

**JAN 16TH 2005: National Day of Mourning for Tsumani victims and Baptism of
Ross Lambert: Matthew 3:15**

John.....would have to be one of the most unusual characters....that we come across
He is very diff to evryone else...(incl Jesus).....as far as clothing ..diet ..way of life

We would call him eccentric

He wore clothes made of camels hair....leather belt.....ate locusts and wild honey
NOT QUITE ROSS LAMBERT ON THE BIBLUMEN.....BUT CLOSE

The thing about John was however.....That he was exactly as God wanted
down to what he said....how he looked....the way he lived

➔because He was the one who came in the Spirit of the prophet of Elijah....
to make straight the way of the Lord

Jesus said of John.....Luke 7:24-28.....

When the people heard about John...they knew.....here was of those prophets
that hadn't been around for centuries
And they flocked to him as iron filings to a magnet

Mainly they were scaredby his fire and brimstone teaching
but they also heard what he said....about hope for the future.....
And they wanted that more than anything else

When they saw and heard John.....they remembered Elijah of old

Living at a time when God's people were far from God
How he challenged the priests of Baal.....to a test on the top of Mt Carmel

They would build an altar to Baal.....and then implore him to send fire
And Elijah would build...to Jehovah.....and pray for His fire
And if God answered Elijah....then the people would return to Him in worship/obedie

And so it was.....Baal was shown to be a big fat zero
Jehovah came through with power...And the people clamoured to do the will of God

THAT WAS THEN>>>>>>But here was John.....God's prophet now
Calling them to return to God.....because God's Kingdom was about to come
→the promised Messiah was on His way

What John had to say.....was very pertinent to their situation

They saw the Roman occupation.....as a sign.....that they were outside God's favour
Now John was saying....that God was about to give His people another chance

But they could not trust in their Jewishness.....Being known as children of Abraham
Not enough

If they wanted to return.....pathway was one of repentance.....
signified by willingness toopenly confess.....then be symbolically cleansed thro....

This won't be the end of the matter either.....said John
When the Messiah comes....baptise with HS and fire.....**BUT this is the beginning**

Well everything was going fine

Many were being baptised.....

Some John refused...because he knew ...repentance was not real

AND then along comes Jesus.....All the way from Galilee to be baptised by

& as..... somehow knows.....this baptismal candidate.....is no sinner
That in fact He should be baptising John.....

And I reckon...quite a state

.v14 says..."But John tried to deter him".....and it has the idea of a persistent effort
only stopped by the words Jesus said in v15

Jesus replied, Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness

The expression Jesus uses is a strong one:-

THIS HAS GOT TO HAPPEN JOHN...

It is proper that we do this.....For in so doing we fulfil all righteousness

And that phrase in the Greek implies→

We comply with all that God requires of us.

And so the baptism goes ahead.....AND God the Father is pleased

He speaks→ This is my Son whom I love; with Him I am well pleased

And Jesus is publicly set apart for ministry....as the heavens open...& the Spirit

..... a sign for John.... Divine commissioning for Jesus

AND SO IT IS.....WE SEE

In this act of Jesus ... identification with normal people....out of favour with God

One writer put it this way:

In undergoing baptism Jesus is accepting His destiny. As one with His people and with Humanity, He takes upon Himself their sins,.....

Some years later....He would do the same thing upon a cross

But also in His baptism.....we see an example.....that Jesus calls those who belong..

To follow

It is an example of obedience.....and of commitment

Indeed His final instruction.....was not just to make.....but then to also baptise

Thro such instruction...He still speaks to all who desire to trust and follow.....and says

Even as I proclaimed my obedience to my Fathers will thro baptism....So I call you

to show in the same way your obedience to me...your commitment to do....

Of course baptism is not the only way we show such a commitment.....or are obedient

Many times Ross has proclaimed in diff ways...his commitment to Jesus

His willingness to be obedient whatever the cost

And the Lord has blessed him....and others...because of that

But just recently the Lord lay upon his heart.....this particular act of baptism
And basically said.....will you obey me in this.....And Ross said >>>YES

And in the end this is what today is fundamentally about.....Obedience
And it is probable.... that today the Lord is challenging you.....about obedience to Him

It may be obeying His call.....to follow Him

It may even relate....baptism

Or it could simply bea decision on your part....to live your life fully for God
Despite the pressure from others.....

(Story of Gladys Aylward.....)