

Matthew 11

WAS THE LAST PROPHET

Read Matthew 11:1-11: Who was John the Baptist? He was the greatest prophet. He was more than a prophet. He and his disciples studied the Old Testament.

"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming." Says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:1)

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." The voice said, "Cry out!" And he said, "What shall I cry?" "All flesh is grass, And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever." (Isaiah 40:1-8)

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. (Isaiah 35:5-6)

In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The

humble also shall increase *their* joy in the LORD, And the poor among men shall rejoice In the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 29: 18-19)

The Apostle John wrote much more about John the Baptist than

another gospel since John and Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist. John the Baptists mother and father were both Levites.

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. (Luke 1:5)

How could Mary and Elizabeth be cousins if Mary was of the tribe of Judah; and Elizabeth be of the tribe of Levi? "Though Elisabeth was, on the father's side, of the daughters of Aaron (v. 5), yet on the mother's side she might be of the house of David, for those two families often intermarried.

However Mary and Elizabeth were related, tribal heritage among the descendants of Jacob was passed down through fathers, not mothers (cf. Ruth 4:18-22); children were always of their father's tribe, not their mother's. Thus, Elizabeth and Mary were descendants of Aaron and David, respectively, by way of their fathers' ancestry, and not necessarily of their mothers'.

John the Baptist also had the privilege to announce the arrival of Jesus. Who else announced the coming of Jesus?

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And

- John the Baptist is repulsed by religion; and prefers solitude with God.
- The Spiritual gifts and signs were displayed in John the Baptist
- They are both associated with Baptism

Read Matthew 10:12-15: John the Baptist was the last of the prophets in his era. He was the greatest prophet. How is John the Baptist referred to as Elijah; and yet he is not? He was not Elijah the person; but he came in the same spirit and message. The same thing happened to Elisha when Elijah was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot.

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Just before Elijah was taken up into heaven in a flaming chariot, Elisha requested that he be given a double portion of Elijah's spirit, which was granted to him (II Kings 2:9-15). Obviously, Elisha did not thereby become a reincarnation of Elijah, since they had both lived at the same time, and since Elijah was clearly taken from the earth once and for all in bodily form. (The fact that Elijah did not die but was taken up bodily into heaven also rules out his being reincarnated in John.) However, Elisha received in his prophetic ministry the spiritual power that characterized Elijah's ministry. Indeed, Elisha's request for a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit makes it impossible that he was requesting to incarnate Elijah's personal spirit, for one's individual spirit surely cannot be "doubled." Neither in the case of Elisha, nor in the case of John, then, do we find evidence of a reincarnation of the personal spirit of Elijah. Nor is there any reason to regard John's statement in John 1:21 as a contradiction of Gabriel's promise and Jesus' statements regarding John's ministry as a kind of second Elijah.

Read Matthew 10:16-18: Jesus uses the public reaction to John the Baptist and himself as proof of their insincerity. John the Baptist's miracles were attributed to magic and demonic power of a crazy man living out of society in the countryside. He had no regard for tradition or formality. They had all of the miracles and signs they could want. They heard the scriptures from him. He asked for nothing of himself. Jesus, on the other hand came comfortably and blending into society without notoriety as he embraced sinners to make connections. Jesus embraced all of the Jewish traditions. Jesus was accused of being a lowlife sinner, since he would not be separated from sinners.

Read Matthew 11:20-24: We talked about the evangelical triangle of Capernum, Bethsaida and Chorazin as being above normal accountability. They saw miracles of Christ and ignored them. Which is higher accountability; to hear the word and ignore it; or to ignore many miracles of God?

Capernaum means village of Nahum (the prophet).

Read Matthew 11:25-30: Jesus is gentle and lowly of heart. He instructs us to rest in his ways; and not to be under a burden. What burden is he talking about? He says that his yoke brings peace. Physical labor is not a restful thing. There is a restoration that takes place when we are about our father's business. Our father's business is not stressing over meeting rituals or human measurements.

Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1-2)

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. (Romans 14:16-20)

A lot to do w/ Holy Spirit