

The Gospel of John
As the Moon to the Sun
John 1

Thanks to Charlie for teaching last week. We begin in John 1:6 -

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

In John 1:4 John states that Jesus is the life. This is true.

John 10:7b-11 - "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Eternal life is not the extension of your life but the exchange of your life although our sin nature keeps us from every fully appropriating it.

In verse 6, John moves into his next metaphor for Jesus: light. But first, a word about John the Baptist who is not that light.

First: The Messenger. 6

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

V 6 – the “man sent from God” is John the Baptist.

- a) John is mentioned in all four gospels.
- b) He is the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, a descendent of Aaron
- c) He is a relative of Jesus since Mary and Elizabeth are cousins
- d) He is about six months older than Jesus (Lk 1:41)
- e) Mark says he is the fulfilment of Isaiah as “a voice crying in the wilderness”
- f) Matthew claims he is the fulfilment of the prophecy of Elijah (Mt 11:14; 17:11-13; Lk 1:16-17)
- g) He proclaims repentance demonstrated by baptism
- h) He baptizes Jesus
- i) He is jailed for rebuking Herod for marrying the ex-wife of his brother, Philip
- j) Herod beheads him
- k) When Herod hears about Jesus, he fears John the Baptist has come back to haunt him

John was a

- a) Prophet
- b) Priest
- c) Nazarite

Three lifelong Nazarites: Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist

- a) No touch dead body – His heart is God’s.
- b) No contact with wine – His mind is God’s.
- c) No hair cut – His body is God’s.

In the NT we are called “living epistles” (2 Cor 3:2). This is what Nazarites were.

Deuteronomy 6:5 – *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

Only three Nazarites in 1500 years of Hebrew history. Of Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist, Samson failed miserably. Samuel was the first and John the Baptist was the last.

John was a prophet and “more than a prophet” (Luke 7:26). His ministry, like that of the apostle John’s, painted Jesus as

- a) The light – knowing – 4b
- b) The life – showing – 4a

There is no way to separate the two. John rephrases it in

1 John 4:16 - *So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.*

- a) Know – *ginosko* = to understand
- b) Believe – *pisteuo* – to be persuaded

To know Jesus is to be persuaded by him. To be unpersuaded is not to know. It is impossible to know Eternity, Omnipotence, Holiness, etc and not be shaped by it.

Second: The Motive 7

He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.

The difference between an attorney and a witness is that an attorney attempts to influence people to make a decision. A witness simply tells what they have seen and know.

Third: The Method 8

He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

How did he do that? Vs 19-35 tell us how

*And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "**I am not the Christ.**" ²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." ²² So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³ He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." ²⁴ (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵ They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶ John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷ even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸ These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

*²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**"*

- This is Jesus's first appearance in the Gospel of John
- Jesus is called the lamb only twice in the OT, twice in the Gospels, once in Acts but 28 times in Revelation.
- The Passover is coming, and the bleating of sheep could be heard in the background
 - Shepherds and sheep disappear at Jesus's birth because Jesus is the Great Shepherd and the ultimate, final lamb.
- He answers Isaac's questions "...where is the lamb" (Gen 22:7).
- The Jews were looking for a Messenger like Moses
- They were looking for a Messiah like Aaron
- They were looking for a Monarch like David
- God sent them a lamb

John didn't introduce Jesus as any of these but went right to the heart of Israel's need: redemption.

Hebrews 10:4-10 - *For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; ⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of

me in the scroll of the book.”⁸ When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law),⁹ then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second.¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

³⁰ This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’³¹ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.”³² And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.”³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”³⁵ The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, **“Behold, the Lamb of God!”**³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, **and they followed Jesus.**

“testimony” = marturia = testifying

1:35-42 - The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, **“Behold, the Lamb of God!”**³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.³⁸ Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”³⁹ He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ).⁴² He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

3:25-30 - Now a discussion arose between some of John’s disciples and a Jew over purification.²⁶ And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.”²⁷ John answered, “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’²⁹ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease.”

Look how John continually points away from himself to Jesus. Why?

- a) We are just witnesses, not the object of the witness
- b) We will fail but Jesus will not (testimony is powerful but not omnipotent)
- c) Only Jesus can save

Conclusion:

All of this section occurs over about 3 days –

Day one – A delegation from the Sanhedrin questions John about his identity

Day two – John declares that Jesus is the Lamb of God

Day three – Two of John's followers, one of them Andrew, leave John to follow Jesus

This too, is our life's work -

The moon is a dead world in space, a massive chunk of lifeless rock. It has not a spark of fire, not a glimmer of light of its own. The work of the moon is to be a giant reflector in the sky, to pick up the light of the sun and relay that light to the earth. The moon is not the light. It is poised in space to bear witness to the light. Out there beyond the darkness of the world and of the night is the sun. The sun is a vast orb of burning gas, a kind of nuclear furnace, blazing away, pouring out a continual stream of light. The moon's function is only temporary, for the day is coming. The sun sheds its light directly on the earth, dispelling its darkness in a way the moon could not do. Such was John the Baptist. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light.

-

John Phillips