

# Celebrating HIS First Coming

## *Remembering what the Prophets said... Pt. 9*

### Matthew 3:1-8 AMPC

*1 In those days there appeared John the Baptist, preaching in the Wilderness (Desert) of Judea*

*2 And saying, Repent ([a]think differently; change your mind, regretting your sins and changing your conduct), for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

*3 This is he who was mentioned by the prophet Isaiah when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness (shouting in the desert), Prepare the road for the Lord, make His highways straight (level, [b]direct).*

*4 This same John's garments were made of camel's hair, and he wore a leather girdle about his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.*

*5 Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the country round about the Jordan went out to him;*

*6 And they were baptized in the Jordan by him, confessing their sins.*

*7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee and escape from the wrath and indignation [of God against disobedience] that is coming?*

*8 Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance [let your lives prove your change of heart];*

[illegible]

**John 1:19 KJV**

*19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?*

***John 1:19 AMPC***

*19 And this is the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites to him from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you?*

John, born into a priestly family, belonged to the tribe of Levi. His parent were Zechariah a (Hebrew priest), and Elizabeth. He began his ministry in the Jordan Valley when he was approximately 29 or 30 years old, and he had boldly proclaimed the need for spiritual repentance and the preparation for the coming of the Messiah. He was the cousin of Jesus Christ and served as His prophetic forerunner.

The priests and Levites knew that Messiah was promised and knew that there would be a forerunner, a prophet to prepare the way or announce the Messiah's arrival. God foreknew that John would do this, that he would be so full of faith, boldness, righteousness that he would be known as the greatest of all the prophets - Jesus said so. John the Baptist was so special that some thought that perhaps this was Messiah or even Eliza and the only way they can find out is to ask him.

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**John 1:20 KJV**

*20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.*

**John 1:20 AMPC**

*20 He confessed (admitted the truth) and did not try to conceal it, but acknowledged, I am not the Christ!*

Some thought that John the Baptist was the Christ, but John the Baptist knew he was not Messiah; and when he was ministering, he was careful to tell them that he was not the Christ (Messiah).

**John 14:6 AMPC**

*6 Jesus said to him, I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me.*

By looking at John's life (word and deed), he conducted himself in such a way that he looked like the promised Messiah or Christ. But, he was an imitator of the Word or Jesus, they literally could see Jesus or the Word in Him.

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**John 1:21 KJV**

*21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.*

**John 1:21 AMPC**

*21 They asked him, What then? Are you Elijah? And he said, I am not! Are you the Prophet? And he answered, No!*

We see in Malachi 4:5, promises that the prophet Elijah will return before Messiah establishes His earthly kingdom.

**Malachi 4:1-5 AMPC**

*1 For behold, the day comes that shall burn like an oven, and all the proud and arrogant, yes, and all that do wickedly and are lawless, shall be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.*

*2 But unto you who revere and worshipfully fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings and His beams, and you shall go forth and gambol like calves [released] from the stall and leap for joy.*

*3 And you shall tread down the lawless and wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, says the Lord of hosts.*

*4 [Earnestly] remember the law of Moses, My servant, the statutes and the ordinances which I commanded him on [Mount] Horeb [to give] to all Israel.*

**5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.**

If John was the forerunner of Messiah, was he Elijah, they asked him? The angel announcing John's birth said that John would go before Jesus "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (see Luke 1:17), indicating that someone other than literal Elijah would fulfill the prophecy.

**Luke 1:17 AMPC**

*17 **And he will [himself] go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah,** to turn back the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient and incredulous and unpersuadable to the wisdom of the upright [which is [a]the knowledge and holy love of the will of God]—in order to make ready for the Lord a people [perfectly] prepared [in spirit, [b]adjusted and disposed and placed in the right moral state].*

God sent John who was like Elijah, one who had the same type of ministry, the same power and similar personality. Jesus said that John was that Elijah or spirit of Elijah that was prophesied in Malachi. (Matthew 17)

Jesus was not speaking of Elijah being reincarnated in John, but that John came in the spirit and power of Elijah. John was the fulfillment of the Scripture in Malachi and he truly did come before Messiah, six months earlier. John was telling them here that he was not in fact Elijah.

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**John 1:22 KJV**

*22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?*

### **John 1:22 AMPC**

*22 Then they said to him, Who are you? Tell us, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?*

John is stirring up the whole countryside **telling people to repent for Messiah is coming**. This word has gotten back to the rulers or religious leaders of the temple and they have sent out representative to find out just who this is that's stirring up all these problems talking about repenting and lining up with God's Word and not their religion or ideology... The big question was "Who are you?"

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### **John 1:23 KJV**

*23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.*

### **John 1:23 AMPC**

*23 He said, I am the voice of one crying aloud in the wilderness [the voice of one shouting in the desert], Prepare the way of the Lord [level, straighten out, the path of the Lord], as the prophet Isaiah said.*

The prophecy of John the Baptist being "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness" can be found (in Isaiah 40:3). John was a messenger, but he was much more. He was preparing their hearts to receive the Lord. He literally quotes scripture about himself to the ones who are supposed to not just know but rightly identify scripture and tell everyone the whole truth.

**John 16:8-13 AMPC**

8 **And when He comes,** He will convict and convince the world and bring demonstration to it about sin and about righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God) and about judgment:

9 About sin, because they do not believe in Me [trust in, rely on, and adhere to Me];

10 About righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God), because I go to My Father, and you will see Me no longer;

11 About judgment, because the ruler (evil genius, prince) of this world [Satan] is judged and condemned and sentence already is passed upon him.

12 I have still many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them or to take them upon you or to grasp them now.

13 **But when He, the Spirit of Truth** (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all the Truth (the whole, full Truth). For He will not speak His own message [on His own authority]; but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father; He will give the message that has been given to Him], and He will announce and declare to you the things that are to come [that will happen in the future].

In the original context of (Isa. 40:3), the prophet heard a voice calling for the leveling of a path. This call was a prophetic picture that foreshadowed the final and greatest return of Israel to their God from spiritual darkness and alienation through the spiritual redemption accomplished by the Messiah (Romans 11:25-27).

In full humility, John compared himself to a voice rather than a person, focusing the attention exclusively upon Christ. (This is the same spirit or humility that Peter showed as well) When asked who he is, John replies that who he is matters less than what he says. This wilderness is a physical wilderness but can also be thought of as a wilderness of sin. John tells them, it was told you by the prophet Isaiah and the time is here.

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**John 1:24 KJV**

*24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.*

**John 1:24 AMPC**

*24 The messengers had been sent from the Pharisees.*

These Pharisees (religious leaders) were supposed to be very knowledgeable of the Bible. They already knew of this prophecy in Isaiah and of the one in Malachi.

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**John 1:25 KJV**

*25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?*

**John 1:25 AMPC**

*25 And they asked him, Why then are you baptizing if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?*



They expected Elijah to come and cleanse them and get them ready to receive the Messiah. If John was baptizing for this reason (if he was Elijah), they approved; but if he is not Elijah, they want to know where he got his authority to do this.

They wouldn't argue too much with John the Baptist because his father was a priest. “*Why baptizest thou then*”: Baptism could only be performed by prophets, or other religious authorities. It was the rite of passage of Gentile entrance into Judaism.

Since John had identified himself as a mere voice, now the question arose as to his authority for doing baptizing. The Old Testament associated the coming of Messiah with repentance and spiritual cleansing. John focused attention on his position as forerunner of Messiah, who used traditional proselyte baptism as a symbol of the need to recognize those Jews who were outside God's saving covenant like Gentiles.

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**Note:** John's job was to prepare people for Jesus Coming. To tell them what true repentance looked like. Before the Messiah comes this is what you and I must do... REPENT! No longer live, act and think like you used to in your former ignorance to the whole TRUTH.

**John 1:26-27 KJV**

*26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;*

*27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*

### **John 1:26-27 AMPC**

*26 John answered them, I [only] baptize [a]in (with) water. Among you there stands One Whom you do not recognize and with Whom you are not acquainted and of Whom you know nothing.*

*27 It is He Who, coming after me, is preferred before me, the string of Whose sandal I am not worthy to unloose.*

John's baptism or decision to change your way of living, acting and thinking was a baptism of repentance. The only way to receive this salvation was buy repentance of your former self.

John answers their question by saying “I am not Messiah or Elijah, but my baptism is to prepare you to receive Messiah”. John recognizes Jesus standing among those listening.

He doesn't point Him out yet... he just says He is here in this crowd. John says “He is much greater than I am. Each time John had opportunity to focus on himself in these encounters, he instead shifted the focus onto Messiah.

### **John 1:1 AMPC**

*1 In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself.*

John went so far as to state that he, unlike a slave that was required to remove his master's shoes, was not even worthy of performing this action in relationship to Messiah.

**John 1:28 KJV**

*28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

**John 1:28 AMPC**

*28 These things occurred in Bethany (Bethabara) across the Jordan [[a]at the Jordan crossing], where John was then baptizing.*

Bethabara means house of the desert, so we know this is a desert place near Jordan. Some Bible translations call this place Bethany while other translations render this word as “Bethabara.” Some feel that John incorrectly identified Bethany as the place of these events. The answer is that two Bethanys existed, i.e. one near Jerusalem where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived and one “beyond the Jordan” near the region of Galilee.

**Bethany near Jerusalem:** The well-known village on the Mount of Olives (about two miles from Jerusalem), home to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

**Bethany beyond the Jordan:** A location in Perea, across the Jordan River, where John the Baptist baptized (often called Bethabara in some translations).

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**Note:** Verses 29-34, deal with John’s witness to a another group of Jews on the second day regarding Jesus. This section brings forth all many scriptures to the promised messiah.

In the gospel of John, he continues the theme of John the Baptist's witness but also gives a list of titles applied to Jesus: Lamb of God (verses 29 and 36); Rabbi (verses 38 and 49); Messiah/Christ (verse 41); Son of God (verses 34 and 49); King of Israel (verse 49); Son of Man (verse 51); and "Him of whom Moses in the Law, and also the Prophets wrote" (verse 45).

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**John 1:29 KJV**

*29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

**John 1:29 AMPC**

**29 The next day John saw Jesus coming to him and said, Look! There is the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!**

This is a very broad and wide ranging statement here. We know of the sacrificial lamb that was killed, and the blood sprinkled over the door in the time of Moses to save the first born of all the Hebrews when God destroyed the first born of Egypt.

We know that the lamb is the Passover animal sacrificed once a year in memory of that night when death passed over the Hebrew homes because of the blood of the lamb. This is saying then "This is your Passover sacrifice" speaking of Jesus, the blood of the animal could do nothing but cover the sin. But now, this is the precious blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, and He does away with sin. In fact, not for just that occasion, but for all of eternity.

**“Taketh”:** means to continually take away. It is so interesting how every little word is so important in Scripture.

### **1 John 1:9 AMPC**

9 If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just (true to His own nature and promises) and will forgive our sins [dismiss our lawlessness] and [continuously] cleanse us from all unrighteousness [everything not in conformity to His will in purpose, thought, and action].

**Note:** In 1 John, this is not speaking of the new birth or salvation but along the journey or relationship as we work out or get rid of these “sins” He will forgive if we not only confess but change our way of living, thinking and acting.

### **John 8:11 AMPC**

*11 She answered, No one, Lord! And Jesus said, I do not condemn you either. Go on your way and from now on sin no more.*

### **1 Corinthians 6:9-11 AMPC**

*9 Do you not know that the unrighteous and the wrongdoers will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived (misled): neither the impure and immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in homosexuality,*

*10 Nor cheats (swindlers and thieves), nor greedy graspers, nor drunkards, nor foulmouthed revilers and slanderers, nor extortioners and robbers **will inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God.***

**11 And such some of you were [once]. But you were washed clean (purified by a complete atonement for sin and made free from the guilt of sin), and you were consecrated (set apart, hallowed), and you were justified [pronounced righteous, by trusting] in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the [Holy] Spirit of our God.**

John the Baptist used the expression “the Lamb of God” as a reference to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to atone for the sin of the world. John ( the apostle) references and proclaims this throughout his writings (1 John, 2 John 3 John and Revelation) and this proclamation appears throughout the New Testament.

John being filled with the Holy Spirit from before birth looks to Jesus, and sees Jesus' own precious blood cleansing all of His people from unrighteousness. John makes clear however, that its efficacious effect is only for those who receive Christ and follow Him or the Word.

**John 14:15 AMPC**

*15 If you [really] love Me, you will keep (obey) My commands.*

**John 14:21 AMPC**

*21 The person who has My commands and keeps them is the one who [really] loves Me; and whoever [really] loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I [too] will love him and will show (reveal, manifest) Myself to him. [I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.]*

**Galatians 2:20 AMPC**

*20 I have been crucified with Christ [in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ (the Messiah) lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith in (by adherence to and reliance on and complete trust in) the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*

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**John 1:30 KJV**

*30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.*

**John 1:30 AMPC**

*30 This is He of Whom I said, After me comes a Man Who has priority over me [Who takes rank above me] because He was before me and existed before I did.*

Here in verse 30, John is saying. ‘This is the one I was talking about that is the Messiah, He is greater than I am and has always been’.

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**John 1:31 KJV**

*31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.*

**John 1:31 AMPC**

*31 And I did not know Him and did not recognize Him [myself]; but it is in order that He should be made manifest and be revealed to Israel [be brought out where we can see Him] that I came baptizing [a]in (with) water.*

How humble is this of John. I was with Jesus growing up, I am his cousin, he was my age, I knew the prophecies not just about me but about who the Messiah would be. John is saying, I know scripture, I know the Old Testament and I know that some of you will have a hard time with this TRUTH but, He IS HERE!

John knew that Jesus was a relative of his in the flesh, because John's mother and Jesus' mother were cousins. In the Spirit, John knew that Jesus was the promised Christ (the Messiah). However, Jesus the Son of God was not ready to manifest Himself. The word Manifest means: in this instance, to render apparent (to be made visible).

John's job is to make the coming of Messiah apparent to the people. The signs of His first coming are now made manifest and I have to prepare you for meeting the Messiah.

John is baptizing them, but not cleansing them from their sins. When a Christian is baptized, it is not for the remission of sin, but an outward expression of being dead, buried (in water), and resurrected with Jesus Christ our Lord.

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**John 1:32 KJV**

*32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.*

**John 1:32 AMPC**

*32 John gave further evidence, saying, I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and it dwelt on Him [never to depart].*



At this baptism John is speaking of here, some of the other gospels go into more detail and tell of the voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:16-17).

**Matthew 3:16-17 AMPC**

*16 And when Jesus was baptized, He went up at once out of the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he [John] saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him.*

The thing John would have us see here is the Spirit remaining. We can see here the Father (voice from heaven), Son of God (Word), and Holy Spirit (dove), present at the baptism of Jesus. They are all in agreement.

God had previously communicated to John that this sign was to indicate the promised Messiah, (verse 33), so when John witnessed this act, he was able to identify the Messiah as Jesus.

***Never to depart:*** The Holy Spirit was here to stay and not just wait for moments to be on people for periods of time as it was in the Old Testament.

**Genesis 1:1-3 AMPC**

*1 In the beginning God (prepared, formed, fashioned, and) created the heavens and the earth.*

*2 The earth was without form and an empty waste, and darkness was upon the face of the very great deep. The Spirit of God was moving (hovering, brooding) over the face of the waters.*

**John 1:33 KJV**

*33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*

**John 1:33 AMPC**

*33 And I did not know Him nor recognize Him, but He Who sent me to baptize [a]in (with) water said to me, Upon Him Whom you shall see the Spirit descend and remain, that One is He Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.*

(Matthew chapter 3), tells us more about this baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.

**Matthew 3:15 AMPC**

*15 But Jesus replied to him, Permit it just now; for this is the fitting way for [both of] us to fulfill all righteousness [that is, to perform completely whatever is right]. Then he permitted Him.*

This first public event of His ministry is also rich in meaning.

- O It pictured His death and resurrection, Luke. 12:50;
- O It therefore prefigured the significance of Christian baptism
- O It marked His first public identification with those whose sins He would bear, Isaiah 53:1-12; and
- O It was a public affirmation of His Messiahship by testimony directly from heaven.

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**John 1:34 KJV**

*34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

**John 1:34 AMPC**

*34 And I have seen [that happen—I actually did see it] and my testimony is that this is the Son of God!*

Not just because of the Holy Spirit descending, or the voice from heaven, but on all knowledge of Jesus and on what God had told him, John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God.

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**John 1:35-36 KJV**

*35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;  
36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!*

**John 1:35-36 AMPC**

*35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,  
36 And he looked at Jesus as He walked along, and said, Look! There is the Lamb of God!*

These disciples here are speaking of John the Baptist. Here Jesus is going away from John, and John is telling his disciples ***“Behold the Lamb of God”***.

**Note:** In the Spirit, John could see Jesus as the sacrifice for our sins. Jesus told the religious people who He was by referring back to Genesis - Abraham.

**John 8:56-59 AMPC**

*56 Your forefather Abraham was extremely happy at the hope and prospect of seeing My day (My incarnation); and he did see it and was delighted.*

**Genesis 22:1-14 AMPC**

*1 After these events, God tested and proved Abraham and said to him, Abraham! And he said, Here I am.*

*2 [God] said, Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I will tell you.*

*3 So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and then began the trip to the place of which God had told him.*

*4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.*

*5 And Abraham said to his servants, Settle down and stay here with the donkey, and I and the young man will go yonder and worship and [a]come again to you.*

*6 Then Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on [the shoulders of] Isaac his son, and he took the fire (the firepot) in his own hand, and a knife; and the two of them went on together.*

7 And Isaac said to Abraham, My father! And he said, Here I am, my son. [Isaac] said, See, here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt sacrifice?

8 Abraham said, My son, [b]God Himself will provide a lamb for the burnt offering. So the two went on together.

9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there; then he laid the wood in order and [c]bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar on the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took hold of the knife to slay his son.

11 But the [d]Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham! He answered, Here I am.

12 And He said, Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear and revere God, since you have not held back from Me or begrudged giving Me your son, your only son.

13 Then Abraham looked up and glanced around, and behold, behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering and an ascending sacrifice instead of his son!

14 So Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide. And it is said to this day, On the mount of the Lord it will be provided.

Abraham was obedient to God and proved it by giving up everything he had. He proved his Faith in God by his acts of obedience.

### **Hebrews 11:6 AMPC**

6 But without faith it is impossible to please and be satisfactory to Him. For whoever would come near to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him [out].

### **Romans 10:17 AMPC**

17 So **faith comes by hearing [what is told], and what is heard comes by the preaching** [of the message that came from the lips] of Christ (the Messiah Himself).

### **James 2:17-26 AMPC**

17 **So also faith, if it does not have works (deeds and actions of obedience to back it up), by itself is destitute of power (inoperative, dead).**

18 But someone will say [to you then], You [say you] have faith, and I have [good] works. Now you show me your [alleged] faith apart from any [good] works [if you can], and I by [good] works [of obedience] will show you my faith.

19 You believe that God is one; you do well. So do the demons believe and shudder [in terror and horror such as [a]make a man's hair stand on end and contract the surface of his skin]!

20 Are you willing to be shown [proof], you foolish (unproductive, spiritually deficient) fellow, that faith apart from [good] works is inactive and ineffective and worthless?

21 Was not our forefather Abraham [shown to be] justified (made acceptable to God) by [his] works when he brought to the altar as an offering his [own] son Isaac?

22 You see that [his] faith was cooperating with his works, and [his] faith was completed and reached its supreme expression [when he implemented it] by [good] works.

23 And [so] the Scripture was fulfilled that says, Abraham believed in (adhered to, trusted in, and relied on) God, and this was accounted to him as righteousness (as conformity to God's will in thought and deed), and he was called God's friend.

24 You see that a man is justified (pronounced righteous before God) through what he does and not alone through faith [through works of obedience as well as by what he believes].

25 So also with Rahab the harlot—was she not shown to be justified (pronounced righteous before God) by [good] deeds when she took in the scouts (spies) and sent them away by a different route?

26 For as the human body apart from the spirit is lifeless, so faith apart from [its] works of obedience is also dead.

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### **John 1:37 KJV**

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

### **John 1:37 AMPC**

37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Him.



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