

THE ONE AND ONLY, JOHN THE BAPTIST

John 1:6-7; Luke 7:28

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: If John the Baptist were to come into the Christian Church scene today, how would the Churches deal with him? The Bible very plainly states that this man John was a man who was sent from God. and Jesus, Himself, stated that there was no one greater. In all probability if John the Baptist were to show up today he would be encouraged to pat himself on the back and be proud of the fact that God had sent him and that he needed to write some books, perhaps make a movie and of course hold seminars and lectures.

However when John the Baptist was here, he gladly stepped down - allowing Jesus the Christ to replace, to displace him completely. John the Baptist even stated that " he was not worthy to even untie Jesus' sandals." He never wanted recognition from those who followed him, he was simply doing what God had sent him to do, make the way ready for the Messiah and that's what he did when he cried out: "...*Behold, the Lamb of God...*" He turned all the eyes away from himself to Jesus and then he just faded away. No, John the Baptist would never have fit into today's religious scene.

I. JOHN THE BAPTIST WOULD HAVE NEEDED TO MAKE SOME CHANGED TO FIT IN TODAY

1. He would have had to adjust the way he dressed and appeared when in public
2. He would have had to adjust his sermon style and manner of delivery.
 - John never preached about adjusting one's lifestyle, he preached repentance.
 - John never invited the crowd to sit down with him and talk about their religious beliefs.
 - Religious discussion/speculation never deals with one's own sins, just those of others.
3. He preached a straight, spiritual message aimed at getting decisions and results.
 - He never thought about whether his message or style was going to hurt anybody's feelings.

II. JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS GREATER THAN ANY BEFORE HIM

1. Many churches have seminars, discussions, sessions, studies about religious topics but never about repenting and getting right with God.
 - Someone moderates the meetings and everyone puts in their thoughts and when it is all over it has been nothing more than just playing a game.
 - Five minutes on one's knees with God in complete sincerity will get one closer to the Lord and closer to the truth than all of the discussion groups anywhere.
 - Who can argue with someone who is on his/her knees pouring out his/her heart to God before others (discussion group)?
2. John's greatness lay in his high office and in his high privilege as a man actually sent from God.
 - It was not John's mother or father who told him to go preach.
 - It was not wanting public recognition that caused John to go preach.
 - It was not John's outstanding capabilities that caused John to go preach.
 - What John was doing was bigger than John because of what God was doing in the fullness of time.
 - Abraham saw the Lord's day and was glad, but John the Baptist actually lived in the Lord's Day and that made him greater than Abraham.

- David played his harp and sang of the coming One who would be wounded and pierced, yet would rise and sing among His brethren. John was there when He came and saw Him and knew Him.
- Isaiah prophesied of the One who should come, born of a virgin, but John the Baptist recognized Him and touched Him and even baptized Him.
- Malachi said that "He would suddenly come into His temple and sit as a purifier of silver....," but John the Baptist actually walked in that temple.
- John the Baptist was greater than any of the Old Testament prophets, kings, priests for he was the one who prepared the way and introduced the One they all prophesied and sang about, Jesus Christ.

III. REASONS JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS GREATER THAN ANY BEFORE HIM

1. John the Baptist was indeed a man sent from God.
 - Matthew and Mark write about John the Baptist, but give no great background, pedigree. Luke writes telling who John the Baptist's parents were, as well as his unusual birth.
 - The disciple/apostle John writes farther, higher, deeper than the others and states that John the Baptist was a man sent from God.
 - There could be no greater honor than to be picked by God to do something that nobody else would ever be asked to do.
 - When Moses died, God sent Joshua to gather the nation and establish Israel in the promised land.
 - God sent David who sang and made music thousands of years ago which has been used by Jewish worshippers ever since and even in today's Churches, people still sing David's songs.
 - God sent Paul, and God sent Peter and the Church was established.
 - God has sent others through the centuries to do great things.
2. John had the ability to live and meditate in solitude - quietness.
 - He lived in the desert until the appointed time of God and he came out of his silence like the blare of a trumpet and crowds all gathered to hear this man who had been with God and who had come from God.
 - Finding solitude in today's time is difficult for somebody is always talking or something is always drawing attention away.
 - John the Baptist met God in silence of the desert - a lesson for all, just get alone with Jesus for a while.
3. John was blessed of God with his simplicity.
 - John was simple in dress and what he ate.
 - John's faith in God was simple and he never tried to impress anyone.
 - John never spent any time bragging, he just walked around simply doing the will of God.
4. John had the right kind of vision, a true spiritual discernment - he could see things as they were.
 - When the Holy Spirit came like a dove, descending upon the Lord Jesus, how many of the crowd saw the Holy Spirit come?
 - ***"...I would not have known Him, except that the One who sent me to baptize with water told me, ' the man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is He who will baptize with the Holy Spirit...' (John 1:33)***
 - John was a man of vision in the midst of people who had no vision.

5. John had courage.

- John stood in public, among many and said to the religious leaders of his day,

"...You brood of vipers..." (Luke 3:7)

- Christians today do not have the courage to be different. They don't want to hurt any feelings, they don't want to lose any influence, respect, or any friends.

- God calls His Church to be Sheep, not mice.

CONCLUSION:

1. John the Baptist didn't want anything for himself. He just wanted to live to glorify his God.

2. The God of John the Baptist is still the God of this very moment. Nothing has changed and God is still seeking men and women in whom He can find those characteristics that marked John the Baptist.

3. Within the heart of every Christian lies exactly what God is looking for - his/her spiritual life that is to be simple, hearts that are to meditate and be silent, determination to be courageous and open to God's leadings.

4. Where are God's preachers? Where are God's pastors? Where are God's prophets?

5. The simple, humble and courageous who are willing to serve and wait on God in the long silences, who wait to hear what God says before they go to tell the world - people who seek only to glorify their God and His Christ. Are YOU one of these?