

Hurst Green Evangelical Church

13th Jan 2019

Luke 3:1-20

John the Baptist

John the Baptist

He is often spoken about but we do not know a lot about John the Baptist – actually we do not know a lot about any biblical characters apart from Jesus.

John crops up at Jesus Birth; in preparing a way for Jesus; in fulfilling prophecies and in dying.

Apart from that whole years go by and we know nothing and have to assume things based on the little we are told.

But still in his birth, life and death there is much that John can teach us.

Prophesied over

Having just had Christmas we have been reminded of one of the big things we do know about John and that is that he was prophesied over.

You could have a very productive time looking at the many Old Testament prophecies about John. They do not name him but talk of a messenger and we tend to skate over these and stick to the big ones that often are only summaries of the promises that God has made.

Put aside an hour or two and take a look at the detail.

For the purposes of this morning and keeping this talk to a manageable length I will stick with the Christmas theme and the most well-known of the prophecies over John.

Turn to page XXX - In the temple Zechariah hears the angel tell him about his future son

Luke 1:13-17 (ANIV)

¹³ *But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. ¹⁴ He will be a **joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. ¹⁶ Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."***

These words of course had to be recorded by Zechariah since only he and the angel were present and additional prophecies were added by Zechariah when his son was born and he sang later in chapter 1.

But John was prophesied over.

In those five verses there are some awesome statements (Look at the prophecies highlighted above in bold.)

There are others even in that passage but what a wonderful list that is – would you like those prophecies?

- Joy and delight to your parents
- Great in the sight of the Lord
- Bring many back to the Lord their God
- Go before the Lord in Spirit and Power
- To prepare people for the Lord

That is a list I would like!

They came with a price. In Luke 1 – no wine and he will end up with a grizzly death all because he follows Gods word and commands for him!!!

Came to pass – Luke 3:1-6

And these prophesies came to pass as we are told in Luke 3 when John heard the word of God and obeyed it.

That is the challenge – there is usually an act of the will in here and we have to hear and obey. As we sing “hear and obey for there is no other way”.

And look at the guidance he gives to the people in Luke 3:7-18. That passage is full of good guidance for us today. Often we claim that we do not know how to live our lives for God and in that claim we lie to ourselves for our bible is full of teaching and those verses form a good start to living the Christian life..

Heard God and obeyed – act of the will

But he ended up in prison! And it would not have been a comfortable prison likes ours today!

Finished his mission

But in all of this he remained true and finished his mission although it cost him his life.

In your own time take a look at Matt 14:1-12 where Herod is tricked into killing John.

Us

How does all of this apply to us today?

Well we are different to John in that we know a lot about ourselves. Some we might want to forget; some we would not want others to know about and some we do not mind being known.

Prophesied over

Like John we have been prophesied over – do you realise that?

Most of us, instinctively would say that we don’t have prophesies over us but we do – the problem is we do not acknowledge them therefore it is very difficult to have the act of our will that makes them part of our life.

Most of them are there in the bible recorded just like Johns are!!

You could spend another hour or two looking at those! Time well invested. Try it!

Here are just a few of them

1 Peter 1:5 (ANIV)

⁵ *who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

How about that as one to start with. You live your life shielded by God's power!

This is not just a temporary thing – it is there until the coming of your salvation. It does not promise you an easy cruise through life. As we can all testify to we take on all the bumps and trials but what is important to us is shielded.

Our treasure in heaven, our sure and certain promise cannot be damaged, tarnished or in any way taken away until we claim the crown through Christ our own.

or

Ephesians 2:6 (ANIV)

⁶ *And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,*

Our life is no ordinary life but one that leads to this wonderful climax of being raised up with Christ at his second coming.

And while many prophecies deal with the end of our lives and eternity try this one that looks back

Jeremiah 1:5 (ANIV)

⁵ *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."*

While that was given to Jeremiah at his calling this is true for us as we were known before the world began and we have been appointed prophets to the nations as we are sent out to the ends of the earth to carry the good news in obedience to the great commission.

Remember Samaria and the ends of the earth – we are part of that.

And also

Ephesians 2:10 (ANIV)

¹⁰ *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

So you cannot deny that you have been prophesied over and I have only chosen a few of the many that are in our bibles. The only reason we don't know them is that we have not looked for them.

And we know that God's word will come to pass and so all these prophecies are true and available to us. We just have to do our part by believing that what God says is true and that if he promises us something then that is there for us.

That is not really very hard is it?

We just have to make that choice and if we make that choice then we will be effective for again God promises us that in those great words at the end of John's gospel.

John 14:12 (ANIV)

¹² I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Now that is one we have trouble believing!

That even greater things causes us problems but leave that to God. His ways are not our ways and probably his measurements are different to ours.

For us - concentrate on the good works he has laid before us. Who knows the impact we are having and what the effect of that will be?

Those who were part of you accepting Christ's claims had no idea that you would end up here as part of the body of Christ doing these good works.

Who knows the impact your good works will have to the future – you may help convince a great evangelist that Christ's claims are true and so be part of bringing many to Christ.

Do not laugh - you do not know.

Do your good works and let God decide which are even greater things.

And so – live as one winning the race; believe God and the prophecies spoken over you; live as if they are true

Let them come to pass so that you gain that accolade of “Good and faithful servant.”