

SIGN STUDY #7: JOHN'S BAPTISM

The family of Imran (3):38-39

(38) There did Zakariya pray to his Lord, saying: "O my Lord! Grant unto me from Thee a progeny that is pure: for Thou art He that heareth prayer!"

(39) While he was standing in prayer in the chamber, the angels called unto him: "Allah doth give thee glad tidings of Yahya, **witnessing the truth of a Word from Allah, and (be besides) noble, chaste, and a prophet,- of the (goodly) company of the righteous.**"

- John was a prophet that is especially noted for his holiness. He is also the one who is to confirm the Word of God.

Mary (19):7-15

(7) (His prayer was answered): "O Zakariya! We give thee good news of a son: His name shall be Yahya: **(1) on none by that name have We conferred distinction before.**

(8) He said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son, when my wife is barren and I have grown quite decrepit from old age?"

(9) He said: "So (it will be) thy Lord saith, 'that is easy for Me: I did indeed create thee before, when thou hadst been nothing!'"

(10) (Zakariya) said: "O my Lord! give me a Sign." "Thy Sign," was the answer, "Shall be that thou shalt speak to no man for three nights, although thou art not dumb."

(11) So Zakariya came out to his people from his chamber: He told them by signs to celebrate Allah's praises in the morning and in the evening.

(12) (To his son came the command): "O Yahya! take hold of the Book with might": and **(2) We gave him Wisdom even as a youth,**

(13) And piety (for all creatures) as from Us, and purity: He was devout,

(14) And kind to his parents, and he was not overbearing or rebellious.

(15) So Peace on him the day he was born, the day that he dies, and the day that he will be raised up to life (again)!

(1) This was a new name to the family. In Luke 2:59-61 when the family and community heard John's name they said "What? There is no one in your family by that name."

(2) God gave John wisdom, something said of very few other people in the holy books.

The Prophets (21):89-90

(89) And (remember) Zakariya, when he cried to his Lord: "O my Lord! leave me not without offspring, though thou art the best of inheritors."

(90) So We listened to him: and We granted him Yahya: We cured his wife's (Barrenness) for him. **These (three) were ever quick in emulation in good works; they used to call on Us with love and reverence, and humble themselves before Us.**

- John had a very close relationship with God.

Matthew 3

¹ In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, ² **(1) “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”** ³ The prophet **(2) Isaiah** was speaking about John when he said,

“He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the LORD’s coming!

Clear the road for him!’”

⁴ **(3) John’s clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey.** ⁵ People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. ⁶ **(4) And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.**

⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. “You brood of snakes!” he exclaimed. “Who warned you to flee God’s coming wrath? ⁸ Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. ⁹ Don’t just say to each other, **(5) ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing,** for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. ¹⁰ Even now the ax of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. **(6) But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals.** He will baptize you with the **(7) Holy Spirit and with fire.** ¹² He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire.”

¹³ Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ **(8) But John tried to talk him out of it.** “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?”

¹⁵ But Jesus said, “It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.” So John agreed to baptize him.

¹⁶ After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

(1) John came with a very simple message.

(2) The reference is Isaiah 40:3.

(3) John completely set himself apart from the other religious leaders.

(4) “Confessed” means to agree with God’s truth. Baptism is total immersion. Just like the picture of a cloth being dyed in The Heifer (2):138 “We take on God’s own dye. Who has a better dye than God’s? We worship Him alone.” Just like dye, baptism renews.

(5) The teachers were only relying on their heritage to save them rather than on submitting to God and relying on His Mercy, which is the same mistake as Noah’s son.

(6) John is clear about his calling to reveal someone greater.

(7) Just like in Bees (16):102, the Holy Spirit gives strength and guidance to those who submit and believe. Fire can be either viewed as being filled with God’s presence since the Lord appeared to Moses in a fire, or it can be viewed as a warning of coming judgment for those who choose not to believe.

(8) John initially didn’t understand what Jesus was doing, but then Jesus convinced him that this was all part of God’s plan. John then submitted.

John 1:28-29

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “**Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” ³⁰ He is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.’

- John points out who the great sacrifice is.

Review:

Adam: After disobeying God Adam cried out for the Mercy of God. God responded with giving him the robe of righteousness made from an animal sacrifice. In the same way there is a promise of a future great sacrifice for all mankind.

Noah: Just like the true believers got on board the ark and were saved from God’s wrath, the true believers will accept the great sacrifice when it comes.

Abraham: When asked to sacrifice his son Abraham obeyed, but God stopped him at the last moment and provided an animal sacrifice (called a “momentous sacrifice”). In the same way God will be the one providing the coming great sacrifice.

Moses: The entire community of Israel needed to take the blood of a perfect lamb and paint it over the door of their house in order to be protected from the angel of death.

David: In the Psalms David describes that the great sacrifice will be from his family and will undergo terrible suffering. Other prophecies say that this suffering will be done as a mercy on behalf of other people.

Jonah: Jonah ran from God and so the Lord kept him a fish for three days and nights. He was raised and used to see a massive number of people released from sin. Jesus said the last sign he will give is the “sign of Jonah.”

John the Baptist: Called a holy prophet from before birth, he identified Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Main Point of the Story:

John had a special mission from birth to announce the coming of the one who was the Messiah.

Spiritual Meaning of the Story:

All the signs point to the Messiah, the one through whom God chose to redeem the world.

Next week: Jesus

The Heifer (2):87,253; The family of Imran (3):45-55; Women (4):158; Mary (19):16-34; Revelations Well Expounded (41):41-44; Ornaments of Gold (43):61-63

John 5:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28