

John the Baptist

John and the Messiah

Introduction

- As we continue to dig into the message of John the Baptist, we will look at what he says about the coming Messiah.

John Was Not the Messiah

- The people speculated that John might be the promised Messiah – Luke 3:15
- John is very clear that he is not the Messiah – Luke 3:16, John 1:19-20
- He has a very clear understanding that he is the forerunner of the Messiah – Luke 3:16, John 1:15,23
 - John's ministry is unfulfilled without the Messiah.

John's Message Concerning the Messiah

- John stresses the judgment that comes with the Messiah
 - The illustration of chopping down a tree – Matthew 3:10, Luke 3:9
 - The judgment (axe) is at hand (by the tree), ready for the Messiah to begin.
 - The righteous (good trees) will be spared, the wicked (bad trees) will be judged.
 - I think this is not about the presence of good works (fruit) as much as it is the type of tree, like the wheat and tares of Matthew 13:24-30.
 - The judgment is absolute, leaving no foundation (root) and utterly consuming (fire).
 - The illustration of winnowing grain – Matthew 3:12, Luke 3:17
 - The Messiah is ready to judge (fan in hand)
 - This is the winnowing basket or shovel to toss grain in the air.
 - “It was used for throwing the grain, after it was threshed, into the air, so that the chaff might be driven away by the wind.” – Barnes
 - The judgment is complete (purge his floor)
 - The righteous will be retained (wheat in the garner) and wicked will be destroyed (chaff burned in unquenchable fire)
 - The Three Baptisms – Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16
 - John claims only to baptize in water.
 - Thus, it is a symbolic act, picturing (and yet inferior to) a greater object.
 - The Messiah would baptize with the Holy Ghost.
 - This is supernatural: life and empowerment – Acts 1:5, Romans 6:3, I Corinthians 12:13

- The Messiah would baptize with fire.
 - This is supernatural: judgement.
 - John speaks of fire three times – burning trees, burning chaff, and here – all of which are judgment.
- John stresses the superiority of Christ.
 - John believes himself unworthy of the lowest acts of servitude for the Messiah – Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:7, Luke 3:16, John 1:27
 - “Among Jews, Greeks, and Romans alike, this office, that of untying and carrying the shoes of the master of the house or of a guest, was the well-known function of the lowest slave of the household. When our Lord washed the disciples’ feet (John 13:4-5), He was taking upon Himself a like menial task which, of course, actually involved the other.” – Ellicott
 - John believes the Messiah to come is greater than Himself – Matthew 3:11, Luke 3:16, John 1:15
 - Christ was not a disciple of John, though His ministry followed John’s.
 - John believed in the preincarnate existence of Christ – John 1:15,27