

## The Witness of John

John 1:19-34

May 22, 2022

1. John, the Voice in the Wilderness (1:19-28)
  - a. Jewish Authorities Question John (19-22)
    - i. The witness of John – “and this is the record of John” (19a)
      1. This scene is full of lawsuit imagery.
      2. John is about to declare eye-witness testimony to the identity of Jesus Christ.
    - ii. The cross-examination of John – “when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him...” (19b)
      1. The cross-examiners:
        - a. The Jews: the Jews are mentioned 71 times in the Gospel of John. In over half of the occurrences the Jews are in opposition to Jesus and His ministry.
        - b. Priests and Levites from Jerusalem: as teachers of the law and ministers in the temple, they were responsible for the teaching and judging the people.
        - c. Pharisees (cf. 24): they were experts in religious matters and exercised great religious influence.
      2. First Exchange:
        - a. Question 1: “Who art thou?” (19c).
        - b. Answer 1: “And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ” (20).
          - i. John’s confession was emphatic.
          - ii. John emphatically confesses that he is not the Christ.
          - iii. His examiners wanted to know if he claimed to be the Messiah.
          - iv. John is the perfect prototype for the Christian preacher who proclaims Christ, not himself.
      3. Second Exchange:
        - a. Question 2: “Art thou Elias?” (21a)
          - i. God promised to send Elijah to prepare the way for the coming Messiah.
          - ii. Malachi 4:5-6 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”
          - iii. John wore camel-hair tunic and leather belt just as Elijah.
          - iv. Jesus would later identify John the Baptist as the promised Elijah (cf. Matt 11:14; 17:12; Luke 1:17).
          - v. The Jews longed for the return of Elijah who could call down fire from heaven and bring deliverance, but that was not John’s role.
        - b. Answer 2: “And he saith, I am not” (21b)
      4. Third Exchange:
        - a. Question 3: “Art thou that prophet? (21c)
          - i. The Jews looked for a prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-19).
          - ii. “That Prophet” was to be Jesus Christ!
        - b. Answer 3: “And he answered, No” (21c)
      5. Fourth Exchange:
        - a. Question 4: “Who art thou? That we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? (22).
          - i. John’s examiners need an answer so they can report back to those that sent them.
          - ii. Now that they know who he isn’t, they still need to know his claims about himself.
    - b. John’s Declaration of the Christ (23-28)
      - i. John is merely the voice – “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness” (23).
        1. He is the voice of a prophet (cf. Isaiah 40:3).
        2. His role is not to teach, but to introduce – “Make straight the way of the Lord.”
      - ii. The Promised One is coming (25-27).
        1. They want to know why John with no official status performs an official act of baptism (25).
        2. John dismisses the subject of baptism and points to the fact that his baptism isn’t an end to itself; the primary purpose of John’s baptism was to point to the coming Messiah who was already among them, but they did not know it!

3. In comparison to the Messiah, John was not worthy for even the most demeaning act of untying the strap of His sandal.
  4. John wanted to do everything he could to avoid receiving any honor due to Jesus Christ.
  - iii. The place of John's declaration – "These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing" (28)
2. Jesus, the Lamb and Son of God (1:29-34)
- a. John's Witness to the Lamb of God (29-31)
    - i. "The next day" – John's witness has broadened from a witness to the Jewish leadership to now a witness before all Israel.
    - ii. "Behold, the Lamb of God"
      1. The lamb provided by God (Genesis 22:8)
      2. The Passover lamb (Exodus 12:21)
      3. The guilt offering (Leviticus 14:25)
      4. The lamb of Isaiah 53:7
      5. The triumphant Lamb of Revelation (5:6; 14:1-4; 17:14)
    - iii. "which taketh away the sin of the world" (29)
      1. Jesus is the ultimate Passover sacrifice
      2. 18:28 "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover."
      3. 19:36 "For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."
    - iv. "This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me" (30).
      1. John declares the fulfillment of his own prophecy (cf. 1:15).
      2. John wants everyone to recognize the identity of the Lamb of God.
    - v. "And I knew him not:"
      1. Until this moment, John did not realize the true identity of his cousin, Jesus.
      2. John's baptism was designed to prepare Israel for the coming of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the *world*.
  - b. The Spirit's Witness to the Son of God (32-34)
    - i. God revealed to John the way that he would know the identity of the Son of God – "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."
      1. The Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove.
      2. The Holy Spirit remains on Christ in fulfillment to prophecy.
        - a. Isaiah 11:2 "And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him"
        - b. Acts 10:38 "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power"
      3. Jesus is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.
        - a. Jesus is the true "Baptist"; and for that reason, the Apostle John never calls John, "the Baptist."
        - b. Jesus is the coming Davidic king upon whom the Lord promised to pour out His Spirit (Isa 11:1-9).
        - c. Jesus is the servant upon whom God will put his Spirit (Isaiah 42:1).
        - d. He is the prophet who announces, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isaiah 61:1).
        - e. The Spirit is the sign of the promised age when the Holy Spirit would be poured out on the people of God (Ezekiel 36:25-26).
    - ii. John bears witness that the man standing before him is the Son of God – "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (34).
      1. Jesus is the unique Son of God (1:18) upon whom we must believe to become children of God.
      2. If we want to have eternal life, we must confess that Jesus is the Son of God (20:31).

Conclusion:

1. Have you recognized Jesus as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world?
2. Have you embraced your mission as a voice that introduces the Lamb of God to the world around you?