

Subject: John's Witness to Jesus

Scripture: John 1:19-34

How is it possible that people who call themselves Christians can be so different in their beliefs and their worship and their way of living the Christian life? One reason is that they base their understanding of Christ and the Christian life on second hand information or what we may call tradition. We must keep going back to the Bible for the truth about Christ and what it means to be a Christian. God gave us four inspired accounts of Christ's life and ministry. We are looking carefully at one of them, the Gospel according to John.

If you had lived at the time of Christ would you have believed in Him and followed Him? How would you have known who He was? Would you believe what He said? Would you believe what others said about Him?

To make sure that people knew who Jesus was and point people to believe in Him, God sent a man named John. He was just a man in contrast to Jesus who was both God and man. This man named John was not John the apostle, but John the Baptist, and he was a powerful witness to Christ, telling others who He was and pointing people to trust Him. The Gospel of John presents eight witnesses in all: John is the first witness; the Father; Jesus' own words; His works; the Old Testament scriptures; some of those who came to know Him and believe in Him; the disciples; and the Holy Spirit.

JESUS IS THE LIGHT (1:6-9)

We first read about John the Baptist in 1:6-9. He came as a witness to Jesus. It is as if the world is a jury that considers the testimony and the evidence. Several witnesses are called to testify and John was the first. He came to bear witness to Jesus as the light of the world. John himself was a burning and shining light (Jn. 5:35) and the people were willing to come to his light. But he was only a little candle compared to the blazing sun. What is the significance of John bearing witness to Jesus as the light? All men are spiritually blind. We need to see Jesus for who He truly is. If John had not prepared the way, the people could have missed seeing the light of the world.

JESUS IS THE EXALTED AND ETERNAL ONE (1:15, 19-28, 30)

John knew who He was and he knew who Jesus was. Three times John said that Jesus was preferred before him. Jesus was in a much higher position. And Jesus was before him in time. John the Baptist echoed what John the apostle wrote in the introduction (1:1-18). What is the significance of John's witness to Jesus as the exalted and eternal One? All men are self-seeking and full of pride. We need to see Jesus for who He is and humble ourselves.

JESUS IS THE LAMB OF GOD (1:29, 35-36)

The people who heard John would have understood what he meant. Lambs were commonly used as sacrifices. What is the significance of John's witness to Jesus as the Lamb of God? He is the sacrifice that takes away our sins. There is a scarlet thread that runs through the Bible. In Genesis 4, we see Abel offering a blood sacrifice to God, a lamb for a man. In Exodus 12, we see the Passover lamb killed and the blood applied to the sides and top of the doorway to every Jewish home, a lamb for a family. In Leviticus 16, we see the Day of Atonement and the high priest confessing the sins of the people, then offering the lamb on the altar to make atonement for those sins, a lamb for a nation. And here John says that Jesus is

the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. That means the collective sins of all people, as the prophet said, **Isaiah 53:6** *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD (1:31-34)

God prepared John to recognize Jesus as His Son at His baptism. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus in the form of a dove and remained on Him. This was God's way of showing John that Jesus was the Messiah (Christ), the anointed One. His identity as the Son of God was a claim to deity. Over and over Jesus said that God was His Father, and some of the religious leaders accused Him of blasphemy because He made Himself equal with God, **John 5:18** *Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*

John's testimony introduces the main theme of the Gospel. He presents Jesus as God's only Son, who came to give us eternal life (Jn. 3:16). John is the only writer who told us the purpose of his Gospel, **John 20:30-31** ³⁰*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:* ³¹*But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

We find a statement about John the Baptist in **John 10:39-42** ³⁹*Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,* ⁴⁰*And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.* ⁴¹*And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.* ⁴²*And many believed on him there.* John did not perform any miracles, but he did speak the truth about Christ. John was an eyewitness who told the truth. It is evidence that demands a verdict.

John understood who Jesus was and pointed to Him above all others. We can learn something from John. We should look to Jesus and not to men. Politicians and leaders often say look to us. We are the answer to your problems and needs. John and the Scriptures say look to Jesus.

When I think of John the Baptist and his witness to Christ I think about a pastor friend who used to have some business cards with these words: "If you forget me, you have lost nothing. But if you forget Jesus, you have lost everything." We must make a decision about Christ. We must either receive Him and believe on His name or reject Him. We have the same choice that people had when they heard and saw Jesus 2,000 years ago.

John 1:11-13 ¹¹*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* ¹²*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* ¹³*Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*