

1/19/25

John The Faithful Witness
Jn. 1:19-37

When John the beloved wrote his gospel years after, about 95 A. D. he did so with a purpose, he chose specific material not found in the synoptic gospels and declared, “these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. Jn. 20:31

* This is the recorded purpose for writing his gospel!

The faithful witness of John the Baptist by the leading of the Holy Spirit through John the beloved is a great way to start his recorded proof that Jesus is the Son of God, which will in turn help us to be faithful witnesses of Jesus.

We want to look at the faithful witness of John the Baptist, which consists of three things.

- I. John knew who he was, the voice in the wilderness. vs. 19-23
- II. John knew what he was called to do, baptize in water. vs. 24-28
- III. John knew who he was to point people to, Jesus. vs. 29-37

I. John knew who he was, the voice in the wilderness. vs. 19-23

A. The declaration about the words of John are identified to be his testimony. vs. 19

1. The identification of the words of John, “Now this is the testimony of John.” vs. 19a

a. The word testimony or witness is a favorite word of John.

1) The word testimony “marturia” means a reliable source of information to something observed or known or the disclosing of a record to another, much like a witness in a court of law.

2) John used the word in various forms 26 times.

b. John the Baptist was God’s witness to testify to the world about Jesus that all through John might believe that Jesus was the light. vs. 6-7

* There had been a 400 year of silence since the last prophet had spoken for God, Malachi.

c. The message of John the Baptist was repent in view of sin and in view of the Lord’s coming to judge man.

2. The occasion is identified to be a delegation from Jerusalem, “when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem.” vs. 19b

a. The apostle John is the only one to record the delegation from Jerusalem.

b. The term “Jews” is used by John over 70 times and the majority of the time it is

- used as the religious leaders who opposed Jesus.
- c. The delegation was made up of priests and Levites, who oversaw the temple sacrifices and service.
 - d. The delegation was sent by the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews, composed of the chief priests, elders and scribes, 70 in number after the Old Testament. Num. 11:16
 - e. The delegation sent by the Jews from Jerusalem gave opportunity for John the Baptist to reveal his witness about the Messiah.
3. The intention of the delegation from Jerusalem was to inquire from John the Baptist to identify himself, “to ask him, Who are you?” vs. 19b-c
 - a. The multitudes were coming out to be baptized by John from Jerusalem, all Judea and all the regions around the Jordan. Matt. 3:5; Lk. 3:7
 - b. The Sanherin was the religious watchdog over self appointed Messiahs.
- B.** The declaration of John the Baptist revealed who he was not. vs. 20-21
1. The first answer of John the Baptists to their first question “who are you” was that, “He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” vs. 20

- a. John confessed and did not deny, “I am not the Christ”. vs. 20
 - b. The people were in expectation of the Messiah and all the people reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not. Lk. 3:15
2. The second question to John the Baptist was, “And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” vs. 21a-c
 - a. Malachi had prophesied that Elijah would come before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, the Second Coming of Jesus, and he would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children’s hearts to the parents. Mal. 4:5
 - b. John the Baptist certainly fit the description and likeness of Elijah.
 - 1) John was preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” Matt. 3:1-2
 - 2) “John the Baptist was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Matt. 3:4
 3. The second answer of John the Baptist was He was not Elijah, “He said, I am not.” vs. 21d-e
 - a) The Father of John Zecharias was told by the angel Gabrieleil that his prayer had

been answered and his wife Elizebeth would have a son in her old age and that he would come in the power and the spirit of Elijah. Lk. 1:17

- b) Jesus identified John the Baptist as Elijah speaking highly of him, being His messenger to prepare His way as fulfilled prophecy and that he came in the power and the spirit of Elijah as the prophecy of his birth. Matt. 11:9-14; Lk. 1:17; 7:25-28
- c) The prophecy of Eliajah was two-fold, short-term and long-term. Mal. 3:1; 4:5
 - 1) John the Baptist in the spirit and power of Elijah at the First Coming of Messiah.
 - 2) Elijah himself literally at the Second Coming of the Messiah.
- 4. The third question to John the Baptist was, “Are you the Prophet?” vs. 21f
 - a. The reference is not just to any prophet, the article is present.
 - b. The reference was to the ultimate prophet, the Messiah spoken by Moses. Deut. 18:15
- 5. The third answer of John the Baptist was a third denial, “And he answered , “No.” vs. 21g-h
 - * They had run out of guesses!

- C. The declaration of John the Baptists revealed who he was. vs. 22-23
 - 1. The fourth and last question returned the first question, “Then they said to him, “Who are you.” vs. 22a-b
 - a. They were stumped as to who he was, yet they knew his father was a priest.
 - b. They ran out of options.
 - 2. The reason they were asking John to identify himself is stated, “that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” vs. 22c-d
 - * They had to report back to the Sanhedrin!
 - 3. The fourth answer of John the Baptist revealed who he was, “He said, “I am The voice crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord,”” as the prophet Isaaih said.” vs. 23; Is. 40:3
 - a. A voice of a carrier, the focus being on his work not his person, he was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah.
 - 1) The three synoptic say, “Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.” Matt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3b; Lk. 3:4b
 - 2) This was after the practice of announcing the arrival of a king or a dignitary by filling the holes in the road and making the road as straight as possible to assure his speedy arrival. Lk. 3:5

- 3) John tells them Jesus the king of the Jews was already stood among them, and they did not know it. vs. 26d
- b. John the Baptist was the prophet of God, sent by God as the precursor or forerunner of Jesus, John broke the 400 year silence. vs. 6-7
 * Jesus called him the greatest of all the prophets of the Old Testament for he closed the Old Testament Canon according to Jesus. Matt. 11:11-13; Lk. 7:28a
- c. John the Baptists was to bare witness that the “Eternal Logos” who became flesh was coming after him and was of higher rank than him. vs. 15

Illustration

Eliezer illustrates our first point as a faithful servant representing Abraham, not himself, to bring back the bride of Issac.

Application

1. The believer is to be a faithful witness about Jesus, so as to point people to Jesus, not themselves.
 - a. The people in the church are prone to complement the Pastor or a person about the word of God and we must resist the temptation of taking the credit, having their eyes on us.
 - b. The person preaching, teaching or witnessing must remind the hearer that they are sinners,

- “For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2Cor. 4:5-6
2. The believer must always remember that he or she are the servant of Jesus.
 - a. Having been redeemed and saved us by His grace. Eph. 2:8-9
 - b. Having been equipped and enabled us to be His witness by His word and Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8
 - c. Having been taught that it is required of a steward to be found faithful. 1Cor. 4:2
 - d. Having nothing to boast about or take any credit. 1Cor. 4:7
 * “For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”

John was a faithful witness of Jesus because he knew who he was, the voice in the wilderness!

II. John knew what he was called to do, baptize in water. vs. 24-28

- A.** The Baptist was not to be intimidated by the religious men of his day regarding his ministry of baptism. vs. 24-25
- 1.** The identity of the the second delegation is stated, “Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees.” vs. 24
 - a.** The Pharisees sent are distinct for the first delegation from the Sanhedrin, though the Parisees part of the Sanhedrin, the other was the Saducees.
 - b.** The Pharisees were the religious ritualists that epitomized hypocrisy and self-righteousness.
 - 1)** The Saducees were the materialist and wealthy aristocrats of the priestly line, who did not believe in angels, spirits or the resurrection, while the Pharisees did.
 - 2)** The Baptist called both of them “Brood of vipers” and warned them that they would not escape God's judgment to come just because they Abraham as their father. Matt. 3:7-12; Lk. 3:7-9
 - 2.** The delegation asked him in view of his answer why he was baptizing?, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” vs. 25
 - a.** Baptism was only for proselytes.
 - 1)** Symbolic of cleansing.
 - 2)** Symbolic of dedication.

- b.** Baptism for a Jew was an unheard thing.
 - 1)** They were the children of Abraham.
 - 2)** They were the people of God.
- B.** The Baptist declared the difference between his ministry and the ministry of Jesus. vs. 26-27
 - 1.** The ministry of John was as the forerunner, “John answered them, saying, “I baptize with water.” vs. 26a-c
 - a)** He baptized with water for repentance for the remission of sins an external ritual.
 - b)** Remember that these priest were fully aware John’s dad Zacharias was of the priestly order and therefore so was John!
 - 2.** The ministry of Jesus was the person of the Messiah, “but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.” vs. 26d-27
 - a.** The word “but” marks the sharp contrast between John and Jesus. vs. 26d
 - b.** The Messiah was present in the midst of them, whom they did not know. vs. 27a
 - c.** The Messiah Jesus would come after John. vs. 27b
 - d.** The Messiah Jesus is and was of greater importance than John. vs. 27c
 - e.** The cousin of Jesus, John the Baptist was called to be the Messiah’s servant, yet

declared he did not think himself worthy of the lowliest task of washing His feet. vs. 27d

- 1) Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire, an inward transformation to validate the outward ritual of water baptism. Matt. 3:11;
Lk. 3:16
- 2) A very important difference.

C. The Baptist was to perform his ministry at the location that God chose. vs. 28

* “These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.”

1. The location was in Bathabara and means “house of the ford”, a ford is a shallow where one could cross and on the other side of the Jordan.
2. The location was not in the center of Jerusalem.
3. The location was not to be in the priesthood at the temple.
4. The location was not to be in the midst of a select few or wealthy people.
5. The location was to be in the wilderness and into all the regions around Jordan preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Lk. 3:3

Illustration

Paul knew Jesus chose him to bear His name before the Gentiles, kings, the children of Israel and to suffer great things for His name’s sake. Acts 9:15-16

Application

1. What has God called you to do as a Christian and part of the church, the body of Christ?

- a. The only one that can know that is myself and yourself, as you study and seek Jesus daily.
- b. Jesus has saved you to serve the saints and sinners, he will direct and guide you as you are involve in the church, serving others.

* “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Acts 13:2

2. What gifts has God imparted to you; do you know your spiritual gifts?

- a. There are twenty one gifts listed for us. Rom. 12; 1Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11
- b. Every believer has at least one gift. 1Pet. 4:10

3. What will be the outcome for each of us at the Bema-Seat of Christ?

- a. The first possibility is to suffer the loss of all for having done all for the wrong reasons and motives, love for self.
- b. The second is to receive crowns for our faithful service out of love for Jesus and people?
- c. It will be wood, hay or stubble, all burnt up or silver, gold or precious stone, a permanent

reward? Rom. 14:12; 1Cor. 3:13-15; 4:5; 2Cor. 5:10

John was a faithful witness of Jesus because he knew what he was called to do, baptize in water !

III. John knew who he was to point people to, Jesus. vs. 29-37

A. John the Baptist was to point people to “The Lamb Of God”. vs. 29

1. The occasion took place the following day, “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him.” vs. 29a
 - a. Jesus was walking towards John.
 - b. Jesus had already defeated Satan in the wilderness forty-one days prior.
2. The proclamation identified His person in fulfillment of all the prophecies, promises and types of the Old Testament law, “and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God”. vs. 29b-d
* Gen. 22; Ex. 12; Is. 53
 - a. Every Jew understood the sacrificial system for atonement.
 - b. Every Jew knew that only the life of another as a substitute for the person, could expiate their sins.
 - c. Every Jew knew that the atoning power was in a spotless lamb and its blood contained the life of the flesh, which was the basis of atonement. Lev. 17:11

d. Every sacrifice of the Old Testament was a shadow and type that pointed to Jesus, the coming Messiah as the Lamb of God, the fulfillment.

3. The proclamation identified and focuses on His work and mission, “who takes away the sin of the world! vs. 29d

* 2Cor. 5:21; 1Jn. 2:2; 3:5

- a. The phrase “Lamb of God” is unique of John, found only twice. Jn. 1:29, 36
- b. The term “Lamb” a synonym for “the Lamb of God” found once in Acts and 1Peter, but 28 times in the book of Revelation. Acts 8:32; 1Pet. 1:19
- c. The word “sin” is singular and refers to all the sins of the world, the rebellion and disobedience of all sinners that Jesus would atone for through His death and resurrection, no one is excluded. Jn. 3:16

B. John the Baptist was to point people to the “Baptizer of the Holy Spirit.” vs. 30-33

1. The identity of Jesus the Messiah is repeated by John, “This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’” vs. 30
 - a. This statement has been stated by John in his prologue to the Sanhedrin delegation and Pharisees, Jesus was coming after his ministry and was consider of higher rank, greater than John. vs. 6-8, 15, 27a-b, 30

- b. The statement, “for He is before me” once again can only mean that Jesus the Messiah was Eternal from all eternity, it cannot refer that Jesus was older for John was six months older than Jesus!
 - c. “The Lamb of God” would be the Eternal One who would come after John and ranked higher than him, for John was just a man, Jesus the Messiah was God who became the God-man. vs. 29
2. The identity of Jesus as the “lamb of God” by John his cousin was not something John knew, until he baptized Jesus by the revelation of the Father. vs. 31-33
- a. The purpose of John the Baptist’s ministry of baptism was that “The Lamb of God”, “The Eternal God” might be revealed to Israel, “I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.” vs. 31
 * When Jesus came to John to be baptized, John tried to prevent Him saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” But Jesus said, “Permit it so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Matt. 3:14-15
 - b. The sign given to John the Baptist by God the Father to identify the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit was

that the Spirit would descend and remained on Him. vs. 32-33

- 1) The eyewitness of John is stated, “And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.” vs. 32
- 2) The acknowledgement of John that He did not know Jesus was the Messiah is stated, “I did not know Him.” vs 33a
- 3) The sign given to John by God the Father to identify the Messiah was by revelation and illumination, “but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’” vs. 33b-e

C. John the Baptist was to point people to the Son of God. vs. 34

“And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”

- 1. John testified that he witness all and that Jesus is , “The Son of God.” vs. 29, 35
 - a. The pre-existent One.
 - b. The eternal One.
 - c. The incarnate One.
- 2. John already testified that Jesus, “The baptizer with the Holy Spirit” was the “Son of God.” vs. 32-33

- a. The Second Person of the Trinity.
- b. The True light that lights every man that comes into the world.
- c. The Creator of everything.

D. John the Baptist pointed Andrew and John to Jesus. vs. 35-37

1. John the Baptist was standing with Andrew and John the beloved, “Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.” vs. 35
* The two were disciples of John!
2. John the Baptist confirmed Jesus was the Messiah focusing now on His person, not His work, “And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” vs. 36
* The word looking “emblepo” means with a penetrating gaze as Jesus walked away from him and proclaimed as he pointed to Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God.”
3. John the beloved and Andrew were the first two disciples of Jesus and follow Jesus, “The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.” vs. 37
 - a. The two believed the witness of John the Baptist!
 - b. John the Baptist declared to his disciples three important things one day as they were concerned that all the people were going to Jesus as they were baptizing. Jn. 3:25-30

- 1) John clearly told them that a man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from above. Jn. 3:27
- 2) John clearly told them he was not the Chris, but the friend of the bridegroom who rejoices when he hears the voice of the groom who has the bride. Jn. 3:28-29
- 3) John clearly told them that Jesus must increase, but he must decrease. Jn. 3:30

Illustration

Noah was a faithful witness of God pointing people to the only way of escaping the coming judgment of God, yet he had not one person repent in 120 years.

Application

1. The world is tolerant of anything people want to believe and worship in rejection of Jesus and His word, but we must point them to Jesus.
 - a. People worship creation.
 - b. People worship allians, UFO’s from outer space.
 - c. People worship idols of every kind, things, false imiges, ideologies or money.
 - d. People worship themselves.
 - * “Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and

creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” Rom. 1:22-25

2. The God of the Bible and Savior of the world is intolerant of all names but one to repent and be saved, Jesus Christ.

- a.** There is no other name given under heaven and earth whereby men must be saved. Acts 4:12
- b.** There is but one way, truth and the life to bring us to the father, Jesus. Jn. 14:6
- c.** There is but one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. 1Tim. 2:5
- d.** There is but on Person God the Father speaks through today, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” Heb. 1:1-4

3. The will of God is that all be saved, but not all want to be saved or go to heaven.

- a.** Salvation comes by hearing the proclamation of the gospel. Rom. 1:16-17
- b.** Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17
- c.** The Person of the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment to reveal supernaturally the need of a sinner to repent and be saved by believng in who Jesus is and what He accomplish through His death and resurrection. Jn. 16:8
- d.** And it is all by grace through faith. Eph. 2:8-9

John was a faithful witness of Jesus because he knew who he was to point people to, Jesus!

Conclusion

We have looked at the faithful witness of John the Baptist, which consists of three things.

- I.** John knew who he was, the voice in the wilderness!
- II.** John knew what he was called to do, baptize in water!
- III.** John knew who he was to point man to, Jesus!