

The Book of John - 9

Introduction: John chapter 1 begins with a revelation concerning the Word. As we continue in the passage, we are introduced to the Chosen Witnesses of the Word.

The first of these that we have been dealing with is John the Baptist.

I. The Prologue- The Revelation of the Word 1:1-14

A. The Word 1-5, 9-14

II. The Chosen Witnesses of the Word 1:19-4:54

A. John the Baptist

We begin with the record of John found **in verse 19**. Notice what the Bible says. **Read verses 19-29.**

We must remember that John's record of the Gospel is not as sequentially concerned as Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We discover in **verse 29** that John "the next day" indicated he knew whom the Lord Jesus Christ was following the questioning from the religious delegation.

We also discover that there was a period in which John preached and was baptizing when He did not know who the Lord Jesus Christ was. This is made clear in **verse 31**.

As John Phillips stated, "The testimony of John the Baptist was a logical place for John the apostle to begin his gospel since one of his overall objectives **was to trace the parallel rise of belief and unbelief among the Jewish people** living in Palestine at the time of Christ."

In this record of John, there are several items you and I need to make a note of. **First, we see that this delegation** was made up of priests and Levites. We see, more specifically, that the Pharisees sent this delegation.

John 1:24, "24 And they which were sent **were of the Pharisees.**"

They, upon arrival, question John, "Who art thou?"

He first lists **who he was not:**

v20 "I am not the Christ."

v21 "...Art thou Elias?..." "...I am not."

v21 "...Art thou that prophet?..." "...And he answered, No."

Who We Are Not

John the Baptist understood His role in God's plan. You and I should **know our place and function within the local New Testament Church.**

I Corinthians 12:1-18

Every part is important.

We are a local body of believers. The Bible compares us to a physical body composed of many members. (**I Corinthians 12:1-18**) Just as the members of your physical body are necessary and particular to your ability to function, so are the members of the local church. You are essential to the function of this local body, this local church.

Each member is different.

I understand, as a child of God, that I am in this world, but I am not of this world.

In **John 15:19**, the Lord was preparing His disciples for the ministry that was shortly before them, *"19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because **ye are not of the world**, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."*

So, we would understand, I am **a member** [part of] of the body of Christ. I am **a member** of this local church body. I know I am not a child of darkness but rather a child of the great King.

John stated **who He was not**. John said **who he was**.

Notice **His response was Scriptural**.

John 1:23 *"23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, **as said the prophet Esaias.**"*

"The imagery was taken from the days when there were no paved roads, only tracks across the fields. If a king were to travel, the road must be built and smoothed out so that the royal chariot might not find the traveling unduly rough nor be swamped in the mire. John claimed that he was to make the road for a greater personage who was to represent Jehovah." – **Tenney**.

The delegation asks in **verse 25**, *“Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?”*

John, though of the Levitical priestly line, was not involved in the religious government in Jerusalem. He came preaching and baptizing in the wilderness. Whether proselyte baptism for Gentiles was in full swing or not at this time of this encounter is debatable, but what is certain is that Jews were not baptized.

“They washed for ceremonial purposes according to the law, but this was different. (**Num 19:10–13; 31:23–24; Lev 11, 22:4–6; Lev 17:15; Lev 15:6–8, 11–12, 13, 16; Lev 15:21–22, 25–27; Lev 14:8–9**)

Beyond these cleansing rituals, several other practices were required in order to partake of eating sacrificed animals (**Lev 8:19–21**) and temple worship (**Lev 15:31**). Certain impurities could be only removed by using running water (**Lev 14:5–6, 50–52; 15:13; Deut 21:4**).”¹

Notice these words of John the Baptist in **Matthew 3:9-12** *“9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And now also the **axe is laid unto the root of the trees**: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. 11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”*

In **verses 26-28**, we find John’s answer to point them to the Lord Jesus Christ.

AT Robertson had this to say, “John is treating the Jewish nation as pagans who need to repent, to confess their sins, and to come back to the kingdom of God. The baptism in the Jordan was the objective challenge to this.”

“26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. 28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.”

John mentions in his answer **their blindness**.

*“...but there standeth one among you, **whom ye know not...**”*

And is not this the problem still today? Many do not see. There is blindness among

¹ Benjamin Espinoza, “Baptism,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

men. How many will not recognize Jesus Christ as their Saviour?

Folks will cling to superstitions, they will cling to idols, they will adhere to empty religions, and moral exercises but will not recognize the One who has come and is our Saviour.

John secondly declares the **preeminence and glory** of the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice what he says in **verse 27**.

"...I am not worthy to unloose..." His shoe's latchet.

"The "latchet" of sandals was the string or thong by which they were fastened to the feet. To unloose them was the office of a servant, and John means, therefore, that he was unworthy to perform the lowest office for the Messiah. This was remarkable humility." - **Albert Barnes**.

How many of us readily contemplate the same thing? I am not worthy of performing even the most menial task for the Lord. Though none of us are worthy, in Christ, our Lord has given us such privilege to serve Him. John recognized this.

It is recalled from John the apostle, who was a follower at this point of John the Baptist. **Verse 28** states, *"These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing."*

"This name [Bethabara] means "house of ferry." The traditional is the Jericho ford some miles north of the Dead Sea. Another view is that the place referred to is another fifty miles north of the Jericho ford, a place in the land of Bashan..." - John Phillips

John 1:29 *"29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

This declaration by John is both **compelling and complete**. John states, *"Behold..."* There is something to be said for the excitement of a Christian announcing the King of kings. And though He is the King, John the Baptist did not announce Him as the King. He did not introduce Him as the Holy One of God. He did not introduce Him as the Word, but He said, Behold **the Lamb of God**.

"He went right to the heart of Israel's need, of the whole world's need." John's baptism confronted people with **repentance**. There was a need for not only **repentance** but also **redemption**.

Hebrews 10:1-4 *"1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."*