

SERMON 4
JOHN 1:19-28

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? That we may give an answer to them that sent us. What saith thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice on one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizes thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth on among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordon, where John was baptizing.

John 1:14-18

We know that the theme of the Gospel of John is the deity of Christ. John is trying to show in his gospel that Jesus is actually God himself. And that's why in the opening verses he states that Jesus Christ is actually the Word of God who existed before creation, he was with the Father and he was God. (v.1) He created all things. (v.3) He is the source of life and light. (v.4) So we have a very good summary of the eternal Word of God.

But then, we have the amazing account of this eternal God coming into the world. (vs. 9, 10) And God became flesh. (v.14) That is, God assumed a human nature. He became a man in every sense of the word, except without a sin nature.

And this is the great truth that the Apostle John is trying to convey in his gospel. He is trying to convince us that this man Jesus is actually God incarnate. And he says, "We beheld his glory." When he says, "We," he is undoubtedly speaking of the other disciples. And he is saying that we the disciples beheld his glory. We saw him day after day. We observed this man Jesus. And we saw his glory. He is saying, "We saw his divinity shining through. We heard him speak. We saw his miracles. We saw how he lived his life. And this man was God."

Now in this Gospel of John, it is almost like we are in a courtroom. And the Apostle John is the attorney. And he has made his opening statement and he has told the Judge that Jesus is God. And now, the Judge says, "Okay John, you may put on your evidence." And John the Apostle calls as his first witness, John the Baptist.

The Man, John the Baptist

Now first of all, who is this man, John the Baptist. And I would say that we know quite a bit about him from the Scriptures.

1. He was the subject of prophesy in the Old Testament.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Isaiah 40:3

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the
His birth was due to a miraculous intervention of God.

(Luke 1:7, 13)

2. He was filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. (Luke 1:15)
3. He was a man sent from God. (John 1:6)
4. He had a purpose – to prepare the way of the Lord. (Matthew 3:3)
5. He was the son of a priest – Zacharias. (Luke 1:8, 9)
6. He made his company with the poor. (He wore camel's hair. His meat was locusts and wild honey.)

Note: His raiment and his food was not unusual. It was just the trappings of poverty. He lived with the poor and was content with such a lifestyle.

The Occasion

1. John had been preaching for several months.
2. Jesus had already been baptized.
3. Jesus had already been tempted in the wilderness.

The Jews sent a delegation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem to find out what was going on. Apparently John was becoming famous and many people were flocking to see him and he was having some impact with the people. Many were being baptized. And many people were wondering if he was the Christ. (Luke 3:15) And so, the Jews sent spies out to find out about this man John.

The Questions asked by the Jewish delegation

1. *Who art thou?* (v.19)

2. *Why baptizes thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?*
(v.25)