

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN I.29-34



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,

He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Gospel of John: John 1.29-34
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Introduction to *John 1.29-34*

John the Baptist plays an important role in these opening paragraphs of the Gospel of John. John the apostle is using him to set the tone and primary themes of his book. He is packing so much into his brief description of John's ministry, that we can only understand what he's doing and what he wants us to learn by slowing down and taking our time getting through these verses.

So we'll look at six more verses dealing with John in this study. Here his ministry comes into sharper focus, as do the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 The Lamb of God

Read and meditate on John 1.29.

John recognizes Jesus as the Lamb and Son of God, the One he'd been told about, the One Who is to be preferred above John, because of His eternal provenance and divine mission. There is much to learn in this short passage, as we continue to observe John's witness to Jesus, and reflect on the implications of his witness for our own.

²⁹The next day, Jesus came to John, and he declared, "Behold! The Lamb of God, Who takes away our sins – the world's sin – and Who makes us whole!"

- John 1.29

Reflect

1. Jesus arrived at Bethany near the Jordan on the day after John's interlocutors had accosted him. Why did Jesus wait until then to come? If the purpose of His coming was to be revealed to Israel (v. 31), wouldn't it have made more sense for Him to arrive while the priests and Levites were there, questioning John? Does this timing suggest anything about Jesus' purpose in carrying out His mission? Complete this prayer: *You are Lord of time, Lord Jesus, and Lord of timing as well. Help me, in the time of my life, to...*

2. I'm struck by John's immediate recognition of Jesus and His mission. We recall that, while they were cousins, John had been isolated in the wilderness, perhaps for many years, prior to beginning his ministry (cf. Lk. 1.80). It's likely he'd had little, if any, contact with Jesus until this moment. How did John recognize Jesus as the One Who was "coming after" Him to baptize with the Spirit? Is there any encouragement for us in John's recognition of Jesus for how we may expect to encounter Jesus in His Word (Jn. 5.39; 6.63)? *Lord, as I read and meditate on Your Word each day...*

3. John declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God. What place did lambs have in the economy of Israel in John's day? How would the people who heard John have responded to his proclaiming Jesus the Lamb of God? What images, feelings, or thoughts would have run through their minds? *Jesus, Lamb of God, Lamb slain for me...*

4. One obvious use of lambs in Israel was as a sacrifice for sin (cf. Ex. 12.1-13). But they weren't the only animals sacrificed. One important annual sacrifice involved the *scapegoat* (cf. Lev. 15.5-10). What did the scapegoat accomplish for the people of Israel? What leads us to think John may have been combining this idea with that of the sacrificial lamb? Why might he have wanted to do that? *Lord, You have taken away my sins; let me not...*

5. The Lamb of God was to be revealed to *Israel*, but He would take away the sin of *the world*. John says *sin* rather than *sins*. Why? What does he mean by speaking of sin in this singular, *categorical* manner? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into a single prayer.

Summary

"[Jesus] gave his blood as the price for our salvation, and by undergoing death for a time he condemned the sovereignty of death forever. The Lamb that was innocent was killed. But by a wonderful and longed-for display [of his power] he efficaciously weakened the strength of the lion that had killed him. The Lamb that took away the sins of the world brought to naught the lion that had brought sins into the world. It was the

Lamb that restored us by the offering of his flesh and blood, so that we would not perish.” *The Venerable Bede* (ca. 672-735 AD)

The sacrifices of ancient Israel *covered* the *sins* of the people. But they needed to be repeated over and over, because animal sacrifices could never reach to the *sin* of the people, much less to the *sin* that has infected and pervaded the whole world. The Lamb of God was necessary for that. How should you respond to the One Who has taken away both your sin and your sins?

Closing Prayer

O God, You know my foolishness;
And my sins are not hidden from You.
Let not those who wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me;
Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.
Because for Your sake I have borne reproach;
Shame has covered my face.
I have become a stranger to my brothers,
And an alien to my mother's children;
Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up,
And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.

Psalm 69.5-9

Psalm 69.5-7, 13-15 ([*Greensleeves: What Child Is This?*](#))

O God, our folly all You know, our wrongs from You are not hidden;
Let those who in Your mercy go not by our shame be smitten.
“Let none dishonored be because, O Lord, because of Me!
You make Me dishonor see; on Me reproach is written.”

O Lord, we make our prayer to You; receive our words, O Savior!
Let lovingkindness see us through, and answer us with favor!
Lord, lift us above the mire; deliv’rance is our one desire!
Let not the floods conspire to swallow us forever!

2 The Real Deal

Read and meditate on John 1.30.

Imagine how John must have felt at this moment. He had been baptizing people as the forerunner of the Lord, to make ready the way of His coming. His entire adult life was devoted to anticipating the coming of Christ. And now, here He was!

³⁰“Yes, this is He, this is the One of Whom I said, ‘One after me will come Who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’”

- John 1.30

Reflect

1. Jesus walks toward John, whose eyes are suddenly opened to know Him for Who He is. John says, excitedly, “Look!” And he directs attention away from himself as he explains to people what they are seeing. How should we do this in our own witness to the Lord? Complete this prayer: *Lord, today help me to prepare the way for You into my [Personal Mission Field](#). Let me...*

2. John emphasizes that Jesus is to be preferred before him because He was “first of me” as the Greek has it literally. John, we recall, was six months older than Jesus. What is John acknowledging about Jesus by saying this? How might you express this as part of your witness to Jesus? *Lord Jesus, First in my life, be First in me today by...*

3. John emphasizes that Jesus is a *Man*. By the time the apostle John was writing this, a sect had arisen, claiming to be Christian, which denied the incarnation of Jesus, saying that Jesus was not really a Man but merely a kind of phantom (see how John attacks this view in 1 John 1.1-3). Is it important that we hold firm to the fact that Jesus was a Man Who lived in history? Why? *Lord, because You were a true human being, just as I am...*

4. The word *preferred* is implied in John’s comments. This word doesn’t actually occur, but this is clearly the meaning of what John actually said (“He has become *before* me, because He was *before* me in time”). Why were people coming to John? What did he mean by saying they should *prefer* Jesus to him? Why? *Lord, I want to “prefer” You to everything else in my life today, and that means...*

5. John the Baptist was a remarkable man – austere, bold, generous, and holy. But he would not allow himself to be the focus of people’s attention once Jesus arrived. John pointed people to Jesus, and we should both *look* to Jesus and *point others to Him* as well. What does looking to Jesus – *preferring* Him – mean for you today? Whom can you point to Jesus today? How will you do that? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

“O, the message of the Baptist, and the mystery in it!

He calls the shepherd lamb, and not only a lamb, but one to free from mistakes.

He showed the lawless that the goat which they sent into the desert was ineffective.

‘Lo,’ he said, ‘the lamb; there is no longer need of the goat;

Put your hands on him,

All of you who confess your sins,

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For He has come to take them away, those of the people, and of the whole world.
For lo, the One whom the Father has sent to us is the One who carries away evil,
Who appeared and illumined all things.” *Romanus Melodus (fl. ca. 536-556 AD)*

John did not delay to turn the attention of the crowds away from himself to Jesus. He knew his work was merely preparatory, and that Jesus as the Real Deal. John could only help people to get ready for Jesus, by leading them to face up to their sins and admit their need for salvation. This is all we can do as well. Like John, we need to point people to Jesus. How will you try to prepare the way to Jesus for someone today?

Closing Prayer

Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.
Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish *in* the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

Psalm 2.10-12

Psalm 2.9-12 ([*Agincourt: O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!*](#))

To Christ, the Lord, be given all
Who humbly embrace Him and on Him call.
Be wise, be warned: His judgment comes
To break the prideful, sinful ones.

Rejoice with fear in Jesus' grace,
And worship before His exalted face!
Beware His anger and judgment grim:
How blessed are all who rest in Him!

3 Revealed to Israel

Read and meditate on John 1.31.

John the apostle chose just the words from John the Baptist that would give direction to his gospel. He didn't tell us as much as some of the other gospel writers, but he told us as much as would help to keep us focused on Jesus and His mission, and their place in Scripture and the historic unfolding of God's work of redemption.

³¹And I knew Him not because He was to be revealed to Israel. So I came baptizing, that you all might know Him."

- John 1.31

Reflect

1. John explains that he didn't know Jesus as the Lamb of God until the moment He arrived to be baptized. John is the *forerunner* of Jesus, but he is also a kind of *forerunner* for Israel. Explain. Complete this prayer: *Let me see Jesus in Your Word today, Father, so that others may see Jesus...*

2. The apostle John is going to show us how Jesus takes away the sin of the *world*. He did this by being first revealed *to Israel*. Why did it make sense for Jesus to be born in a place like Judea rather than in the imperial capital at Rome? How had God been preparing the Jewish people for the coming of the Lamb Who takes away the sin of the *world*? *Lord, I know the Old Testament is rich with teaching about Jesus (Jn. 5.39). Help me, as I read it...*

3. It's clear from John the Baptist that his baptizing was *preparatory* for the coming of Christ. But this is not the way we practice baptism in the Christian community. What is the purpose of baptism, if not to *prepare* us for Christ? Ask a pastor or church leader, if you don't know. But does baptism still have a kind of *preparatory* role in Christian life? Explain. *Lord, as I remember my own baptism, I...*

4. John says that, for anyone to recognize and acknowledge Jesus as the Lamb of God – to *receive* and *believe* in Him (Jn. 1.12) – He has to be *revealed* to them. What does he mean by that? How is Jesus *revealed* to people? How was He revealed to you? Can Jesus be clearly revealed to people without a work of God? Explain. *Reveal more of Yourself to me today, O Lord, that I might be used to reveal You to...*

5. John the apostle will insist that his gospel is intended as a means whereby Jesus might be revealed to people as the Savior of the world (cf. Jn. 20.30, 31). Can we hope to point people to Jesus *without* using the Word of God in Scripture? Why not? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

“Eliezar sought Rebekah as a bride at a well of water. Jacob sought Rachel at a well of water, as Moses did so with Zipporah. Thus, all of these were types of the Lord, who sought his church as a bride by the baptism at the Jordan River. And just as Eliezar made Rebekah known to his master when he came to meet her in the field, so also John made our Savior known at the Jordan: ‘See, the Lamb of God, for he takes away the sin of the world.’” *Ephrem the Syrian (fl. 363-373 AD)*

Your Personal Mission Field is what the Jordan valley was to John the Baptist, and what Judea and Samaria were to our Lord Jesus during His incarnation. What are you learning from John about how you should work

your Personal Mission Field?

Closing Prayer

When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion,
We were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing.
Then they said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”
The LORD has done great things for us,
And we are glad.
Bring back our captivity, O LORD,
As the streams in the South.
Those who sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.
He who continually goes forth weeping,
Bearing seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,
Bringing his sheaves *with him*.

Psalm 126

Psalm 126.1, 2, 6 ([*Truro: Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*](#))

When God restored our fortunes all,
We were like those who sweetly dream.
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled,
Made Him our constant song and theme.

They who in tears of sorrow sow
And cast their seed on ev'ry hand,
With joy shall reach their heav'nly home,
And bring the harvest of their land.

4 Anointed of the Spirit

Read and meditate on John 1.32.

John testifies that the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus “like a dove.” This may mean *in the form of a dove* or *like a dove as it lands*. Did John see an actual dove? Or is this just a metaphor? It doesn’t really matter: John knew the Spirit when he saw Him.

³²John bore further witness saying, “I saw when the Spirit of our God on high descended on Him like a dove, and on Him rested and remained.”

- John 1.32

Reflect

1. Meditate on John 6.63. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism. What did this symbolize? How does it further confirm what John the apostle has already told us about the Word-become-flesh? According to Acts 1.8, what role does the Spirit have in our witness for Christ? How does that occur? Complete this prayer: *Let Your Spirit fill me today, Lord, so that...*

2. In a very real sense, the Spirit bridges the gap between heaven and earth, God and people, eternity and time. Why was it important that this be signified concerning Jesus at the outset of His ministry? What does it indicate about the Word of God’s purpose in becoming a Man? *Lord, I want to be more consistently filled with Your Spirit. Let me know Him today, Lord, filling me...*

3. John emphasized that the Spirit *remained* on Jesus – probably not in the form of a dove. How did the Holy Spirit relate to Israel in the Old Testament? Does this descent of the Spirit signal a difference? In what ways? How does Jesus’ coming make that difference happen? *Today, Lord, I’ll know that Your Spirit remains with me as...*

4. John testified God had revealed to him about the descent of the Spirit. Look at Isaiah 42.1-9. Could John have been referring to a passage like this? Is it a good idea to look to the Old Testament to bolster our understanding of and witness to Jesus? Explain. *The Spirit anointed You as the Lord’s Servant, Lord Jesus. Let Him anoint me today for...*

5. God revealed to John the coming of Jesus, partly by the Old Testament, and partly, we may assume, by revelation given to him in the wilderness. God told John what to look for in recognizing the coming of the Lamb and Son of God. Is your reading and study of Scripture helping you to gain a clearer understanding of what it means to be a witness to Jesus? Explain. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

“We do not attribute only to Christ the possession of a real body and say that the Holy Spirit assumed a false appearance to people’s eyes. For the Holy Spirit could no more, in consistency with his nature, deceive people than could the Son of God. The almighty God, who made every creature out of nothing, could as easily form a real body of a dove, without the instrumentality of other doves, as he made a real body in the womb of the Virgin without the seed of the male.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Jesus’ baptism was not *for* the remission of sins, but “to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3.13-15). By

submitting to baptism, Jesus *identified with* the people of Israel (and the world) and *took upon Himself* their confession of sin. How does this point forward to the work Jesus came to do? What does our baptism say about us, our sin, and Jesus?

Closing Prayer

Vindicate me, O God,
And plead my cause against an ungodly nation;
Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!
For You *are* the God of my strength;
Why do You cast me off?
Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
Oh, send out Your light and Your truth!
Let them lead me;
Let them bring me to Your holy hill
And to Your tabernacle.
Then I will go to the altar of God,
To God my exceeding joy;
And on the harp I will praise You,
O God, my God.
Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my God.

Psalm 43

Psalm 43:1-4 ([*Hyfrydol: Jesus, What a Friend for Sinners!*](#))

Vindicate me, Jesus plead for me! Make my case against my foes.
Rescue me, do not ignore me, God of strength, relieve my woes!
From deceitful men and spirits, from oppression, mourning sore –
Heed my prayer, receive and hear it, keep me to You forevermore.

Let Your light and truth precede me, bring me to Your holy hill.
To Your holy altar lead me, let me dwell within Your will.
Lord, my joy and consolation, You, Who grace to me impart,
Hear my joyful adoration; I will praise You from the heart.

5 On the Authority of God

Read and meditate on John 1.33.

As we have seen, the question of authority will loom large in the Gospel of John. The authorities that were in power in Jesus' day – both religious and civil – would find their authority challenged, to the point of taking drastic measure to shore it up. Those who claim the authority of God for their message had better be sure of this.

*³³I knew Him not
until that moment, but I had been taught
by Him Who sent me here to baptize, "On
the One you see the Holy Spirit come,
descending and remaining on Him, He
will baptize with the Holy Spirit."*

- John 1.33

Reflect

1. John knew God had taught him about Jesus. He based his work on the authority of God, and committed his life to God's calling, because he trusted the Word of God completely. Ultimately, this would cost John his life (Matt. 14.1-12). How can we become similarly convinced of what God testifies to in His Word? Complete this prayer: *Strengthen me, Lord, to trust in Your Word, even when...*

2. John recognized Jesus because of what God had revealed to him. Jot down some Old Testament passages that point clearly to Jesus – such as Micah 5.2. How, following John's example, can we use such passages in our witness to Christ? *I want to see You more consistently in all of Scripture, Lord. Help me today to...*

3. John said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Jesus had the authority of God's Word and Spirit for the work He would do. So do we. In baptism, water is *applied* as a symbol. In the new birth, the *Spirit* is applied, not merely symbolically, but really. Meditate on John 6.63, Galatians 4.6, John 14.16-18, and Acts 1.8. How do these passages help us understand what it means to be baptized by the Spirit? Whose work is this? *Lord, let Your Spirit fill me more and more! Bring forth in me today, Lord...*

4. We note the emphasis again on the Holy Spirit *remaining* on Jesus. This signifies the coming of the Spirit in a more permanent and personal form than was normally the case prior to this time. The Spirit will descend into and remain with those whom Jesus baptizes with the Spirit. What difference should the Spirit's presence in and with us make in how we understand our lives in the world? *Lord, let me see with the eyes of Your Spirit, so that my life...*

5. We are belaboring this dramatic moment – the baptism of Jesus – because it heralds so much of everything else that will follow, both in the Gospel of John and in the unfolding of Christ's redeeming work. It indicates a kind of spiritual authority that trumps all other authorities because of what God has spoken in His Word. Briefly comment on the ideas of preparation, proclamation, promise, and the presence of the Lord, as these apply to your own life and witness. Bring your prayers from questions 1-4 together into one prayer.

Summary

"The Father sent forth his voice proclaiming the Son, the Holy Spirit came upon him as well, focusing the voice upon the head of Christ ... in order that no one present might think that what was said of Christ was

said of John.... But someone might ask: How was it that the Jews did not believe, if they saw the Spirit? Such sights, however, require the mental vision rather than the bodily. If those who saw Christ working miracles were so drunk with malice that they denied what their own eyes had seen, how could the appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove overcome their unbelief? Some say, however, that the sight was not visible to all, but only to John and those more disposed toward devotion. But even if the descent of the Spirit, as a dove, was visible to the outward eye, it does not follow that because all saw it, all understood it." *John Chrysostom (ca. 354-407 AD)*

The Spirit of God is crucial to everything about the work of Christ. It was important to the apostle John to focus on the Spirit with Jesus, just as Jesus would focus on the coming of the Spirit for His Church toward the end of His earthly ministry. Do you think we place enough importance on the Holy Spirit in the Church today? Explain.

Closing Prayer

Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases!
For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.
They speak idly everyone with his neighbor;
With flattering lips *and* a double heart they speak.
May the Lord cut off all flattering lips,
And the tongue that speaks proud things,
Who have said,
"With our tongue we will prevail;
Our lips *are* our own;
Who is lord over us?"
"For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy,
Now I will arise," says the LORD;
"I will set *him* in the safety for which he yearns."
The words of the Lord *are* pure words,
Like silver tried in a furnace of earth,
Purified seven times.
You shall keep them, O LORD,
You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

Psalm 12.1-7

Psalm 12.5-7 (*Hamburg: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*)

Rise up, O Lord, and rescue all Your precious children, sore distressed.
Save those who faithfully on You call; grant them deliv'rance, peace, and rest.

Your words are pure and proven true, like silver seven times refined;
You will preserve Your Word ever true, and keep the heart to You inclined.

6 The Son of God

Read and meditate on John 1.34.

Of all the statements John has made to this point about Jesus, surely this would be the most shocking: “this is the Son of God.” From the beginning of His ministry to the end, this unwavering testimony is on the table. Any who doubt or deny that Jesus embraced this title, simply are not allowing the Scriptures to speak for themselves. Jesus is the Son of God, and with fact, every human being must deal.

³⁴*See,*
He is the Son of God! For on Him rests
the Spirit of the eternal God, most blessed!”

- John 1.34

Reflect

1. Read and meditate on Psalm 2. How is the Son of God described in this psalm? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord Jesus, Son of God, I also am a child of the Father, so that...*
2. The apostle John omits to tell us about the voice from heaven heard at the baptism of Jesus. Meditate on Matthew 3.16, 17. John the Baptist undoubtedly heard this voice, and so likely did many others. Since God Himself pointed to the Old Testament to identify Jesus, what does this suggest about how we may expect to grow in our understanding of Him? *Lord, help me as I read the Old Testament, that...*
3. John uses two verbs to describe his ministry in verse 34. What are they? What does each involve? What place should each of these have in your own ministry? *Lord, help me to see You more clearly, so that each day I may...*
4. In a very real sense, our calling as disciples of the Lord reduces to these two activities: *see* Jesus and *testify* of Him by our lives and words. John will return to these two verbs in various ways in His gospel. For example, with respect to *seeing* Jesus, look at John 12.20, 21 and John 20.24-29. What are we looking for when we are trying to *see* Jesus? *Lord Jesus, I want to see you more completely, more truly, and more constantly. Help me to...*
5. Testifying about Jesus will also come up in John’s gospel again and again (cf. John 4.28, 29; John 5.10-15; John 9.24, 25). Seeing Jesus and testifying about Him are inextricably linked in John’s mind. Why should this be so? How can this become more true in your own life? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed from questions 1-4.

Summary

““John testified ... that he [Jesus] was the Son of God.” Therefore, it was necessary that he [Jesus] baptize, who was the only Son of God, not an adopted [son]. The adopted sons are the ministers of the only Son. The only Son has power, the adopted sons have the ministry.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

It is becoming increasingly clear that John the apostle is using John the Baptist to lay down a kind of cornerstone for his gospel. While his account of John’s life and ministry is not as full as those given by Matthew and Luke, the parts he chose to report fit his purpose in writing, that we might *see* in Jesus the fulfillment of all God’s creative and redemptive purposes, and that we might *boldly testify* of Him to everyone, relying on the Word and Spirit of God to enable us to fulfill our calling. How has the ministry of John the Baptist helped you understand your own calling better?

Closing Prayer

Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*,
“Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us.”
He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The LORD shall hold them in derision.
Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
“Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion.”
“I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
‘You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
Ask of Me, and I will give You
The nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.’”

Psalm 2.1-8

Psalm 2.1-8 ([*Agincourt: O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!*](#))

Why do the nations vainly rage, conspiring together from age to age?
Earth’s kings and all of their counselors stand against the Lord and His Right Hand.

“Now let us cast His yoke below, His Kingdom authority overthrow!
Throw off His Law, reject His Word; no more be governed by this Lord!”

The Lord in heaven laughs in wrath at all who embark on this cursed path.
His angry Word to them is plain: “Yet shall My King in Zion reign!”

Proclaim the message far and wide that God has exalted the Crucified!
From heav’n He sent us His only Son, Who has for us salvation won!

7 Witness to the Son

Read and meditate on John 1.6-34.

Today's reading will encompass all the ministry of John the Baptist as we have seen it thus far. Pay attention to how many times *witness* or some version of, or action describing this activity occurs. Jesus said John was the greatest man born of women (Matt. 11.11). Here at the beginning of John's gospel, where the apostle gives so much attention to the Baptist, we do well to reflect deeply on him.

²⁹The next day, Jesus came to John, and he declared, "Behold! The Lamb of God, Who takes away our sins – the world's sin – and Who makes us whole! ³⁰Yes, this is He, this is the One of Whom I said, 'One after me will come Who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' ³¹And I knew Him not because He was to be revealed to Israel. So I came baptizing, that you all might know Him."

³²John bore further witness saying, "I saw when the Spirit of our God on high descended on Him like a dove, and on Him rested and remained. ³³I knew Him not until that moment, but I had been taught by Him Who sent me here to baptize, "On the One you see the Holy Spirit come, descending and remaining on Him, He will baptize with the Holy Spirit." ³⁴See, He is the Son of God! For on Him rests the Spirit of the eternal God, most blessed!"

- John 1.29-34

Reflect

1. As you review the work of John the Baptist, what traits or attributes stand out to you about him? Complete this prayer: *Lord Jesus, help me to see the greatness You saw in John, so that...*
2. What did John *see* concerning Jesus? How did he see this? How did he describe Jesus, and how would he have applied what he saw to himself? How did he regard himself in relation to Jesus? *Like John the Baptist, Lord, I want to...*
3. Summarize the testimony or witness John gave to Jesus. How does this guide you in thinking about your own witness for the Lord (Acts 1.8)? *Lord, help me be alert to opportunities to bear witness to You. As I go out into my Personal Mission Field today...*
4. If we assume that John the apostle is using John the Baptist to introduce the primary themes he will deal with throughout his gospel, what should we be looking for as we read and study on in the Gospel of John? *Lord, help me to bring together, and to keep in my soul, all that You are teaching me...*
5. We're not quite finished with John the Baptist, as we shall see. Though what John has told us about him is

spare, it is fraught with significance, both for the Word-become-flesh, the gospel that John is writing, and for us as readers of this gospel and recipients of John the Baptist's witness. Explain. Bring your prayers from questions 1-4 together into a single prayer.

Summary

"A confident witness is one who not only sees but actually speaks about what he has seen. [John] surely was not ignorant of what was written, "Tell what your eyes have seen." "I saw" then, he says, the sign, and I understood what was signified by it. I bear witness "that this is the Son of God," who was proclaimed by the law through Moses and heralded by the voice of the holy prophets. The blessed Evangelist seems to me again to say with supreme confidence, "This is the Son of God," that is, the one and only one who is by nature the unique heir of the Father to whom we too, sons by adoption, are conformed and through whom we are called by grace to the dignity of sonship." *Cyril of Alexandria (374-444 AD)*

We shall see that John the Baptist's ministry had the desired effect: It turned the attention of others to Jesus. How did he do that? What should we take away from this for our own callings in life?

Closing Prayer

O God, do not be far from me;
O my God, make haste to help me!
Let them be confounded and consumed
Who are adversaries of my life;
Let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonor
Who seek my hurt.
But I will hope continually,
And will praise You yet more and more.
My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness
And Your salvation all the day,
For I do not know *their* limits.
I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD;
I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.

Psalm 71.12-16

Psalm 71.12-16, 3 ([*Solid Rock: My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*](#))

O God, be not too far from me; my ever-present Helper be!
Consume and shame my enemies; let them reproached and humbled be.
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

But as for me, my voice I raise to sing in hope and constant praise!
With saving grace my voice will swell, Your never-ending grace to tell.
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

The Gospel of John: John 1.29-34

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Why is a proper understanding of John the Baptist and his ministry so important for understanding the entire gospel of John?
2. What can we learn from John the Baptist to help us in our walk with and work for the Lord?
3. How would you counsel a new believer to *see* Jesus?
4. Suppose someone asks you, like they did John the Baptist, “Who are you?” John answered in terms of Scripture and his relationship to Jesus. If you were to answer that way, what would you say?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from John 1.6-34? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

Items for prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.