

V. CONCLUSION

- A. John the Baptist was a great prophet. He preached much about Jesus, the Lamb of God, repentance, righteousness, about Israel, about believing and about being led of the Lord.
- B. John has come and prophesied of Christ and many things about him.
- C. John did not live very long. He could be called the first Christian martyr.
- D. Some say that he was not the first martyr, because there were no Christians before Pentecost, but I deny that. They may not have been called Christians, but there were believers before Pentecost.
- E. He is a Christian martyr, because he introduced the Savior of Christians who would come a fulfill the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah.
- F. Anyway, they were not called Christians until they were in Antioch.
- G. Thanks the Lord for John the Baptist. He was prophesied nearly 700 years before he came to introduce the Messiah and preach repentance and the Kingdom of God.