

John Baptist , the Fire of God - Part 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon calls for a deep, personal revival and a return to seeking God with fervor, exemplified through the life and message of John the Baptist.

Duration: 42:48

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, Isaiah 6:8, Malachi 3:1, Matthew 3:11, Luke 3:16, John 3:30, Acts 1:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, Hebrews 12:29, James 4:8

Topics: "John The Baptist", "Baptism Of The Holy Spirit", "Revival"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill passionately preaches about John the Baptist as a fiery messenger of God, emphasizing the need for personal revival and the baptism of the Holy Spirit with fire. He calls for believers to seek God earnestly, to break down the walls of unbelief and doubt in their lives, and to be consumed by the divine fire of God. Ravenhill highlights the urgency of the hour, urging the church to awaken to its calling and to be filled with the Holy Spirit, as John the Baptist was, to prepare the way for the Lord. He stresses that true revival comes not from programs or strategies but from a deep, intimate relationship with God that ignites a passion for holiness and repentance. The preacher concludes with a call to action, encouraging the congregation to respond to God's invitation and to seek His presence above all else.

Transcript

We pray again with Edwin Hatch this morning. Breathe on us, breath of God. Fill us with life anew that we may love what thou wouldst love and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on us, each of us, individually, breath of God, that we may say, breathe on me, breath of God, till I am wholly thine, till all this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine. Lord, I believe this morning we're in the valley of decision. We march round Jericho every day this week.

I pray the walls will come down today, the walls in our own life. If there are any walls of unbelief, crush them, we pray today. If there are any walls of doubt, crush them.

Lord, again we pray, make this one meeting again a tragedy to the devil. We ask in Jesus' name. Be seated.

Thank you. I got a note here. My dear wife brought it a minute or two ago.

I got a shock. I thought it said, sung by David Raymill. I thought he was going to sing.

I couldn't believe that. His wife's a very glorious singer, but she hasn't done a thing on him for singing. Nancy, when you go home, teach him every hour, every day.

I mean, it'll take you every hour anyhow. Here's a poem he wrote about, you know, the different things that have been preached this week. Here it is by David, right off the grill.

I've built the altar, Lord, send the flame. I'll be the sacrifice unto your name. Come, holy fire.

The next line is what we've been praying for three weeks. We prayed Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings at 1130 to one, and then the other morning is at 630, and it's been absolutely glorious. Will I choke up on this? Let me read that part.

Let me read the whole thing. It's better than Shakespeare. I've built the altar, Lord, send the flame.

I'll be the sacrifice unto your name. Come, holy fire, consume me now. That's been our prayer.

Lord, in your presence, I make this vow. Nothing but you, Lord, do I desire. You're grownly only, and one desire.

Wonderful. Thanks, Dave. I'll leave you this in my will.

That reminds me of the TB evangelists. I think they missed it, you know, begging for money. They should just have sung Take thy will and make it mine.

There's one word that I hold on to. Tenaciously. I've never preached on it.

I'd like to sometime. Let me read part of it. It's Malachi chapter 3, verse 1. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek.

Now, let's get this straight. Why did you come to this conference? Did you come to see miracles? Did you come to hear prophecy? Why did you come? Did you come to meet God? Have you met God? Do you want to meet him this morning? Well, say, come, Lord Jesus. Come, Lord.

Praise. The Lord whom ye seek shall come tomorrow. No, that's a KC version.

What is the scripture? The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly. What were the shepherds doing? Watching over their flocks by night and suddenly there was a sound of a heavenly host. The men had been sitting around in the upper room.

They'd been there for what, 49 days? And suddenly there was a sound of a rushing mighty wind. So I'm praying this morning that suddenly God will come. You jump up from your seat with an arrow of God in your heart and flee here for refuge.

The Lord whom ye seek and I'm seeking God. I'm not seeking miracles as good as they are or prophecy. I'm seeking God.

You say America needs God. No, she doesn't. She needs, the church needs God.

If the church gets God, America will soon feel it. She'll be staggering. You know those preachers that stand in pulpits with icicles hanging on them, preaching freeze-dried sermons.

Can you imagine another bickle going home on fire? Did you say no? How many would like to see your pulpit on fire? Great. Hey, when's the next Kansas City Fellowship meeting? Let me announce it. June what? June 25 to 49.

29. Put that in your diary. I want to see you all there.

Do you know what we're going to do? You've already rented a building to seat 10,000. Well, that's the next stop. That's just a trial balloon.

I want to see you all in London. When is the London meeting? October. The meeting house is already booked.

14,000. Can you imagine that every night? So when you see your grandfather, tell him that the preacher said he's not to leave you any money in Israel. He's to give you it now to go to London.

Now all that advice is free. Don't worry. Well, thank you, David.

That's confirmation this morning. You know, the message to the world is John 3.16. The message to the church is Luke 3.16. What does that say? You don't know. It's a good thing you came to the meeting this morning.

Luke chapter 3 and verse 16. John answered saying, John answered saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water but one mightier than I is coming whose shoes I'm not even worthy to carry his shoes. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

But you know, we're leaving the last of that off. Have you had the baptism? Forget it. Did you have the baptism of the Holy Ghost and with fire? Because our God is what? A consuming fire.

And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple with what? Fire. You know, I used to feel so sorry for John the Baptist. I mean, when you think a poor guy didn't have a Bible, didn't have a copy of our Revival Tarot.

He didn't have, you know, that new wonderful book 20. What's it called, David? 26 perversions. No, I David says, you know, about all these versions.

David says only 10 versions. Five are wise and five are foolish. No, no.

Well, despite all this, Saint Louis Paul, here I am with King James again. The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple. I say I used to feel sorry for him.

Do you remember the last word in Malachi? The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple and he shall purify the sons of Levi. So he begins with the preachers. Between Malachi and Matthew, there are 400 years of silence without any prophetic voice, 400 years of darkness without any prophetic light.

And then suddenly, unexpectedly, John the Baptist appears in the wilderness. And I used to feel sorry. I used to feel, Lord, that's not right.

I mean, he comes into a nation in chaos. A nation that's under the heel of the oppressor. A nation that's overtaxed and overburdened.

And yet here his preachers suddenly plunged into this mess. He has no financial backing. He's no credentials.

He's never been ordained. He doesn't even have a newsletter. He comes across that dark sky like what's what Halle's meteor flashed across the sky.

And suddenly, well, I'll tell you what I thought. I thought, God, you're always helping your people. Why didn't you put the pillar of fire in that wilderness? Just like he did for Israel.

All the nation would have come. All the people around about would say, what's that? Oh, that's God come back in his glory. There's a pillar of fire.

He didn't do that. He did more than that. He put a man on fire.

John Baptist is incandescent with God. You see, I tease these prophets. Some of these prophets aren't even grown up yet.

The prophets in the Old Testament got punished and they got tried. Malachi, I mean, Jeremiah goes down in a pit. Moses goes 40 years on the back side of the desert.

God says to Isaiah in the 20th chapter, go lie in a shopping center in your nakedness. You go back to Ezekiel. What does he say to Ezekiel? Lie 339 days on one side.

You can do that. Oh, you're all nodding your head. Thank you.

There's a baptism of honesty this morning. You get in your butyrate vest, your bed. You've been about five minutes tossing over, tossing over.

Wife's grunting. What are you doing? I can't sleep. Turn on the other side.

Back on the other side. How many sides do you have? If only two really, inside and outside. But apart from that, can you imagine a man of God with the burden of the nation on him for 390 days? And God says, all you can do is cook your food with human excrement.

And then a bit later, he says, well, I'll relieve you. You can cook your food with animal dung. What do you think the nation thought about him? This is a man that's supposed to know God.

There he is. He isn't in the garments of the high priest. He's been there now, week after week, month after month, lying and groaning, because the Lord has put a burden upon him.

But I'm saying this, you don't spring like that into being a prophet, because somebody tells you one day, I think you're a prophet. Forget it. To be a prophet is painful.

Let me tell you again what Bux Basin said. The true man of God, the true prophet is by the very nature of his calling, a tragic figure. He has a fierce loyalty toward God and a broken heart over its sin.

America's more broken now than ever she's been in the history. We've millions of broken homes with divorce. We've millions of broken bodies through drink.

We've millions of broken bodies through adultery and all the rest of the junk. You know, it seems anybody's broken in America, but the church isn't broken about it. The one thing that alarms me in

America and England is that there is no alarm in the church.

Nobody dares to say we're not going to preach. Most of you can't handle the light you've got now. Why should you hear more? But God is full of mercy.

No, he doesn't put a pillar of fire there. He puts a man who's been walking up and down the valley for 30 years. I love the hymn.

I thought of it this morning. Thou didst not spare thine only son. If God didn't spare his son, is he going to spare me? Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Anyhow, here comes this amazing man, John the Baptist. I used to think he had no backing. Dear God, I'd like to be an evangelist with a backing.

I think of dear, what do you call him now? Paul Cain. He's one of the great men of our generation. I'm sure of that.

But on the other hand, you know when he gets to heaven, he's gonna have to split the reward with his mother. Remind me to tell him about that tonight. What do you think about a woman? He took her around the country with him.

She was a hundred years old. So they knew he wasn't flirting with any girl. Taking a mother around for a hundred years, isn't that wonderful? You think not.

I didn't say your mother-in-law, by the way. I said your mother. Think of that precious woman.

She's prayed for him for what? What is he now? 60. He's in his 61st. I knew he was just a boy.

In his 61st year and his mother's backed him every hour of the day. She told him, number one, what God said. In the middle of his life, what God said.

And now he's almost afraid to leave home because she has a third word to tell him before she goes to heaven. And I think he's very courageous to come to meetings like that. I wouldn't come.

Took me all my time to get there apart from that. But here we are. John the Baptist had some of the greatest people in history.

He has this old woman who the computers have just worked that out. She was 106 years of age. And every day she went to the temple, the Lord whom ye seek.

She didn't know which day revelation would come. You see, in the Welsh revival, they were very smart. They said, God, the Holy Ghost is going to come to Wales, be in church.

Do you know? Almost every church was packed out for months. Before the Holy Spirit came, Seth Joshua was one of the great characters. We don't mention him very much.

But Seth Joshua says, get to church. So every church was packed. We better pull that.

Oh, maybe the next great invasion of God is at Kansas City in June. Right. Lord, put that on record, please.

You want me to come? We used to sing a chorus years ago. Holy Ghost, we bid thee welcome, source of life and power thou art. Come in power and fill thy temple.

Holy Ghost, we welcome thee. But it's a dangerous thing to ask God to come because often he comes with a sword. He may come in the meeting this morning with blinding glory, just like he came on the Damascus Road and he stopped Paul or Saul as he was.

Or he may come in some other very, very fascinating way. Anyhow, John Baptist is not alone. He has one of the greatest prayer groups.

He has his precious woman, 106. He has Simeon. He has others behind him, Simeon.

I always think of Bob Jones. He told me the first time he saw me, I'm Simeon. I didn't know I looked like him.

But anyhow. But the interesting thing was, five people told me, Brother Bickle, that I was Simeon. Yes, thank you.

I feel as old as him this morning. Well, what's unique about Simeon? I mean, when five people tell you in six months you're Simeon, you get a scratch your head and ask why. Because of this, he prayed that the Lord let him live till the baby was born.

And I'm going to live till the baby's born, too. But you know, an interesting thing happened. The day I mentioned that up in Kansas City, the next day a lady came to know to know Alexander.

He's Alexander the Great. She came to know Alexander the day after I said that. She said, I've just discovered I'm pregnant.

And you know, nine months to that day, she had a baby. Nine months to that day, he opened a new church. So there you are.

That doesn't mean a thing to you. You're still drunk on your morning coffee. But it's a privilege, it's an agony to have even a touch of the prophetic burden on you.

And I still feel with all of us, Kansas City, from there till here, we're still in waters to the ankles. We have to move in waters to the knees and then waters to swimming, and that's going to happen. The first time I talked with John Wimber on the phone, I hadn't seen him before.

And you can be brave when you don't know the guy. I didn't know whether he was this height, and he isn't, as you know. But I said to him, John, the Lord told me in prayer this morning, you're a man of destiny.

And I believe he's a man of destiny. He has the trust of millions of people across the world, and that's a frightful responsibility. But here is John the Baptist in agony.

Do you remember Jesus told a story about a man who had a farm? And he sent out his servants, and then finally he sent his son. And John the Baptist is the one that's going to introduce his son. When he came, it was a tremendous period.

I think right after Ezra and Nehemiah, they left a settled form of government in Israel. They enforced the law. They demanded obedience.

And they established a great synagogue, which I believe lasted for what? It was composed of 120 elders. And it lasted 150 years. But those 120 elders get out of the way, and 120 men in the upper room get more revelation of God, more anointing of God than that all the years they were there.

And I believe God is holding back until like that thing David wrote this morning, Lord, I can't live another day without the fire of God. You need the fire of God to pray. You need the fire of God to see visions.

You need the fire of God to recognize. There's no help for us. I don't want to cry as I've done so long.

Like David in Psalm 80, O thou that dwellest between the cherubims, Lord, don't stay there. Come down here. We need God here.

Does it matter if it breaks your heart today? You're going to have a million, millenniums in eternity. There'll be no sorrow there. You can't patch up your prayer life when you get to the judgment seat.

You can't sacrifice when you get to the judgment seat. You can't weep when you get to the judgment seat. It's all between here and there.

This period we're in now is a dressing room for eternity. That's all it is. It's not to get more knowledge.

We have enough knowledge. You need God this morning. I need God this morning.

Some of you disobeyed God all the week. And this is the day, the valley of decision. You'll go back more after today than ever you've done in your life unless you obey God.

So John the Baptist appears. What a message he had. I could tell you about all the corruption he had to face.

The priests were backslidden. The priests themselves were backslidden. And the system they had was bankrupt.

And here he steps into this horrid vacuum. There had been a period before this. I've got a Jewish scholar here, so I mustn't tell you what I think.

I'll gain some stuff from him later. But there had been an awful period of turmoil. Not only had there been an invasion of foreign power that dominated them and taxed them and terrified them.

They Yes, that's right. Terrified them and so forth. They What am I thinking of? I can't quite say this name.

And if I can, I'm sure Bickle can't. Uh Oh, where's Todd? Todd, can you say? No, Todd can't. Well, here's a brute that came on the scene.

He ruled for a while. Antiochus Antiochus Epiphanes. A brutal man.

He vandalized the temple of the living God. He put a statue of Jupiter there. What else did he do? He took a pig and cut its throat on the altar to defile the altar.

And then he burned the scriptures. So you're the nation defiant. As I've said to you more than once, I'm troubled every morning I wake up.

For this simple reason. I live in a world. I live in a world that has lost its way.

And a church that has lost its voice. That voice has to come. We've got to get our old vocabulary back.

Nobody commits adultery now. We're just having an affair. There's no wickedness, only weakness.

There's no iniquity, only infirmity. There's no. Well, you can create a lot of things.

Can you imagine the rottenest thing that the devil ever introduced is called gay? What's gay about having hell in your body? What's gay about sitting a man on a red-hot stove and he burns like hell? A woman called me not long ago. She said, would you pray for a man near me? He's a young man, 25 years of age. He's in agony.

He screams. It's self-inflicted. Nobody gave it to him.

He invites it in his body and asks the government to spend 100 million dollars to get it out. You think the devil isn't a clever guy? How he tricks people. He never shows them the end.

He just showed them the beginning. The church has never faced the challenges it faces now. We've had 25 years of broadcasting and some of the guys that shouted most throughout the Holy Ghost are in jail this morning.

Or they've lost their ministries. So God has to vindicate his own name and I'm praying there'll go a stream of holiness out of this meeting. North, south, east, west.

That your young people will say, daddy, mommy, what happened? One day you'll be praying with your family around the family altar and the Holy Ghost will come and your children will speak in tongues. Your children will prophesy and you'll be embarrassed. You know, Whitfield, I'd love to have heard Whitfield.

I think of much about Whitfield as Bishop Bickle thinks about Brainerd. He reminds me of Brainerd. Only he's twice as heavy as Brainerd.

Brainerd that could go out in the snow weighing only a hundred pounds and with a snout to his chin could pray until the snow melted. He couldn't touch it with his fingers and you can't get people to kneel in a lovely comfortable church with a rug. Well, in God Almighty, how do we dare to say we're the same tribe and people we're not? I've talked 20 years before I ever heard Paul Cain say and a couple of my precious prayer partners are here and they've heard me say many times God's going to give us a new breed of men and they've heard me pray.

Every week we have 500 prayer meetings. 10 years, every Friday night, 500 prayer meeting. And every time in that prayer meeting, I would say this, Lord, at the judgment seat, when there are maybe 50 million eyes or billion eyes looking on me, don't stand there in your majesty and read the record of my poor life and say, son, I had many things to tell you, but you couldn't bear them.

You were too occupied. Your ears were catching other voices, but not mine. That's why that damnable TV has to get out of the way.

You're hearing more about men than you hear about God. You're getting more vision that's television than you are about the vision of the Almighty God. That's all got to change.

I believe many of you are going to a new lease of life from this meeting. You'll be amazed when you wake up. You'll be amazed how the Bible speaks.

You'll be amazed how the Holy Ghost speaks. You'll be amazed how all your interests in other things have withered and perished. You see, this man is shut up to this one thing I do.

So he steps onto the stage. I was saying about Whitfield. I thought about him early this morning.

Lord Chesterfield was one of England's great men, and they told him it's a great honor to buy the name of Whitfield. So he goes to hear Whitfield, and Whitfield is describing a sinner as a blind man, and he says, and he's doing this, you know, he's going nearer to the edge, and he preaches a little, says he's nearer the edge. And he's going on in his blindness.

He treads on something and thinks it's gravel, and it's precious stones. He doesn't know he's blind. He goes a bit nearer, and he's going a bit nearer.

Lord Chesterfield's a brilliant aristocrat, and he jumps up on his feet when he says he's got a bit nearer. He says, my God, he's fallen over. Now that's preaching.

Also, he said one day I'll shoot the arrows of God, and he pulled the bow back, and all the congregation bent down. Oh, I hope you get so terrified this morning. You run out to the front and squeal and howl and say, God, I've been disobedient, but I must get fire before I go back.

Do you want to disappoint God? I don't want to disappoint God. I disappoint some people, I'm sure, but one thing I want to live for, Lord, I don't want to disappoint you, and I don't want you to be disappointed in me. The Lord whom he seeks, he seeks you every day to do his will, and you better hear his voice.

If you don't do it, somebody else will do it. You'll walk around eternity. Somebody will be wearing a crown that God Almighty had for you.

Hold fast to that which thou hast, that no man, not demon, not deacons, which is not the same thing, but anyhow. Neither deacons, nor demons, nor anything, will, uh, I'm going to cut this off now when I go home. Can I tuck it in? Oh, I took my tie off the other night.

Don't take my shirt off, that wouldn't do. But let me just say this quickly without giving you the scriptures, you know. What did Jesus say of John the Baptist, the most amazing man in the world? Do you know what it says? His mother was filled with the Holy Ghost.

Do you know when? As soon as Jesus came in the room, and Jesus was in the belly of Mary, but as soon as Jesus came in the room, he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. It doesn't say that about any other man in the scriptures, does it? It says his mother was filled with the Holy Ghost, his father was filled with the Holy Ghost, his preacher was filled with the Ghost, and he was filled with the Holy Ghost. No wonder he didn't need to go to Bible school to get mixed up.

Now it says in Luke 3 verse 1, let me read it quickly. Now in the 50th year of the reign of Tiberius, Caesar Pontius Pilate being the governor of Judea, Herod was the governor of Galilee. Listen to these marvelous names.

And his brother Philip was a tea truck of Aeturia, of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias was a tea truck abilene. That's about as refreshing as a mouthful of sand, isn't it? You say, well, why is it there, brother Rayner? It's to show you the obstructions against him. He didn't care about military power.

He didn't care what Caesar was on the throne. There's somebody else on the throne. Once you've seen that throne, these thrones don't matter.

Was it in a year that King Uzziah died, got kicked off the throne, that Isaiah saw the throne of God? Who did he see on the throne? Read the 12th chapter of John. The vision he saw in Isaiah 6, I saw one hand lifted up and its glory filled the temple. He saw Jesus.

That's what it says in the 12th. And you know, when you see Jesus like that, you'll be blinded to everything else in the world. Well, make a hill of beans, what they offer you.

It won't matter what God says. Go here or go there, drop everything, sell your house. So what? What's that in the light of eternity? There'll be no sacrifice once we get to the throne of God.

Anyhow, it is John the Baptist. Then the next verse says, Annas and carefust be too high priest. That's illegal.

It shows you the mess in the temple, in the religious world, the mess that they had in the economic world and the military world. And here's a lone man. You know, you better get a bit sharp at you and I. Let me say this this morning again.

Listen, you, you, you, individually, you are just as spiritual as you want to be. No man had ever lived, ever had a Bible like this. I can read Hebrews 11 every morning and it knocks me on the floor in tears.

By faith, not by organization, not by money, not by scholarship, by faith. They subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Women received their dead, raised to life again.

Isn't that wonderful? Except they never had a Bible. What did they do? I'm a bit nervous about some of these prophets. Who's the first man in Hebrews 11, remember? Well, I'll tell you what with God.

What was his name? Enoch. What does it say? You have to go to the end of the Bible to find out. There's a book of Enoch.

It'll cost you \$150 to buy it today. But I'll tell you what, the Bible will tell you more about Enoch than that fellow with his imagination tells you in the book of Enoch. Here is a man, never had a Bible, never saw a priest, never heard of prophecy, never had a Bible.

He's launched out into the world with nothing. And he stands there and says to the nation, the Lord is coming with 10,000 of his saints. How did he know? He'd no Bible.

He'd no church. He'd no high priest. He'd no bloody sacrifice.

And yet he says the Lord will come. Well, listen, if he said that, how far back is that now? What, 7,000 years ago? We must be terribly near to where he's coming now, mustn't we? That ought to thrill you. It'll either thrill you or terrify you.

What does it say? The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple. And when we see him, we shall be what? We shall be given a week to prepare. Oh, no, it's a month, isn't it? Instantly.

If you're not like him in that moment, you'll be left behind to the hell of the world it's going to be. There's no preparation. The preparation is now.

The hour is now, the accepted time. This is the day. Anyhow, here's this man preaching.

A man full of the Holy Ghost, his daddy full of the Holy Ghost, his mother full of the Holy Ghost, the church full of the Holy. It must have been awesome. You know, we've got about 50 different churches in Dallas, and they're all the fastest growing church.

Isn't that crazy? You know, I tell them, I say, I've got a friend called Jesus, and he had the fastest, what? Shrinking church. He preached to 5,000, then to 4,000, then down to 500, and then he had 11. Will he also go away, he said.

Oh, you want Pentecost, you do? Wouldn't it be wonderful if your pastor could say, listen, we're going to have the greatest meeting you've ever been in your life. I've been praying, I've got a word from the Lord. You know, these two old hypocrites we've had for years, they've killed the last six pastors with their unbelief.

Next Sunday morning, I'm going to start the, we're not going to sing the doxology until I've done this. I'm going to raise my hand and kill two of these old hypocrites. If that isn't a way to start a Sunday morning meeting, I don't know what is.

Wouldn't it be great carrying corpses? Goodbye, brother. Don't come back, Sapphira. We've got such wonderful imaginations of what a good meeting is.

Okay, Luke 3, 3. It says what? He came into all the country of Jordan. Preaching the baptism of repentance with the remission of sins. He says the Lord is coming.

All flesh will see it together. Then verse 7 says, when the multitudes came to be baptized, he was such a gracious man. He said, you know, in my opinion, no, in Dr. Smith's latest book, he says, he spit on them, he said, you generation of swine.

Isn't that nice to talk to the aristocrats? When we go to London, brother Bickleigh, if you and I preach in Westminster Abbey, I'm going to say that. Well, that's the equivalent to nowadays. They hate it sneaks.

He says, you vipers. Isn't that something? I was going to tell you something, but I won't say that. But here's a man preaching in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Listen. The multitude came. They didn't stay away.

They said, this man is saying something. He wasn't a faceless preacher, a voiceless preacher. He's a God-shaped man.

He's been listening to God for 30 years and he's got three years to unload. He, a man who is intimate with God will never be intimidated by men. That's one of my slogans.

You can borrow it, Bob Jones, but you didn't say it. I said it. The man who is intimate with God will never be intimidated by men.

I don't care a hell of beans who they are. Who stood up against Hitler? The universities didn't. The businessmen didn't.

There was one man there. What was that great preacher they had? Dietrich Bonhoeff. I remember walking to Dr. Seuss's office one day.

He said, Leonard, the Germans killed their prophet. Dietrich Bonhoeff. What was his book? His best book? The Cost of Discipleship.

Why did God let him die? The Americans broke into that camp three days after he was still hanging on a scaffold. He could have been John the Baptist to his generation, but maybe it was through his books and his lifestyle. They crucified the greatest prophet they've had since Martin Luther.

That's what prophets get, isn't it? What did Abel do? He did the will of God. What did he get for it? He got killed. The other rascal doing the devil's work was living.

Nobody knows all the mind of God. It's a mystery. But listen to him preaching here.

He baptized them to repentance in verse 7. But notice the effect of his preaching. You see, altar calls are trying to help God out. If God isn't present, you need to sing Just As I Am 50 times.

If God is there, you don't sing at all. People are so broken and crushed that God is giving me one more chance, like he's doing this morning. Some of you are in the valley of decision.

God won't come around your place for a long, long while, if ever, maybe 10 years. The Lord whom ye seek. So what does it say? Look at verse 10, please.

In Luke chapter 3, there's no altar call. The Spirit of God is moving. He's shooting the arrows of God in the hearts of people.

They know they've failed. They know they're unrepentant. They know they're rebellious against God's will.

And so what did he do? While he's preaching, the people cried out, what shall we do? That's revival. When you can't sit through the meeting, you feel you've got a burning cancer. If I don't get to the cross now, I may die before the meeting's over.

And if you feel like that, get up and come. I don't care. We'll still go on preaching.

God told me the walls are going to come down this morning. So while he's preaching, the people say, what shall we do? Now turn over the page, if it's like my Bible. Then verse 12, it says, then came the publicans to be baptized.

And they said, Master, what shall we do? Dear God, you've got to preach with all heaven on you to get publicans and sinners like that to cry out, what shall we do? So the people cry out, what shall we do? The publicans cry out, what shall we do? Then he's surrounded by heathen, by men who have been following strange gods in other countries. And here they are mentioned now in verse 14, the soldiers likewise asked of him, what shall we do? Do you see the different stations? John the Baptist is a success geographically. They came to him from Judea and Samaria.

They'd never seen a man God-filled. He's not wearing beautiful garments of glory and beauty. He doesn't wear a skirt with pomegranates and bells.

He's got a dirty old sheep, well not sheepskin, what was it? Camel skin around his neck and a pair of shorts. They'd kick him out of Westminster happy. They'd receive him in open arms at the vineyard.

They'd ask him where they got his pattern for his uniform.

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