

A WORD ON WORSHIP

Review of Message from January 14, 2018

BY PASTOR ANDREW KIKKERT, SUNRISE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Luke 3:7-8

“John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”



John was a prophet whose ministry was rooted in the Old Testament. John did not merely fulfill

Old Testament prophecy, he spoke as an Old Testament prophet. John and the Old Testament prophets spoke of the future, of the Kingdom of God, of the Messiah, and of “things to come” in two different ways. The prophets spoke of the coming of the Lord both as a time of judgment and as a time of blessing. They spoke of Messiah both as the great King, who would reign from the throne of David, and as the Suffering Servant, who would die for the sins of the world. And, you will recall, this was the cause for considerable interest and even agony on the part of the prophets.

John’s one ministry as a prophet - calling Israel to repentance and to the keeping of the Law - was a failure, as all other prophets had failed. It was thus with John’s ministry that the preaching of the Law, of the old covenant, ceased: “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached...” (Luke 16:16). Many of those who came to John for baptism left without ever entering the water. Thus, the kingdom of God was rejected, along with her King. All of this in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

John’s ministry was to close, once and for all, the chapter in Israel’s history of law-keeping. No one had ever been saved by law-keeping, and neither would the kingdom of God ever be initiated because of it. Grace must replace law. The suffering of Messiah would provide a means of forgiveness and escape from the judgment of God. John’s ministry was intended to point this out in a final and definitive way. John not only proclaimed, one final time, a call to repentance and law-keeping, but introduced the One through whom the law would be fulfilled, and through whom salvation and forgiveness would be accomplished.

While John’s ministry and message was to be replaced, there is much that we can learn from him. We can learn from the boldness of John in proclaiming his message. He did not hesitate to call sin what it was, sin; or to warn men of the coming judgment of God. For those of us who tend to be “wimpy” Christians, who are reluctant to tell people they are sinners, who shy away from telling people there is a literal hell for all who do not trust in Christ, John’s boldness should serve as a rebuke. And note that it was his boldness in proclaiming God’s Word that enhanced the power of his message. The gospel is, as Paul says, “the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16). Let us therefore proclaim it boldly.

Sunrise Community Church
Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst
EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.

9642 Live Oak Ave. • Temple City, CA 91780

(626) 287-6120 • PastorAndy@SunriseTC.org • www.SunriseTC.org