

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Judy
Rose

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 10:00 a.m.
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

Who had a vision of a powerful ram on a destructive rampage?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Jehu - 1 Kings 16;4

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There Was a Man

Derrel Shaw

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" (John 1:6). And what a man John was—one of the greatest of all history. When you read everything the New Testament says about John the Baptist you may be surprised to note there are more than 250 verses which in some way relate to him and his work. He was the last Old Testament prophet; he was the forerunner of the Messiah as he prepared the way for Christ and His kingdom. When Jesus was baptized at the hand of John, the Father spoke and the Spirit descended upon the Lord (Matthew 3:16). Speaking later of that occasion John said, "I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:32–34).

John was "***The Voice***" who not only was a prophet of God, but was himself the subject of prophecy. Isaiah told of one to come who would prepare the way of the Lord (Isaiah 40:3–5), and Malachi identified that coming way-preparer as being Elijah the prophet (Malachi 3:1; 4:5–6). The New Testament points to John and his work as the fulfillment of those prophecies when he came in the spirit

and power of Elijah to do the preparatory work for the coming Savior (Matthew 3:1–3; 17:11–13; Luke 1:13–17).

John's plain food and clothing (see Mark 1:6) indicated his message from Heaven was plain and pointed. He told of the Messiah to come, in contrast to Whom he considered himself infinitely inferior. He said, "*He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear*" (Matthew 3:11). He called on people to prepare themselves, as he preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4). So he was known as **The Baptis** (that identifying term was not his name, but it was part of his work—he was the baptizer, the immerser).

"***There was a man.***" Yes, and that man was a colossal character!—powerful, independent, and courageous. The Savior's appraisal of him indicated he could not be shaken like a reed in the wind, and that he was not a pampered weakling, like his persecutors. The Lord said that "*Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist*" (Matthew 11:7–11). His greatness shines out in all the heroic thoughts which are called to our minds by the words, "***There was a man.***" Let us impress upon ourselves and our children that true greatness is not to be sought in king's palaces and in the world's luxuries, but rather in purity of heart and life which is dedicated to God and truth, no matter the personal cost to the one whose course in life is so ordered.

The personal cost for John the Immerser was great. He had spoken plainly to the hypocritical and malicious "religious people," calling them a "***generation of vipers***" (Matthew 3:7). With same kind of boldness this faithful man stood before Herod and told him that his marriage was wrong (Matthew 14:3–4). For the sake of

Herodias and her dancing daughter Salome, Herod then had John beheaded (Matthew 14:5–12) At last John's forceful tongue was still, but the great man had done his work and had pleased God Who sent him.

Today John is gone, but in the Living Word of God his testimony still stands: "*I have borne witness that this is the Son of God.*" We cannot be saved without the Son of God for Whom John prepared the way, so we owe much gratitude and respect to that fearless one the apostle had in mind when he said, "***There was a man.***"

John was a strong character doing forceful preaching. But all of us in the kingdom are greater than John, that is, greater in the advantages we enjoy which he was not privileged to have. He was not in the kingdom, because the kingdom had not yet come—he preached that it was "*at hand,*" but it did not come into being until the events of Acts 2, which transpired after John was dead. So now we who are in the kingdom (Colossians 1:13) have greater blessings than he had. We are in the body of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22–23; 2:16); John was not. We have the complete revelation of the New Testament (Jude 3); he did not. We have the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23–26); he did not. John did not even know the story of the cross, because he died before Christ was crucified. So we are greater than John—not in character, but in circumstances. We are thankful that he prepared the way for our Savior and for our salvation. Let us praise our Father that "***There was a man.***"

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