

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Notes

Sermon Notes for September 20-21, 2003

Dale Whitehead

"The Basic Essentials of Witnessing"

John 1:19-28

What are the basic essentials highlighted in John 1:19-34 that must characterize an effective witness for Christ?

The first basic essential that characterizes an effective witness for Christ is humility (John 1:19-28).

The "Jews" in John 1:19 were the Sanhedrin.

The priests basically were responsible for the offering of sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem. The Levites served the priests as needed.

John the Baptist chose to answer their initial question of "Who you are?" by telling them that he was not the Christ because he knew this was an issue with many people.

Because John the Baptist was not the literal second coming of Elijah, which many Jews expected based on a poor interpretation of Malachi 4:5, he denied that it was him.

When the delegation asked if John the Baptist was "the prophet," they referred to "the prophet" Moses wrote about in Deuteronomy 18:15.

The reference by God to "a prophet like me" in Deuteronomy was not referring to a forerunner of the Messiah but rather to the Messiah Himself (Acts 3:22).

The humility of John the Baptist is first seen in John 1:23 when he simply identified himself as a "voice."

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John the Baptist, when referring to himself as "a voice crying in the wilderness," quoted Isaiah 40:3.

The imagery of making straight the way of the Lord is of preparing a roadway for Him by clearing away obstacles.

John the Baptist called people to prepare the roadway for the coming king when he called them to repent.

He was not the Messiah. He was not the Elijah of the Old Testament. He was not the prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15. He was simply a voice.

In light of the answer that John the Baptist gave this delegation they knew that the Pharisees would not be happy with him doing baptisms.

Baptism was not a new practice in Judaism. It was the regular rite in the admission of converts from other religions.

Jewish baptism was seen as the ceremonial removal of all the pollutions contracted in the Gentile world.

John baptizing Jews, from the perspective of the Jews in general and the Pharisees in particular, would have been unnecessary and unacceptable.

John the Baptist, in responding to the question of why he was baptizing, deflected the attention from himself to Christ.

Humility, a basic essential to effective witnessing, requires us to see ourselves as nothing and Christ as everything.

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I am nothing, you are nothing, but He is everything!