

The Testimony of John the Baptist

by Erlo Stegen

Erlo Stegen's sermon emphasizes the powerful testimony of John the Baptist and the call to true repentance and understanding of Jesus' divine nature.

Scripture: Matthew 3:7, Matthew 12:11, John 1:29

Topics: "Repentance", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being cautious and avoiding sinful behavior. He uses the metaphor of stealing a bottle, warning that it may contain poison and lead to unpleasant consequences. The speaker praises John the Baptist for his confidence and courage in preaching the truth, even to the Pharisees and soldiers. He urges the audience to seek God's guidance through prayer and to repent and obey His voice. The sermon also highlights the danger of being gullible and easily influenced by worldly trends.

Transcript

Now, it is with the testimony of John that he says he was born. And here we find the wonderful testimony of John. John was preaching out there in the wilderness.

He wasn't like other preachers. His preaching had authority. His preaching was with such authority and power, it shook the world.

It wasn't like the preachers who are ambiguous and undecided in their preaching. Some came from the cities and towns with great haste to listen to the preaching of this man. There were leading people, tax collectors, Pharisees, all sorts of people.

And all Jerusalem was shaken. It even got to the religious council that ruled the affairs over religion in Jerusalem. They too were stirred.

They were the bosses of religion over the Jews. And as Pharisees, they had to take note where they said, Do you notice, do you see what's happening there in the wilderness near the Jordan? At the Jordan? We don't even know this guy. He is not one of us.

Let's send therefore a commission which will go and inspect and check him out as to who sent him. Now we don't say that by doing that they did a wicked deed. After all, they were the authorities in religion.

After all, if there is something that is spectacular, something that is amazing happening in some church or some place, it is fitting that you should check it out, test and prove the thing. It could be a deceiver. It could be a person who preaches teaching which is just wrong.

Because you'll find Christians very easily being gullible, naive. If something is happening, they will do what is happening. If you meant to jump, they jump.

So I'm not swift to condemn these leaders in Jerusalem if they sent out a commission to test and to check out what was happening there in the wilderness, for after all, the Bible does say that we should test and prove things. Now maybe they didn't have an ear to hear, so they had to really check it out properly. Now maybe they didn't have an ear to hear, so they had to really check it out properly.

They were the religious leaders of the Jews. Now John the Evangelist writes in detail about John the Baptist's testimony. And it was heard that he baptizes people.

And because he baptized people, he was an immediate suspect, because Elijah didn't baptize people, neither did the prophets, so they wondered what type of new ministry, what new teaching, what type of cult was he starting. And so they asked, are you the Christ? And he very decisively said, no. But are you Elijah? Because it was already rumored abroad that maybe he was Elijah, because remember Elijah had been snatched up to heaven in a chariot of fire.

Then they wondered whether he was one of the prophets. And he simply said, no. They seemed to be satisfied with that, but they continued interrogating him by asking, well, why then do you baptize? What is this? And he said, I baptize with water only, but the one who comes after me shall baptize you with water and with fire, with the spirit and with fire.

He's after me because he was six months younger than John the Baptist was. Although he didn't, although of course, I'm just adding that little detail. So he said, I'm just adding that detail about the months, but he said, the one that comes after me is actually before me.

Now that seemed like a puzzle, a contradiction. This seemed to be a contradiction by claiming that he is both behind him and before him. Some of the things of our faith are indeed a mystery.

And if you don't have wisdom, you will not understand the mysteries. Never. There are those who are, who twist things.

For instance, Jesus spoke about the 10 virgins. Half of them being fools, half of them being wise. By that we can surmise that half of the believers are foolish.

You find Christians who are like that. They hear, they listen, but they don't understand, they don't obey. And they find themselves outside the door knocking to come in.

Now you should not be a foolish Christian. Every Christian should ask him or herself, though I am a virgin, am I wise or am I foolish? Yes, I've made a commitment to the Lord. I've got all the normal things a Christian should have, but there's something missing.

The foolish virgins had their lamps, but it was not full of oil, not full of the Holy Spirit. Don't just assume that a person who claims to be a believer is truly a believer. You need to have discernment whether that person is foolish or wise.

And if that foolish man is your friend, you must be a fool as well. Otherwise you would have noticed, no, there's something lacking, something missing. Make sure.

So be on your guard and take note whether this person is wise in the sight of God or not. So John, it seems in a very relaxed way, a very frank way, he said, No, I'm not he, but I'm the one who came first, but the one who comes after me is before me. I'm older than him, but he's older than me.

What was John implying by that? What was he saying? By that John was telling us who Jesus really was. And who he was. Yeah, and who he was himself, John.

He wasn't pointing to himself. He pointed at the one. By saying the one who comes after me was always before me, he was attributing divine character.

He was saying he is God. He was saying Jesus is God. Now there are foolish preachers in this world today who detract from the divine attributes of Jesus and say, No, he was a man just like we are, not God.

But with John, he was absolutely forthright and said it clearly. He who comes after me was before me. In other words, he, Jesus, is God.

He was uniting it with God. And then the Lord Jesus came. Wanting to be baptized by John.

Then John says something amazing. I knew him not. And again he said, I did not know him.

Now, I don't quite know because they were relatives. Maybe he was inferring that he had known him in the flesh as a human being, as a man. But he hadn't known him spiritually.

Or whether it was just simply lack of communication. They didn't have cars and motorbikes. We're not sure.

And on Sabbaths they didn't travel. On Sabbath days, your traveling limits were very limited. Like you would walk maybe just as far as the shop.

You couldn't take a journey on the Sabbath. They kept the Sabbath. Not as a Sunday.

The Jewish Sabbath was a Saturday. The Zionist groups and Seventh-day Adventists, they still keep the Saturday. But the Christians keep the Sunday because it is the resurrection day.

Jesus arose on Sunday morning. And also, Christians of old, it is historically shown that they met together on Sunday mornings. But it is good that you do get a rest, that you get a time set apart for the Word.

In a certain country, they said, away with this Seventh-day thing, that once every seven days that there is a day off from work. No, we'll make it every tenth day. And I noticed that the horses started closing their eyes.

They were blind. Until they until they Until they relented and changed the law back. Now, of course, there is the state, the fact that Jesus said, if your donkey or animal falls into a pit or well on the Sabbath, obviously you will take steps to get it out on that day.

So you need to understand the connotation and the context of it. Because You can't Now You wives, you might take it literally and say, well, I'm not going to cook then for my husband on a Sunday on the Sabbath. And then you men need to take note of that.

anybody else I'll just let sleeping dogs lie now things go on in this world and sexual abuse and incestual relationships things which where people should go to jail for but they aren't but in eternity you'll be in eternal jail but this same John the Baptist he was courageous when it came to Herod who had taken his brother's wife John said it is not right God does not allow you to steal your brother's wife Herod went and spilled the beans to his wife told her everything like some husbands they don't hold a thing back they just tell everything like Ahab and his wife and Jezebel who was told everything if you've got a wife who can't correct you don't tell her anything don't entrust her because you're not a man and you listen to her and she'll give you the wrong advice and so it was she knew

not Herod was so aroused by this that he said you can demand anything the mother said I demand the head of the of John the Baptist on a platter so terrible so wicked was it Herod, his wife, the whore and the daughter all burning in hell but the voice of John the Baptist is not silent they can still hear his words prepare you the way of the Lord which they did not heed in their dispensation today do you hear the word of God will you allow the Son to set without getting right with God without doing what the Holy Spirit has clearly shown you to do or is it something that you delaying for tomorrow you need to get down on your knees and say Lord remove the dirt out of my ears remove the demonic influence that stops me from hearing your voice if you're not as sick please stand to your feet as

we pray together be merciful to us our Lord help us not to be like those five foolish virgins who cried and wept and shouted to be let in but they were closed outside save us Lord from being fools claiming to be Christians while being worthless oh God work in a marvelous way by your spirit in our midst that this day would not have been in vain that the one who has not heard your word and your voice before may hear your voice today and the one who has heard your voice may they obey that voice by the time the sun sets today Amen

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