

GOSPEL OF THE MESSIAH

Message 12

Text: John 1:19-36

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INTRO: We have looked at two lines of proof that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. We saw that He qualified to be Messiah from His lineage; His bloodline. He was a descendent of David, and Judah, from whom the kings were to come; and from Abraham. Now many would have qualified this far, though of course most would be eliminated by blood line. But then we saw that He passed the test of the devil. The first test would eliminate most. This second test would eliminate all. Well, the third and fourth tests would also eliminate all; and so we can but come to one conclusion: Jesus Christ of Nazareth was the long promised Jewish Messiah.

This morning we want to give proof of Messianic right for Jesus Christ from John the Baptist. When we began this series, it was Luke and John that introduced the subject of the Gospel of the Messiah to us. We have heard quite a lot from Matthew and Luke, and a little from Mark since that time, but nothing from John. But John will now enter and fill in some very important information. If it was not for John here, we would be missing a very important section of the Gospel story. I have introduced John to you in an earlier message. He was the beloved disciple of the Lord. The Lord chose 12 disciples. Of those, Peter, James and John were the closest to Him. But of those three, John was the closest of all. We will meet this John in these next messages. This is not John the Baptist, of whom we have heard by now already. We are now talking about the Apostle John.

Our proof of Messianic right from the Apostle John will come from John 1:19-36. So we give ourselves to that this morning. We will look first at John's declarations regarding himself in 1:19-28, and then at John's declarations of Christ in 1:29-36.

C. Proof Of Messianic Right By John the Baptist

1. John's Declarations Of Himself (1:19-28)

Let me set out now the scene we have in John 1:19-28. In the last message we saw that Jesus

was coming close to being 30 years of age when He was baptized. Almost all commentaries will mention something about the OT priests entering their work when they were 30 years of age. Numbers chapter 4 mentions 7 times that the priests entered their service at thirty and were retired at 50. Since Christ began His ministry at thirty, I would conclude that John the Baptist did so as well, and he was six months older than Jesus.

And so I think that John had now ministered for about 6 months. There he was by the Jordon River, baptizing the baptism of repentance. Jesus had been baptized almost 2 months ago, and then He entered the wilderness where He was tempted. According to Alfred Eedersheim, the day of Christ's temptation was this very day we have, when the priests and Levites came to John. x

You see, for months stories have been filtering back to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem about John and his baptism. As a matter of fact, we have already seen how both Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism, and how John called them a brood of vipers. John has really stirred up the Jewish people. But people are repenting and dealing with their sin. Any time that happens it causes a stir. The Sutura Twins used to cause such a stir wherever they went. In many places there were people all over town making things right with others. Sometimes there were reports in newspapers. When true repentance is brought about, it causes a stir.

And so, the Jews in Jerusalem began to whisper to each other. And the talk continued and grew and the reports kept coming in of the people who were getting right with God. Finally they began to question among themselves, "Could this be the Messiah?" You see, who else would bring about such a thing as people dealing with their sins? And finally they could contain their questions no longer and they chose a delegation of priests and Levites. The Levites were the tribe that had the spiritual oversight of Jewish religious life. The priests were responsible for the temple worship

and sacrifices and the Levites were helpers. Albert Barnes believes that this delegation were likely members of the Sanhedrin. They were the most important body in the Jewish religious life, numbering 70.

Now in verses 19-28 we have all of what has been recorded of this whole day regarding John the Baptist and the religious leaders visit. John had baptized Jesus just over 40 days ago. Alfred Eedersheim believes the day the priests and Levites came to question John about whether he was the long awaited Messiah is the very day Jesus was tempted by Satan. That could very well be. It certainly was very close to it. If Eedersheim is right, and he is a great scholar, then the very day Matthew, Mark and Luke stop their account of the life of Christ, John picks up the story.

Let me show you this from the harmony of the Gospels (Show in Harmony). So Matthew, Mark and Luke give us what happened to Jesus on this particular day, and that is that He was tempted by Satan. John gives us what happened to John the Baptist, possibly the very same day. Eedersheim calls this passage in John, John the Baptist's temptation. He could have been tempted to set himself forth as the Messiah and the priests and Levites might have accepted him as the Messiah.

So, why were the religious leaders so interested in finding out who John was? Well, people from all over are flocking to John to hear him preach. For about 6 months John has been baptizing people and more and more people are coming. They have not heard spiritual truths preached like this for so long, none can remember the last time a godly prophet was among them. According to the Jewish historian, Josephus, such crowds came to John that Herod became afraid John would cause an uprising against him.

So, Herod was growing more and more concerned, and the Jewish religious leaders questions began to burn deeper and deeper. Who is this John? Could he be the Messiah? There was a stir some

thirty years ago that the Messiah had been born. That had all settled down, but now the questions were begging for answers. Maybe, just maybe the Messiah has come. So look at John 1:19 (read). In Jerusalem the religious leaders had heard about John. No doubt they were not sure whether to be alarmed or excited. Who was John? Could he perhaps be the Messiah? And so they elected some representatives and sent them to John to ask, "Who are you?"

Now look at verses 20-21 (read). The first question is, "Are you the Messiah?" And He said, "I am not the Christ". The name 'Christ' means Messiah. Well, they can cross off their foremost question, a question the OT had caused them to ask. So having reviewed the OT possibilities, they asked their next question, "Are you then Elijah?" You see, the last verses in the OT said he was coming. And for some 400 years they had been waiting. So maybe John is Elijah. But John said, "No, I am not." We will see later that Jesus will speak of Him as Elijah, but John came in the spirit and power of Elijah. But Elijah is still to come. Well, these priests and Levites are now almost out of options, but they do have one more. So they asked, "Are you the prophet?" Moses had said that God would raise up a prophet like himself, and Moses had instructed that when He came they should listen to Him. Moses was referring to the Messiah, but the Jews seem not to have made that connection. And John said, "I am not that one either."

Well, look at verse 22 (read). So they said, and I'll put it in my own words, "Well now, we are stumped. We know you are somebody very significant. We have named the only ones listed in the OT who are very significant. And you say you are not any one of those. Those who sent us from Jerusalem want an answer, and yet we have no answer. So tell us who you are that we may answer those at Jerusalem who sent us for this very reason."

Well, John answered them from their own prophets. Look at it in verse 23 (read). We have seen this

prophecy before, in another message. Well, the delegation is not yet satisfied, so look at their question in verses 24 (read). Here we have some indication that these might have been from the ruling 70, the Sanhedrin.

So, we go to verse 25 (read). Notice this carefully. They are saying, "If you are none of those we mentioned to you, why then do you baptize?" I think what they are saying is, "If you are not any of those we questioned you on, who do you think you are to baptize people like this without permission from us?" Let me try to put this in a little more perspective. Go with me to Matthew 23 for a moment (read v. 15). The Jews sought to convert Gentiles, and such converted Gentiles were called proselytes. And when these proselytes underwent a conversion the men were circumcised, but both men and women were baptized. Their Gentileness was washed away and they became Jews by conversion. In a sense, their baptism pictured being born again. They were once Gentiles and now they have become Jews.

So it was not new for the Jews to see baptisms. But to see a Jew baptizing Jews, now that is another question. That is like someone re-baptizing someone who is already in the same faith as those who are baptizing them are. Among Catholics, that is a cardinal sin. Among Mennonites it is like the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. And these Jews want to know, "If you are not any one of those men we mentioned, what right do you have to baptize like this?" Maybe you can now see why Eedersheim calls this John's temptation.

So look at how John answers them in verses 26-27 (read). He said, "There stands one among you whom you don't know. He is coming after me, but He is preferred before me, and I am not worthy to be His slave." When John said, that this One is standing among them, the word to stand is in the perfect tense. John did not mean that Jesus was standing there in their presence right at that time. Jesus did not arrive there until the following day. According to Cleon Rogers Greek

commentary what John meant was: "there is one who has taken His stand in your midst: the hidden Messiah is present in Israel" (178). So, what John is saying is that this One he is talking about is now present in Israel.

So look at how verse 28 closes this day (read; Pictures of Bethabara).

John, who will point to Jesus Christ and say, "That is the Messiah" and thus give Him his vote of confidence, has very clearly told the Jews that he himself is not the Messiah. He is one crying in the wilderness, saying, "Make straight the way of the Lord." That means, "Prepare the road for the coming king, the Messiah." And that road was to be prepared by the preaching of repentance from sin.

2. John's declarations of Christ (1:29-36)

From verses 29-34 we have the recordings of another day. Jesus has overcome in His temptations and John has overcome in his. And the next day as John looks up, whom does he see but Jesus. He is coming toward him, so look at verse 29 (read). Maybe John saw Jesus while He was still a ways off. It may be toward the end of the day because Jesus has come from the wilderness where He was tempted, or from that high mountain where He was last tempted by Satan.

And as John sees him coming, there burst out from within him these words which he cannot contain, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" Here is the real Messiah! Some day I want to tell you more of the significance of the things that take place on these days and the days themselves. Jesus has overcome His temptation. I do not know what John knows about what took place in the past 40 days, but somehow he recognizes that Jesus has been empowered for ministry. I believe that by this time Jesus is fully 30 years old, and right here is the beginning of His ministry. And John sees Him as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

I do not know if the Jewish delegation from Jerusalem is still with John so that they hear him, but look at his testimony in verses 30-34 (read). Notice that John says in verse 31, "I did not know Him." And again in verse 33, "I did not know Him." So how did John know that Jesus was the Christ when He saw Him coming just now? Well, God, who had told John to baptize with water said, "John, when a certain person comes to be baptized by you, and you see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, this is the Christ. This is My Messiah. This is the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit." Well, that had happened just over 40 days ago, and John knew beyond a shadow of doubt that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah! So he could say, "I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God!" There is Messianic right as declared by John the Baptist!

Now notice verse 35-36 (read). Once more we see that it mentions that it is the next day. Now John is standing there with two of his disciples. And again, it is as if it just bursts out of him to point at Jesus and say, "That is Him! Behold the Lamb of God! We have waited for 4,000 years, and here He is!"

Let me try to draw the historical picture here as I see it. Look at verses 30-31 (read). From Luke 1:36 we learn that John did not know Jesus. This seems a bit strange if they were relatives. But I want you to notice something in John 1:10 (read). The world did not know Christ, and the word is *yinwsko*, the regular word for knowing. But in John 1:31 the word for know is *oida*. It means a fullness of knowledge. John most likely knew Jesus. But he did not know Jesus was the Messiah. He was just one of his relatives.

Now look at verse 33a. Again John says he did not know Jesus and again it is the word *oida*. But note now the rest of the verse (read). Just over 40 days ago, John had baptized Jesus. And now look at Matthew 3 (read 16-17). Here John learned to know who Jesus was. But as soon as John had baptized Jesus, Jesus was gone. And now, some

forty days later the priests and Levites come to question John as to whether he is the Messiah. And there is no doubt to John who the Messiah is. And the next day, after the priests and Levites had questioned him, there John sees Jesus. Look at it in John 1:29 (read). And now, the day after that we are in John 1:35-36 and look at them again (read). You see the full impact of who this is has hit John with force. Now he knows oida, Him. He is the Lamb of God! Now look at 1:26 (read). John said to the priests and Levites, you do not know Him. The word he used was oida. They did not recognize Jesus as he recognized Him.

Now we must do one more thing, and that is look at this idea of the Lamb of God. I expect that when God made clothes for Adam and Eve of skins, He slaughtered some lambs. I do not know that, but I expect that is true. Now go with me to Genesis 4 (read 1-2). And when Abel brought an offering, no doubt it was a lamb. And when Abraham was about to plunge a knife into his son Isaac, God stopped him, and there, caught in a thicket was a sheep.

Then when Israel moved into Egypt in the time of Moses, they went in as shepherds; abominable shepherds, at least to the Egyptians. And when Israel left Egypt after the slaying of the firstborn, they did so, having put the blood of lambs on the doorposts of their homes. And there, on that first evening of their exodus out of Egypt, they sacrificed the Passover lamb. And the instructions they received for the Passover lambs that were to be slain every year from there onward are very carefully given. And when the temple was in place, daily lambs were sacrificed to the Lord. And then there were the special feasts to the Lord, and lambs were sacrificed. And then one cannot forget Isaiah 53 where the lamb once more has a prominent part.

Oh what lessons there are to be learned from, what in the eyes of the world are, abominable sheep. You can learn from sheep how to lead people. You can learn from sheep how to live as a Christian. Just over a year ago we had the

privilege to help butcher some lambs. I had heard many things about sheep and I found them true. It says of Christ in Isaiah 53, "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth." Listen, a sheep is not only silent before its shearers, but before its butchers!

I must tell you something I have told you before. Jesus will later say of John the Baptist, "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." From Luke 7 we learn that Jesus is talking about prophets. The least prophet in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist. For years I pondered the meaning of this, but it is plain. What makes one prophet greater than another is his message. The prophet with the greatest message is the greatest prophet. And all the prophets up until John said, "He is coming. He is coming." And here stood John and he said, "He is here! Behold the Lamb of God, the One who takes away the sin of the world." You see, many lambs took away the sins of Israel, but here is the One who takes away the sin of the world!

And what makes the least prophet in the kingdom of heaven greater than John? The OT prophet said, "He is coming!" John said, "He is here!" Every NT prophet says, "He was here. He died. He was buried and He rose again. Hallelujah, He lives!" There is not greater message any prophet can bring.

And when we look at the last proof that Jesus was the Messiah, the proof that we gather from His works and words, we will see that He truly was the Lamb of God!

CONCL: So, let me remind us where we are in these messages on the Gospels. We are in the third of five points. This third point deals with the authentication of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. There was the evidence from His bloodline;

the evidence from His testing, and now the evidence from John the Baptist.

Richard Dawkins, that very ungodly atheist has said, "Faith is the great cop-out." A cop out is an easy and cowardly way out of a problem. I am not sure what problem he thinks faith gets one out of, but I know what his problem is. It is how to satisfy his guilty conscience with evidence that God is not real and Jesus Christ was not the Messiah. Dawkins knows from history that Jesus Christ did in fact exist. But if he would have honestly checked out that bit of history we are checking out right now, he would have to go against obvious evidence, or accept the fact that God Almighty sent Jesus Christ into the world, and that this Jesus died for the sins of Richard Dawkins.

He has said that if there is a God and he meets Him some day he will say, "And who are You?" But when he meets God, and he will, I think he will say something like this, "I know who You are and I know Jesus Christ is Your Son. I beg and I plead of You that You give me one more chance."

You see, in the three points we have covered we have historical proof that Jesus Christ was truly the Messiah, the Son of God. And if we ever complete the next point, the proof will be undeniable by any truly logical mind. And to those who read through the Gospels, they have read so much evidence that if they deny it, they are not logical. They are unreasonable. They cannot be made to look at facts.

And so John said in John 1:34, "And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." And each time he saw Jesus after he had baptized Him and the Holy Spirit had come upon Him, he broke out with these words, "Behold the Lamb of God!"