

Visions and Revelations

Message 8: John the Baptist

Well dear brothers, I'm very happy there's another Lord's day we can share something more. I heard different reports. Many saints are very helped by these messages. For that I am very appreciative. But you've got to realize these messages are not messages. They are for enlightening, for life giving. Most of all, try to build up healthy saints. In turn, we have a healthy church life, so no message end up being just a message. Every message should begin a week long pursuing together. The brother will prepare materials for you like the Chinese speaking saints do. I heard they prepare a lot of materials everyday for the saints to get into. My hope is that in July, maybe by Lord's mercy, the virus is over. We can come together properly at that time. Every saint come to the meeting. You are different, you are no longer a churchgoer, you know how to labor with the Lord. You know how to spend time in your daily life. You know how to be with Christ. You know how to be a pursuing one with the brothers together. Then, you become a blessing to the church. Do you have a picture as I do? I have a picture, this virus thing seemingly is a frustration, but the lord allowed it to save us from our oldness. Bring us into something new. To save us from a church life focused on Lord's day meetings. Maybe a gospel or home meeting now turn to everyday. We try to gain Christ. Try to win Christ. Try to have a little more of Christ. Every day we spend time with Christ. In turn also with the brothers. So when we come together again by Lord's mercy, I hope there is a stronger meeting, a stronger testimony a stronger outflow of life. That is gospel preaching, also the dispensing life to one another that the whole church life will be somewhat different. So I hope brothers if you and I... we all can treasure this 30 minutes together. Every Lord's day is a 30 to 40 minute message. In these messages that we can stir up our appetites that we desire to have more to enjoy. More to partake of Christ more to be with the brothers. More these messages can become a kind of solid food, nourishing all the saints. In turn, the whole church life become somewhat a healthy... now we come to this week. We come to the eighth message. John the Baptist. We covered Joseph, we covered Zechariah. We covered Mary, we covered the shepherds, we covered the wise men, and the star. Now we come to the eighth message. Another person. Who is he? John the Baptist. When I talk about John the Baptist, everybody knows there's a famous figure, his name is John the Baptist. What did he do? He baptized Jesus. But very few realize his lifelong learning, lifelong serving, lifelong effort started in a very glorious way. To a point he baptized Jesus. Eventually he count the later part of failure as fading. Eventually he faded away, which he ought to. Because even he himself said "He (Jesus) shall increase and I shall decrease. He knows this but what is his process? If we look at John's life, he came into being by the blessing of God through the speaking of Gabriel. Praise the Lord for that. The biggest word for Gabriel the angel said was that he shall have the Spirit and power. Two things he has: the Spirit and the power of Elijah. Brother you consider that. There are all the prophets in the Old Testament, but here the angel marks out one Elijah. Of course Elijah is very impressive. There are very impressive

prophets, but what's the difference with Elijah? Elijah's life is skilled with a fight, a fight for Lord's interest, a fight for the Lord's testimony, a fight for the prophet of the Israelites so they can be one with God. He fought with all kinds of miracles. He told the heavens close for how long, that the sparrow will come to feed him. And he was fed by a widow or something, then eventually the son died, he resurrected the son. Then he's competing, challenging the prophets of Baal. In that he said "well your god and my God" so eventually he did marvelous things. This is a person God desires, God loves. God will say, I love to have prophet not just prophesying what's going to happen. Not just saying something "oh you people." Not just saying something "lord bless you." No. He wants a person who says I'm fighting. I'm not just a speaking person, my existence is for God's testimony. My living, my operation, my labor is all for God's testimony. This is marvelous. John is this kind of person. So when he (John) was in his 20's, more and more he realized what he has, so he said I'm going to fulfill my ministry. What is my ministry"? I am a forerunner for Jesus. I want to pave the way for Jesus. I want to pave the way for the son of God for the new age to come in. So what he did? He didn't go to Jerusalem. He didn't follow his father to be a priest. He gave up everything of Judaism. He went to the wilderness and became a voice there. It's good, a voice. Many times we so much want to be a person to be honored, respected. Very few people say I want to be a voice. What is my voice? "Repent!" for the kingdom of God is near! That's a big voice. Accompanied with his living. Now I look at the person, he eat locust, wild honey. He dressed with camel's skin, then what he speaks? "Repent!" Who is he? A voice, you know brother, you got to learn to appreciate it. He says everything from God I want, everything God desires I want. You know why I eat locust, why I eat wild honey? Because they are clean. I didn't do things, while I don't take in anything that's unclean, I take things that's clean, yet not in the form of the priest. Not in the form of Pharisees, or Sadducees. No! I live a life so simple. Because I am only interested in God's testimony. In God's desire and more than that. What do I put on? Camel's clothes. Camel is not clean, it's unclean. Which means you look at me inside I'm very clean, you look at my living, I'm right in the midst of sinners. I'm not clean to a point not touchable, I'm a God-man, I'm a spiritual man don't touch me, everything I said, No. He's a person, I will say rather relaxed. How's your life, my life is very godly before God to a point I refrain myself from cow, beef, lamb. I eat just locust, just wild honey. I am so clean inside, I'm so one with God inside, yet where am I? I am with all men. Especially with Jews, so I am a voice calling the Jews. These Judaizers, those who are in Jewish religion, saying Repent, change your mind. Turn from what you are in. The religious deeds, religious words, religious talk, religious behavior, religious living, religious everything you do. There's something related to God, yet without God. Let me tell you. Come out of it! You must have God himself. You must have God, so repent! What does repent mean? A change, a turn of your mind. From Jewish religion come out of it. From Jewish practice come out of it. From the law of commandment come out of it. From the rituals come out of it. Because, now, come to the wilderness, seemingly there is nothing, but you can be baptized. What does that mean? Terminate yourself. You can be baptized means you change your mind so what your old thought, old mind, old way of thinking, old expectations, old ambitions,

everything is over, I change my mind, I drop them. How to testify I drop them? I went down to the water, baptize me. I baptize myself, I am baptized, I am buried my old man, I terminated myself, so when I come out of the water, I am a new creation. I can be a new creation. That's what Paul says, with us, with Christians. Today with many Christians, we think baptism is a ritual for you to join in to be a member of a certain church. Many times, I ask a Christian, are you a Christian? No. Are you a believer of Jesus? Yes. Then why you are not a Christian? I have not decided where should I be baptized, which congregation I should join? Brother, you have to realize even that is old. You should come out of it. You should say I am just a terrible person, I am a sinful person. I believe in Jesus. Jesus, the blood of Jesus, cleanses me from all of my sins. I am saved, hallelujah I am saved! Isn't that good enough? Lord says yes. Then why we need baptism? To be a testimony. I am saved. I have Christ, I have everything of Christ. All of my old things are gone, now I testify, I come into the water, I bury them, so when I come out of the water, I have the newness of life.

So if you read the outline, here talk about the baptism. Here says, point C, number i. Baptism indicates termination and burial. When Christians are baptized, they testify I have Christ. To me, the world is terminated and my old man is buried. Then being raised from the water indicates germination. It is a marvelous baptism. Termination and germination. When I come out of the water, there is germination, so I should walk in newness of life. This is John's ministry. It is very simple. I see something of God. I'm going to pave the way. How do I pave the way? I will bring people out of the Jewish religion so that they can turn to Christ. So I am in wilderness, but I am very clean. Look, I eat only locust and wild honey. I am so clean. And more than that, I am so much in the midst of fallen man, fallen Israelites. That is why I have camel's clothes, to tell you, you are unclean. You need to be clean. You need to repent.

You know brother, this is really marvelous. At this time, when everything is so marvelous, you know what happened, Jesus came to him. Jesus' word was very simple, now can you baptize me? They know each other, they are cousins. In their growth, they should see each other, they should know one another, so Jesus came to him, I like to be baptized. John should be very clear, because the first time John met Jesus, both were in their mothers' womb, and he was jumping, leaping, because he saw, in Elizabeth's womb, because he saw Jesus' mother Mary came. So after he was born, they grow up, they know the stories. He know Jesus very clear. He knows his mission is to introduce Jesus. So Jesus came and told him, please baptize me. And his word was, no, no, no, that's too much. Now I should come to you. That is interesting, interesting statement. Let me ask you, how many statements you can make? You maybe say, Lord Jesus oh that is too much, you are too high, and I am too low. I am not qualified. Another thing is Lord Jesus, no, no, don't say that, you are the savior, I am only your voice, pioneer, so now how about you baptize me. He said something very interesting. His statement is, I should have come to you, but how come you come to me? This is 50% right, right? What is right? He should come to him. What's wrong? But you come to me. And Jesus answer is even more sweet. He said well, well, allow me now, suffer me for now, at the moment. I know you should come to me. Yes, you should come to me. Yes, I

am your savior, but for the time being, remember I am a man. As a man, I need to be baptized. Even though I am holy, I am sinless, even such a holy, sinless, but as a man, I need to be baptized. So he come up begin my new life. Praise the Lord for this.

So, John allowed him and baptized him. After he was baptized, then firstly Jesus saw something. And John saw something, and Bible used the word behold, which could mean a lot of other people also saw something. Saw what? Saw heaven opened and the Spirit come down to him as a dove. The Holy Spirit come down. You know what does that mean? Holy Spirit was mentioned in the New Testament only. When the Holy Spirit mentioned in the New Testament, begin using the word Holy Spirit, is all related to some divine actions. Holy Spirit come to Mary so she beget Jesus. Related to actions. So, eventually, when the operating of the Holy Spirit was mentioned in the New Testament, it is called the Spirit. The Spirit lead the Lord to the wilderness, the Holy Spirit. So when Holy Spirit come to him, means a lot. Means God is with him, God is happy with him, God is satisfied with him, even abide in him. Holy Spirit comes to him and abides with him.

More than that, is, now Jesus, God will say, oh my Son, now are you ready to serve? Are you ready to preach gospel? Are you ready to fulfill your ministry so the whole human race, can be saved? How marvelous is this? When Jesus was baptized, he saw it. John testify he also saw it. But the word behold means many more should have seen it, seen heaven opened. But there is a voice, voice everybody heard, this is my beloved Son. In him I am well pleased. I am happy with this. Hey, look. You want to be baptized, you are in the wilderness, you do a lot of things, but please come to my Son. In my Son, I am well pleased. What a glorious declaration God has made concerning Christ, which means what? Love the Lord, but have the Lord, pursue the Lord, but have the Lord, serving the Lord but have the Lord, doing things for the Lord, but have the Lord. Become a servant of the Lord, but have the Lord. Do everything with the Lord, for the Lord, but you must have the Lord, because only having Christ is what God pleased. God would say I want you to have Jesus Christ, not things of Jesus Christ, not truths of Jesus Christ, not messages concerning Jesus Christ, not works developing Jesus Christ testimony. No, all of these you can do, you need to do, you have to do, but when you do it, please do it with Jesus Christ. Only with Jesus Christ, God says I am well pleased. What a marvelous thing.

You know what's happened? Very happy right, Jesus now was baptized, God announced, John even heard it, and Jesus also told John, now after baptized me first, this is according to the righteousness. After that, please I will baptize you, because you said it right? You should have come to me. I never denied it. I never denied it, said no, you don't need to come to me. Now I baptize you. You are baptized me. I believe that was happiest moment, Jesus was baptized, hallelujah, and people heard, this is my beloved son. But for some reason, afterwards, John began to talk with his companions, coworkers, now what should we do? We should all go follow Jesus. Many will say, no, no, no, we finally come out of Jewish religion, come out of Jerusalem. We finally get settled, have a happy life in the wilderness, now you tell me to follow Jesus go back? No, no, no, we can't do this. You know eventually what happen? These people's voice kidnapped John the Baptist. He can't follow the Lord anymore, have to consider, I think some

would even say that, John you want to be baptized? John says yeah I like to be baptized by Jesus. Then people say, if you baptized by Jesus, you owe us. We followed you. We followed you all of these years. What happened to you? Now how come you going to be follow Jesus, then where, who will be our leader? You know brother, many times in the church life the flesh, fleshly ones, the soulish ones, the young ones, would have a lot of opinions. Why meeting so long? Why you preach? Why that testimony is good or no good? Why the church life should be like this. You know, a lot of these voices eventually kidnap many elders. Many servant of God they can't go on. They can not proper lead, because all the voices. So dear saints, let me tell you, please don't be a voice causing problems. John is clear, John is the leader. If he is the leader says, "I'm going to be baptized by Jesus as I desired". Then they all should, "let us all go." John also should have said I don't force you. If you don't want to do that, please go your way, I'm going. But anyway it's sad, after all this they say, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no". After all the "no's", John realize he can't. But he's such a good brother, he's there made a few testimonies. Number one, he bring two of his favor, John the disciple, and Andrew, one of the twelve apostles. He bring these two, let's take a walk, to bring them to Jesus. When he see Jesus coming then he shout to these two, "Behold, the Lamb of God!". Don't follow me, go follow Jesus. What a pure brother, how good is John. And secondly, more than that, he people ask him are you Christ? No I'm not Christ. Then eventually he said you know that when Jesus begin to preach gospel and baptize people, the more people went to Jesus for baptism than John. So people talk with John, "Oh, listen, listen. Many people go to Jesus now". John's word is, "He shall increase, I shall decrease". Isn't that a sweet talk? But if he can say this, he shall germinate, I shall terminate, I think everything's ok. It's not decrease or increase, it's you should totally gone, disappear, only Christ still remain. His statement is so spiritual, but is not after God. God says, "I don't want you to decrease. I want you to follow me". Many time I heard the brother said, "Oh, I will decrease". With me there's just kind of funny feeling. No, the Lord doesn't want you to decrease, Lord want you to disappear. Then your whole person is geared only to Christ, Christ alone. Because of this, is such a good brother right? He was such a success, he also get involved with politics, I don't know what's happened to him. He begin to talk with Herod, maybe so many people come to him, this is not right, Herod did not right, he got stirred up, he went to Herod, "No this wrong, you should not marry your brother's wife", or whatever that is. So you know what's happened? Herod just put him in prison. He was in prison, a lot of feelings. I think maybe this is the last thing Lord has done to tell him, "You want do work? No, the work will be gone. I put you in prison, you can't do a thing. Now, can you turn to me, Jesus?". But he was there waiting, this part is hard to understand, so waiting, wait, wait what? Wait for Jesus to come to save him. But nothing. So eventually he sent his comrades, those who follow him, his disciples to see Jesus, ask Jesus, "Are you the coming one?" This is I tell you striking question. He know Jesus even in his mother's womb, he was delivered and Jesus was delivered, they grow up knowing each other, knowing what's going to happen all their life. Yet here he says, "Are you the one who is coming? Are you the one, or are we waiting for another one who's coming? What, if you are the one, why don't you rescue me? Do something! Save my

situation!” He didn’t realize, no, his situation is a frustration. I say this brother, many times we don’t understand. We do things for the Lord, we do things for flesh, we do things in a way even we feel Lord bless us, eventually that’s a frustration to the Lord for building up the Lord’s testimony. Eventually, finally what’s happened, he was killed. You feel sad for that, right? When the daughter says, “I need the head of John”, so Herod feel reluctant, but he promised so he did it. He killed, killed John. You know brother, what a glorious pioneer for the Lord. What a faithful servant for the Lord. All these years, but end up so sad. Let me ask you, but what else can you do? He will have to go. He’s a pioneer of Jesus, now he’s a competitor of Jesus. Jesus baptize, he baptize. Jesus preach, he preach. You are his pioneer to help the real thing, eventually you become his frustrations. But let’s not develop this too much. However, after he was killed, John has very, maybe before that but anyway, the Lord Jesus very good comments on John. He say, “You know, you go out for what? To see those with beautiful garments? Let me tell you there is man, John, he’s greater than all the prophets in the Old Testament. Why? They all predicting about me, foreseeing about me, saying something about me. John saw me. John paved the way for me. He’s the concluding prophet of the Old Testament. He is greater than all these prophets in the Old Testament because he saw me physically”. I hope, I don’t know what is the psychology Jesus had. Jesus could be very sad, “I don’t want to be like that. I wish he can be one of the top disciple of me.” He can be number one, if he follow, if he baptize Jesus and says, “Now Jesus, your turn, baptize me. Everything of mine is over, terminated. I have new beginning”. Wouldn’t he be one of the most useful apostle, disciple by the Lord? But eventually Lord says he’s greater than all the prophets. Then Lord talk to us, but do you know you, brother, I speak to you now. The Lord will speak to you now, even the Lord even speak to you now, as a moment directly. The Lord says, “Do you know, you are the smallest in the kingdom. You are really small. Who are you, Mr. Nobody? Do you know the Bible? No, not much. Do you know the truth? No, not much. Do you bear fruit? No, not much. Do you really desperate after Christ? No, not much”. But Lord says, “But you are much greater than John. John saw me, you have me! John saw you, but you have me. You have me in your heart, you have me in your spirit, I’m one with you, and you can be one with me. You are in the reality of the Kingdom of the Lord”. Lord have mercy, may we learn a lot from it, from this. May we say, “Lord, I want have the reality of baptism. I want have the reality of running after you. I want to have the reality of being your servant of you, pioneer fighting for your interest. And Lord protect me from any other considerations that my focus, my consideration, my life is only for beloved Son, God’s beloved Son, Jesus Christ. If God is pleased with him, I can only well pleased in him. May Lord have mercy, I stop here.