

# The Gospel of John

## Week Three

### The Presentation of Christ by John the Baptist (1.19-51)

#### 1. Introduction

- All information, study notes and related material can be found on the internet at <http://www.rtrc.net/biblestudy/john/john.htm>
- Course Syllabus
- Weekly Outlines (notebook)
- Discussion Forum: <http://www.rtrc.net/forum/> [go to the forum marked "Bible Studies"]
- Audio files are available on the web site

#### 2. Background and Setting

- "The witness of John" – we have seen that the express purpose of his ministry was to focus the attention of everyone on the true light, Jesus Christ, as the object of faith, (1.6-8, 15).
  - Implication: this is the mission of every preacher of the gospel today as well as those that have received this gospel.
- Here we see a detailed account of John the Baptists testimony as given before a delegation of the Sanhedrin, (priests and Levites)
- Remembering the main purpose of this book written by the evangelist. This account is in harmony with that purpose: to point people to Christ, (20. 30-31)
- This event as recorded is "post baptism" that is, this event recorded here happens after the baptism and subsequent temptation in the wilderness of Christ (Mark 1.12 cf. 1.32)
- Minimal attention if paid to the identity and ministry of John the Baptist as compared to the Synoptics (Matthew 3.1-6; Mark 1. 2-6; Luke 1.1-24, 57-80; 3.1-13)
- Location of Bethany – this is not the village east of Jerusalem (cf. John 11). This Bethany is in Perea, just east of the Jordon River

## Summary of the First Week of Ministry

- In all, 7 days are involved in this section starting with the testimony of John the Baptist and ending with the wedding at Cana. The apparent parallel of the Creation Week cannot be dismissed.
  - Day 1 (vv. 19-28) – John the Baptist confesses that he is not the Messiah and that he possesses an independent importance of his own
  - Day 2 (vv. 29-34) – John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the “Lamb of God” for whom he came to prepare the way
  - Day 3 (vv. 35-39) – John’s own testimony causes two of his own disciples to follow Jesus
  - Day 4 (vv. 40-42) – Andrew brings his own brother to Jesus
  - Day 5 (vv. 43-51) – Jesus calls Philip and Philip calls Nathanael
  - Day 6 – the journey to Galilee occurs
  - Day 7 (2.1-12) – the wedding at Cana

### 3. Day One – John the Baptist Confesses that he is not the Messiah (1.19-28)

#### VERSES 19-21

- The Jews send a delegation to investigate John and his activity (v. 19)
- The term “Jews” in the 4<sup>th</sup> gospel often carries a sinister connotation: the nation as represented by its religious leaders who were hostile to Jesus (7.1; 9.22; 18.12-14)
- Possible reasons for this delegation: reports of the work of John the Baptist were reaching the ears of the religious leaders; heavy threats against the impenitent; implication about Jews still needing repentance; unfriendly things being said about the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 3.7); exposing of false prophets was the duty of the Sanhedrin (cf. Deuteronomy 18.20-22)
- Note the response from John:
  - Not the Christ
  - Not Elijah. Though Jesus himself referenced John the Baptist as being “Elijah” here John simply states that he is not actually him in the flesh (Malachi 4.5)

- Not the Prophet—i.e. another Prophet that would come on the scene before the Messiah’s arrival (Deuteronomy 18.15-18)

#### VERSES 22-24

- Note how John does answer: One positive reply verses the three negatives listed prior:
  - “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord’ (also Matthew 3.3; Mark 1.3; Luke 3.4)
  - Implications:
    - It accurately indicates who he is
    - It offers an earnest invitation to repent

#### VERSES 25-28

- The delegation further questions him as to his reasons for baptism. Note that it was not the preaching that bothered them as much as the baptizing (Messianic act, see Ezekiel 36.25; 37.23)
- John’s answer: “I baptize with water” but, as he points out, there is a vast difference between what he is doing and what the Messiah will do. He alone can bestow the thing signified (Mark 1.8)
- He further points out that the Messiah is actually here, now, in their midst.
- John sees himself in such a lowly state as to not even be numbered as a servant (not being worthy to untie his sandal)

#### 4. Day Two – John identifies Jesus as the “Lamb of God” (1.29-34)

##### VERSE 29

- Jesus returns from the desert and his temptation experience
- As John sees him approaching he declares: Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”
- The reference to the “Lamb of God” has numerous possible OT parallels:

- The paschal lamb/Passover lamb
- The lamb that is led to slaughter – Isaiah 53
- The lamb of the daily sacrifice
- The “gentle lamb” of Jeremiah 11.19
- The scapegoat – problem here is that it was not a lamb
- The triumphant lamb
- The God provided lamb – Genesis 22.8
- A guilt offering – Leviticus 14.12ff

#### VERSES 30-34

- John references the eternal existence of Christ
- “I did not recognize him” i.e. as the Messiah. The Greek is clear. It indicates a mental process and refers to knowledge by intuition or by reflection.
- John bore witness to the Spirit of God descending on Him in the form of a dove. Here we see the assumption of the writer that his readers had some knowledge of the Synoptics (Matthew 3.13-17; Mark 1.9-10; Luke 3. 21-22)
- This action was the visible manifestation of the anointing of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit
- John the Baptist’s own testimony further evidences the purpose of the Evangelist

5. Day Three – John’s own testimony causes two of his own disciples to follow Jesus (1.35-39)

#### VERSES 35-39

- Note yesterday John addressed a multitude of undetermined size. Today he is standing with two of his disciples (Andrew and the Apostle John himself)
- Another difference: Yesterday, Jesus was coming toward John. Today he is evidently walking away toward the place he was staying at the time.
- Another difference: Yesterday there was no distinguishable effect yet today these two men take decisive steps which they will remember their entire lives

- Application: Do you remember when you were introduced to the Savior?
- Note the question of Christ: “What are you seeking” Notice that He does not ask “WHO are you seeking?” Were they, in fact, seeking the removal of sin by this Lamb?
- Their answer is one of polite address (also used elsewhere, i.e. Nicodemus in John 3) “Rabbi” meaning “great” hence “master” or “teacher”. They ask, “where are you staying?”
  - Implication – they wanted uninterrupted conversation and time with Jesus
  - Application – Do you seek this and desire this in your own life? Do you long to spend time with the Savior, in His word, learning from Him and being with Him?
- Christ’s answer: “Come and you will see” – formula common among the Rabbis as they used it to show that a solution to a particular problem was possible and that it should be sought together.

#### 6. Day Four – Andrew brings his brother Peter to meet Jesus (1.40-42)

- Andrew heard and followed Jesus and was interested in introducing Him to Peter
  - Application: unsaved family members
- The naming of Peter (cf. Matthew 16.18)

#### 7. Day Five – Jesus calls Philip and Philip calls Nathanael (1.43-51)

- Jesus prepares to leave for Galilee (note 2.1)
- Jesus simply calls to Philip: “Follow Me”.
- Philip finds Nathanael and makes a plea: “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” Both Moses in the Pentateuch and the Prophets write about the Messiah. The whole Old Testament points the world to Christ. These men would have certainly recognized this reality. The Old Testament can never be fully grasped unless the Christ is seen in it. Until then the Old

Testament remains a closed book (see Luke 24.32, 44; John 5.39, 46; Acts 3.18, 24; 7.52; 10.43; 13.29; 26.22, 23; 1 Peter 1.10)

- Nathanael responds: “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Point being that the Old Testament never even mentions Nazareth therefore why would this seemingly insignificant town produce such a Messiah as this. Another possibility is that Nathanael was demonstrating some “town pride”.
- Jesus encounters Nathanael and declares that he has found “an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!” Jesus spoke of deceit and the term here used could be translated “a snare” “deceit” or “guile”. It is clear from the context that Christ is speaking of the OT references to Jacob (see v. 51). Jacob was a man of “guile” (see Genesis 27.35. The employment of “trickery for selfish advantage characterized not only Jacob himself but also his descendents (Genesis 30.37-43 with Genesis 34) As one commentator writes: “A really honest and sincere Israelite, a Jew without duplicity, had become such an exception that at the approach of Nathanael Jesus exclaimed, ‘Look, truly an Israelite in whom deceit does not exist’ ”
- This knowledge (coupled with the fig tree account) leads Nathanael to profess faith in the Son of God.
- Jesus references another example from the life of Jacob (Genesis 28)

## 8. Conclusion