

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

LESSONS FOR THIS SERIES —

1. John the Baptist's story shows how a person can understand and accept their role in the Kingdom and then fulfill it.
2. When someone looked at John the Baptist, they saw Jesus. What do people see when they look at me?

THE SCRIPTURES

"Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ." ²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." ²² Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" ²⁴ Now some Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶ "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing." - John 1:19-28

SOME HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

• The Timing of this Story:

"Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on Him." - John 1:32

• The Location of this Story:

"Then Jesus went back **across the Jordan** to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days." - John 10:10

- There are two Bethanys.

- A note on "the Jews". This phrase is used 59 times in the gospel and nearly all of them are used as an indictment against the Hebrew people.

"You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from **the Jews**." - John 4:22

"Therefore many of **the Jews**... put their faith in Him." - John 11:45



JOHN'S CONFESSION — It is said negatively and positively.

"He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely..." - John 1:20

- John doesn't want anyone to confuse who he is.

THE FOURFOLD TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

1. First, John defined himself by who he was not.

- a. I am not the Messiah.

"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes." - Malachi 4:5

"Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, **in the spirit and power of Elijah**, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous — to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." - Luke 1:16,17

- c. I am not the Prophet.

"Others said, "He is Elijah." And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago." - Mark 6:15

2. Then, John defined himself by who he was.

"Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" - John 1:22

What could John have said?

- He began by quoting Scripture. This is always correct!
- He said that he was a voice; a statement of humility.
- He shared his message: "Get your heart ready for the Lord!"

3. Next, John defined himself by what he did.

"Now some Pharisees who had been sent questioned Him, "why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" - John 1:24,25

- The Jews believed that the Messiah and His predecessor would baptize to cleanse for all sin.

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols... ³³" "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt." - Ezekiel 36:25,33

4. Finally, John defined himself by comparing himself to Jesus.

- John indicated that the Jews should already know Jesus.
- John declared that he was unworthy to untie Jesus' sandals.

CONSIDER:

1. Do you confess your faith freely? Is your faith your priority?
2. Are you able to define your calling?
3. Do your words and actions point to Jesus?

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- b. I am not _____.

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