

“The Gospel of John: The Baptist’s Message”

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Scripture

John 1:6-8

“There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. **He came as a witness, to testify about the Light**, so that all might believe through him. **He was not the Light**, but he came to testify about the Light.”

John 1:19-34

“This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”

22Then they said to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” He said, “**I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,'** as Isaiah the prophet said.”

24Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, and said to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” John answered them saying, “**I baptize in water**, but among you stands One whom you do not know.

27“**It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.**” These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” This is He on behalf of whom I said, after me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.” “I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.”

32John testified saying, “**I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven**, and He remained upon Him. “I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘**He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.**’” “I myself have seen and have testified that **this is the Son of God.**”

Overview of the Gospels

- **Matthew** -> **Jewish flavor to the writing, portraying Jesus as the Christ and King**
- **Mark** -> **Jesus as the “Son of Man”, really Peter’s Gospel for the Gentiles**
- **Luke** -> **Jesus is Human and the Redeemer of Humanity**
- **John** -> **Jesus is the Divine “Son of God”**

Why Write the Gospel?

Matthew, Mark and Luke’s Gospels were already around. Why another one?

The Purpose for John's Gospel

John 20:30-31

"Therefore, **many other signs Jesus also performed** in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that **believing** you may have life in His name."

Many events in John not recorded elsewhere

Many events recorded in the Synoptics not in John -> the Transfiguration, for example

The word "believe" ~100 times in John's Gospel

The Coming Attraction

At the Movies or on TV

Fostering anticipation

How about Jesus's return as a coming attraction?

The Witness

John 1:6-8

"There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. **He came as a witness, to testify about the Light**, so that all might believe through him. **He was not the Light**, but he came to testify about the Light."

John the Baptist was sent from God -> the Greek word is "apostello" where we get the word Apostle

John the Baptist was to be a messenger and a witness, purposely put in place by God.

Witnesses -> used in court in order to build a case to prove innocence or guilt -> **Marturia** in the Greek

The Apostle John is building his case for his pronouncement that Jesus is God in the flesh

John the Baptist is a witness "to testify about the Light"

Last week we noted that Light was in the beginning ("Let there be light") and that Jesus provided illumination

Illumination is spiritual enlightenment -> the Apostle John received that enlightenment from Jesus

In Jesus, John said earlier, "was Life and the life was the light of men" (John 1:5)

John 8:12

"Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, **"I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."**

The Forerunner

Middle Eastern kings would send a representative ahead of their intended arrival in a foreign land

They would plan a path of protection and provision, building agreements with the foreign government about the visit

Just like the U.S. would for a State visit here or a Presidential trip overseas.

John 1:19-21

"This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "**I am not the Christ.**" They asked him, "What then? **Are you Elijah?**" And he said, "I am not." "**Are you the Prophet?**" And he answered, "No."

"I am not the Christ"

Before any questions came to him, John told everyone that he was not the Christ

The Jews were on the lookout for the Christ but had **many people announcing they were the Christ**

The Jews **came to check John the Baptist out**, having heard about what was going on outside of Jerusalem

"Are you Elijah?"

Malachi 4:5-6

"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet **before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.** He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

Elijah was prophesied to come before the "Day of the Lord" -> **well into our future**

Matthew 17:10-13

"His disciples asked Him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" And He answered and said, "**Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished.** So, also, the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." **Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.**"

John the Baptist had "the Spirit" of Elijah

Luke 1:13-17 (The Angel's message concerning John's birth)

"The angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife **Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.** "You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For **he will be great in the sight of the Lord;** and he will drink no wine or liquor, and **he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.**

"And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. **"It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."**

Moses and Elijah appear to Peter, James, and John **at the Transfiguration** -> **Matthew 17:1-3**

Many believe that the real Elijah will return again as one of the two witnesses -> **Revelation 11:3-6**

"Are you the Prophet?"

Deuteronomy 18:15

"The LORD your **God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you**, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him."

That prophet was Jesus, not John the Baptist.

John 6:13-14 (after the feeding of the five thousand)

"So, they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Therefore, when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, **"This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."**

Isaiah's Prophecy

John 1:22-23

"Then they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" He said, **"I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,'** as Isaiah the prophet said."

John the Baptist says exactly what his role is

Isaiah 40:3

"A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God."

John 1:24-27

"Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them saying, **"I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."** These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing."

"Baptize in water" -> **"What's my purpose in coming as the forerunner?"** What does water baptism get you?

"Among you stands One whom you do not know" -> something greater is here -> **Matthew 12:41** about Jonah

What was John's message to the people?

We need to look at John's ministry and message in **Matthew 3**

The Testimony of John

Matthew 3:1-12

"Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!"

4 Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; and **they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed 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 from the wrath to come?**

8 "Therefore **bear fruit in keeping with repentance**; and **do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'**; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. "The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "As for me, **I baptize you with water for repentance**, but **He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

1. It is clear that John the Baptist's message was "Repent"

Repent -> Greek root word is *metanoeo* which literally means a "changing of the mind"

His water baptism was for repentance

He recognized that water baptism alone does not save you from your sins -> **remorse over sin is not enough**

Judas has remorse over his sin and killed himself -> **Matthew 27:5**

The Pharisees and Sadducees were coming for baptism – John's very direct response to them

"You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come"

Viper -> (figuratively) incisive words that deliver deadly venom, with the use of blasphemy. This switches the bitter for the sweet, light for darkness, etc.

The Pharisees and Sadducees did that, confused the way to the truth, treated what was true as blasphemy ->

Jesus was convicted on a charge of blasphemy -> He claimed to be God but that was and is TRUE

2. It is clear that John the Baptist's message included the need for confession of sin and forgiveness

Matthew 3:6

"They were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins"

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Confession of sin to each other is good as James writes:

James 5:16

"Therefore, **confess your sins to one another**, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

But only confession to the Lord is effective

3. It is clear that John the Baptist's message was that family lineage was not going to get you into Heaven

Matthew 3:8

"Do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham."

Indeed, God would choose Gentiles to come into the Kingdom as well as believing Jews

Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is **the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**"

4. It is clear that John the Baptist's message was you needed the Holy Spirit to get into Heaven

Matthew 3:11

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

The guy that comes after me is going to give you the real juice -> the Holy Spirit -> God's presence within you!

John 20:19-22 (Post-resurrection, Jesus appears to the disciples)

"So, when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. So, Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." **And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."**

This was a sign of what would come in the near future **at Pentecost – Acts 2**

Ephesians 1:13-14

“In Him, you also, **after listening to the message of truth**, the gospel of your salvation-- **having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance**, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

John Witnessed the Baptism of Jesus

John 1:29-33

“The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**" This is He on behalf of whom I said, after me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' "I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water."

John testified saying, "**I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven**, and He remained upon Him. "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, '**He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.**'"

The Apostle John says that John the Baptist witnessed Jesus's Baptism

Jesus was the Lamb of God -> **John uses this phrase most**, but Peter (1 Peter 1:19) and Paul (1 Corinthians 5:7) also reference Jesus as a lamb

“Higher rank” -> Jesus was “in the beginning”

Even though John was born first -> “He existed before John”

Jesus is Higher in Priority which is why John says that he's not fit to “untie the thong of or remove his sandal”

“So that He might be manifested to Israel” -> John recognizes his place in the Messianic arrival plan

Matthew described Jesus's Baptism:

Matthew 3:13-17

“Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answering said to him, "**Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**" Then he permitted Him.

After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, **a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."**

“Spirit of God descending as a dove” -> dove is a recurring picture of the Holy Spirit

“Voice out of the heavens” -> Participation of God the Father in Jesus's Baptism

The entire Trinity is involved with the Spirit's dove and the Father's voice being seen and heard

Lastly, we see the Father's blessing on Jesus -> Beloved and Well-Pleased

John's Conclusion – Jesus is God!

After witnessing these events, John is convinced that Jesus is the Son of God -> Who wouldn't be, right?

John 1:34

"I myself have seen and have testified that **this is the Son of God.**"

The Apostle John calls his first witness to testify that Jesus is God in the flesh

John the Baptist responds that he has seen Him up close and personal and he KNOWS that Jesus is God

Communion Prayer

Recognition of the McDonald Family

Benediction