

Advance Man

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. *Slide2 Comedy For a Cause. Slide3 Men's Breakfast.*
- B. *Slide4 Potter's Field Ministries - Mike & Pam. Wed night Oct.14th. see bulletin.*
- C. *Slide5 Stuff The Bus - see bulletin.*

II. Slide6 Intro:

- A. *Slide7 I can't imagine what went into the Popes visit this week. FBI, NYPD, Joint Terrorism Task Force, & all the other agencies that became the Advance Team.*
[+170 other world leaders, 90% of worlds major leaders]
- B. *Slide8 Here we have an Advance Man (John the Bap) advance man - a person who visits a location before the arrival of an important visitor to make the appropriate arrangements.*
 1. In biblical times when a prince or governor desires to visit his people, a high official is sent out in advance to announce his coming lord, and to make preparation for the proposed visit.
 2. The party is greeted & welcomed by the local leaders & citizens. To not bestow honor on a high official's servant/representative was to show disrespect for the high official they would be punished and the trip would be cancelled. (think of David's 10 advance men & Nabal, who is David? Then w/Amon, 1/2 beards 1/2 skirts)
 3. But, sometimes the people would get carried away in honoring the representative...forgetting about the coming of the high official. The representative would be sensitive to this so his lord would not get jealous.
 - a) So many times John had to deflect...No, I'm not the Messiah. No, I'm not The Prophet. No, I'm not the Light just the lamp who bears witness to the Light. No, I'm not the Word, I'm just the voice. No, I'm not the Groom, just the best man.
 - b) We move to our story today, where the advance man had become so popular, even the religious leaders were coming out to his baptisms. And, the people, after 400 yrs of not hearing from any prophet, lost sight of The Coming One...for him.

III. Slide9 JOHN THE BAPTIST (1)

- A. *Some 30 yrs have passed between ch.2 & 3, in which Jesus lived in Nazareth & worked as a carpenter. Now comes the time for His public ministry.*
 1. *Slide10 Over 400 yrs have passed since the nation had heard the voice of a Prophet. Then John the Baptist appeared and a great revival occurred.*
- B. *John the Bap - The last O.T. Prophet & the greatest man ever.*

1. Mt.11:11 I tell you the truth, of **all** who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. **Yet** even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is **greater than he is**. [The privileges of Jesus' disciples sharing in the kingdom will be far greater than anything anyone could experience on earth]

IV. Slide11 **MESSAGE OF CHANGE (2) Repent**

- A. Slide12a **Repent** = metanoia, *not* regret or remorse, **but** to have a *change of mind* & **act** on that change.
 1. John didn't call people to be **sorry**, **but** to *change* their **ways**. They were to have a change of **mind**, a change of **attitude** that translates to a change of **action**, a changed life.
- B. Slide12b He preached **repent**. Don't start at the end, *You need Jesus*...they don't know why
- C. The starting blocks is *Repentance*...
 1. Mt.4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, **Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is near.
 2. Acts 2:38 Peter replied, **Repent** and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 3. Acts 20:21 I (*Paul*) have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.
 4. Rev. ch.'s 2,3 Jesus to the churches of Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, & Laodicea...**Repent!**
 5. Acts 17:30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to **repent**.

V. Slide13 **DESERT THUNDER (3) The Voice**

- A. *Voice* in Heb. קול is call aloud, noise, *thunder* - so msg says, *Thunder in the desert!*
- B. Jesus was the *Word*...John the *voice* to declare the *Word*.
- C. John is the **voice**, his tone is **crying**, his place is *in the wilderness*, his mission is *to prepare the way of the Lord*.
- D. In **Isaiah's** account, where all 4 gospel writers quote from, the prophet called the people to smooth out a highway in the desert.

1. Slide14 Listen! It's the voice of someone shouting, "Clear the way through the wilderness for the Lord! Make a straight highway through the wasteland for our God! Fill in the valleys, and level the mountains and hills. Straighten the curves, and smooth out the rough places. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The Lord has spoken. Is.40:3-5

E. Slide15 Why did John have to make straight the way?

1. Imagery was taken from the days (Isaiah, 700 yrs earlier) when there were no paved roads, only tracks across the fields. If the king were to travel, the road must be built & smoothed out that the royal chariot might not find the traveling unduly rough, nor swamped in the mire.
2. John was paving the path for the Messiah. Clear the Path. Trail Blaze.

F. Slide16 Wilderness? Isaiah chose this metaphor to describe *Israel's sp condition* desolate/dry/barren

1. These words demand *a spiritual renewal* in preparation for Messiah's advent.
 - a) **Isaiah** spoke of God's coming to lead His people out of their **Babylon** exile. **John**, spoke of God's coming to lead His people out of **sin's** exile.
2. It is the picture of **us** making a Highway for God, along which He will move toward His ultimate accomplishment.
3. Our highway system seeks to do the same thing. Get on the I-15 South. Just south of Tem, part of the valley is filled in. And then through the great arched bridge the hill is cutaway for the road to go through.
4. There are no mountains too high for God, nor for the people of faith.
 - a) I guess we could sing with Diana Ross, *Ain't no mountain high enough. Ain't no valley low enough. Ain't no river wide enough to keep me from loving you.*
 - b) Which **mountain** is in front of you? Are there any **obstacles** that need to be removed in your life? Have you rolled out the **Red Carpet** for Christ in your life?

G. Am I prepared for His coming? Jesus cannot come and do His work *in me* as long as there is *something* blocking the way (whether it is good or bad).

1. When He comes to me, am I prepared for Him to drag every wrong thing I have ever done into the light? That is exactly **where** He comes. **Wherever I know I am unclean** is where He will put His feet and stand, **and** **wherever I think I am clean** is where He will remove His feet and walk away.

H. The **highway to heaven** is **paved** by *prepared hearts, repentant hearts, soft hearts, fertile hearts.*

1. Rough terrain in our hearts needs to be smoothed b4 the Lord can come near.
2. *When you read your bible & pray, first clear the way for the Lord. When you worship, first smooth the desert path for God. When God seems distant, do a little roadwork of repentance in order to prepare the way for Him.*

VI. Slide17 **SIMPLICITY (4) Food & Clothes**

A. He was rough/raw, stern/inflexible, & his dress was like Elijah. 2 Kgs1:8

1. He lived off the land, eating insects such as **locusts** (an excellence source of protein) and **wild honey**.

B. *Note his simplicity, sternness, & self-Denial.*

VII. Slide18 **POPULARITY (5) Humility**

A. Mt.21:32 tells us that many Tax Collectors & Harlots came out for his baptism, **but** the Religious Leaders refused to **repent & believe** him.

B. John thought more of his *coming Lord* than of **all Judea**. Great Perspective (no pride)

VIII. Slide19 **THE BAPTIZER (6) 2-Fold**

A. John's Baptism was not made up **but** was *from heaven*. (John's baptism where was it from? Heaven/earth?)

B. John's Baptism was **2-fold**:

1. **It prepared** the Nation for Christ. Mt.3:6 he brought them to **confess their sins**.
2. **It Presented** Christ to the Nation. Jn.1:31 **I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that He might be revealed to Israel.**

C. **Read** Acts 19:3-6 the **3 Baptisms** [John's, Jesus', H.S.]

IX. Slide20 **THE REBUKER (7-9) Pharisees & Sadducees**

A. **Pharisees** = Separate. The religious conservatives of the day.

Sadducees - The religious liberals/rationalists of the day.

1. These 2 groups were **serpentine** in their motives, **viperish** in their tempers, **so** he calls them **brood of vipers**, **or** offspring of baby snakes, **baby rattlers!**

a) Picture is of snakes fleeing a grass fire.

B. **Were they there for curiosity or public show?**

Is it possible that John responds with **surprise not rebuke?**

C. It isn't enough to trust in one's **memberships** or **associations**. John explains *one's faith* is a matter of **personal commitment**, **not** a reliance on **ancestral pedigree**.

X. Slide21 **THE LUMBERJACK (10) Jesus**

A. Now the tree-cutter of the *fruitless trees* has arrived. The Great Woodsman has buried his axe at the root of the tree.

B. **Axe + Root = Felled. Then Fired.**

1. His axe is **still** at work. Cutting down *fruitless trees* **but also** *fruitless branches, & corrupt fruit*. Jn.15:2 **He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.**

XI. Slide22 **THE FIRE BAPTIZER (11) Jesus**

A. Some want the **power** (HS) w/o the **fire** (purge)...Except the *package deal*.

B. Have you ever come to the point in your life where you can say, *I indeed...but He...?*

1. **I indeed**, is **what I can do**, **but He** comes and does **what I can't do**. Get to the end of yourself where you can't do anything, **but** where He does everything.

C. Do you know this Baptism? (H.S.) What are all the *water-baptisms* in the world compared to it? Listen to Jesus' last words in **Acts 1:5,8**.

D. Slide23 There are **3 diff terms** used for *the power-bestowing event* Luke's talking about.

1. **Baptized w/the H.S.** – used only 1 more time in Acts (11:16). When Peter explains what happened in the house of Cornelius (10:44-46).
2. **The H.S. has come upon you** – (*epi/upon*) [*para/with; en/in*]
3. **Filled w/the H.S.** – we have repetitive times individuals are filled w/the Spirit.
4. There are many *discussions, disagreements, & arguments* on how many times one can be **baptize** or **filled** w/the Spirit. **Whether** it occurs **at** salvation or is **subsequent** to conversion. **Whether** there is **initial physical evidence** to certify that it happened or not is more important to some than others.
5. Slide24 I think we can all agree on this: ***"We need to receive the supernatural power of the H.S. in our lives & our ministries to the greatest extent possible in order to serve God well in our world."*** Peter Wagner

E. He has provided us with a **power** for our daily living.

1. It's the difference between running an automobile **w/o** oil & **with** oil.
2. You can't run it w/o **gas**, the car would **stop**. But try running it w/o **oil**. It will run for a little while, **but** the repair bill is **always costly**. So it is w/the **Christian life**.

F. I remember being at a Coffee Shop while hunting in Blythe:

1. Our waitress kept filling up or warming up our coffee.
2. But as she did it, she would always **spill it over the top** & into the saucer
3. Good picture of the H.S. wanting to re-fill & overflow each of our lives.

XII. Slide 25 THE WINNOWER (12) Jesus

A. Slide 26 He drops his Axe & picks up his **Fan** (winnowing fork, where the **wheat** stays, the *chaff* blows into different pile, ready for the fire)

1. *Jesus' teaching* acts as a winnowing fork. He is the Great **Divider**.
2. Interesting, everyone seeks to **unite**, Jesus seeks to ÷

XIII. Slide 27 JESUS THE BAPTIZED (13-17)

A. Notice when it was time, Jesus did not summon the baptizer to come up to Galilee. No, *Jesus joyfully journeys to the Jordan to join John.*

B. Slide 28 John senses his *unworthiness* around the Christ.

1. John had not been assured from heaven yet...Jn. 1:33, *I didn't know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God. Somehow he knew.*

C. John tried to prevent him - Not shrinking from duty, but declining an honor. He's in the same mode as when:

1. Peter said, Depart from me for I am a sinful man. Paul said, I am the chief of sinners. John the Bap, I am not worthy to carry His flip flops. John, I fell on my face as a dead man. Isaiah, I am undone/ruined, I am a man of unclean lips. *Lord, teach us such Humility!*

D. (15) Fulfill all Righteousness - Baptism sets forth our Lord's immersion into *His suffering, burial, & Res.* In that sense, it fulfills *All* Righteousness.

E. Slide 29 No reason is *directly* explained for Jesus Baptism. It may be suggested that:

1. It was an Affirmation of **John's** ministry. Both the man & the message. *To show his message of repentance was a valid one.*
2. It is an Identification w/us personally. He who knew no sin...took our sin, died for us, & identifies w/us in Baptism.

3. It was a Declaration to **His Father** Prophetically. Jesus was Declaring His submission to His Fathers **plan** & His expectation of his Fathers **power**.
 4. It is an Illustration of the **Trinity**.
- F. **So**, His baptism marked His **entrance into public ministry** & **confirmed Him as the Son of God**. **And**, the Holy Spirit came to **anoint** & **empower** Him for the mission that lay ahead.
1. Our King was now **proclaimed** & **anointed**...**would His next step be to take the kingdom?** (Stay tuned for ch.4)