

Outline of Fr. Patrick Winslow's Lecture on Lesson 2

I. Who is John the Baptist?

A. Exchange credentials

1. Delegates exchange credentials before begin discussion
2. The priests and Levites are the delegates from the people of Israel (Jews) and John is the delegate from God. Exchange credentials = "Who are you?"

B. Depend on a common language ==> John the Baptist and the priests and Levites used the language of the Old Testament (OT).

1. He first states who he is not.

- He is not the Christ.
- He is not Elijah. (Malachi 4:5-6)
- He is not The Prophet. (Deuteronomy 18:18)

2. Then states who he is

- I am the voice of "the one crying out in the wilderness" like the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah 40-66 will tell you who I am. Like Isaiah, I comfort God's people who after being set free return home to find their promised land in ruin and the Temple destroyed.
 - This time, victory will not be merely the taking back of land and/or the rebuilding of a Temple building.
 - This victory will be the ultimate liberation, restoration and consolation which comes from the Messiah who has arrived.
- John is a forerunner preparing the way for the Messiah.

3. Now, John's role was clear. Next question: "Why are **you** baptizing if you are just an Isaiah-like figure?"

- John explains his role as forerunner involves baptism (sprinkling/washing) that is also a forerunner to the real baptism of Christ.
 - a. John is faithfully fulfilling what the nation of Israel is failing to do - to be a light for the nations. He is being a light for the people of Israel. Israel was chosen by God to be the eldest brother to all the nations - a light for the nations.

- b. John's baptism is one of "repentance" ==> All must admit their failure, including the people of Israel for not fulfilling their role faithfully. (Ezekiel 36:16-32) John is
 - ✧ Making a judgment against Israel for presuming upon the covenant while imitating the Gentiles to whom they were supposed to bear witness, and
 - ✧ Preparing them to receive the remedy by moving them to a "baptism" that symbolizes their humble and contrite response to this indictment. It is an act of repentance.
- John's baptism is a precursor to the real baptism where the Messiah will baptize with the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Image of "sprinkling" and the washing of baptism are connected to the "Lamb of God." ==> the blood of the Passover lamb "sprinkled" on the nation of Israel ==> the Exodus.
 - b. Image of "sprinkling" and baptism are connected to Isaiah's imagery of the suffering messianic servant who will "sprinkle many nations and who bears the sins of the people like a lamb" ==> a man who will be the sacrificial lamb whose blood will be sprinkled upon us to wash/cleanse us from sin.
 - c. John points to this 'Lamb' - Jesus.

II. Nathanael

- A. Nathanael comes to accept the gift of faith in the Messiah because he sees Jesus as the fulfillment of the Scriptures. How?
 1. Jesus speaks of seeing Nathanael under the fig tree ==> messianic "branch" imagery (Zechariah 3:8-10)
 2. Zechariah refers to one named Joshua (can be translated "Jesus") who removes the guilt of the people by a "Branch". A "branch" will provide comfort, safety and protection for one who seeks shelter underneath it. The "branch" is a symbol of the Messiah.
 3. Nathanael encounters Philip and asks if anything good can come from Nazareth (could be translated as "**Branchville**"). Philip invites him to come and see. Jesus greets Nathanael by declaring him free from guile/guilt. Nathanael asks, "how do you know me?" Jesus responds, "before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." That Nathanael was under the fig tree ==> he was studying the Scriptures (the practice of a Scripture student.) Nathanael sees the connection: Jesus/Joshua from "Branchville" removes his guile. He then responds by cooperating with the grace of God by accepting the gift of divine faith and declares, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ==> the word of God being fulfilled in his midst.
- B. Nathanael's coming to accept the gift of faith in the Messiah shows what is happening to all who have left everything behind to follow Jesus.