**The Gospel of John:**

**John’s Testimony of the Christ, pt 2**

*John 1:19-37*

**Context**

John A. (the Apostle) gives us examples of how John B. (the Baptist) testimony or witness points to Jesus being the Christ. The events occurring in this section identify the peak of the greatest man who ever lived up to this point.

In these 3 consecutive days following the baptism of Jesus by John B., John is conversing with three distinct groups of people further elucidating his testimony. It is unusual to have a series of events occurring in scripture like this. His message to each group, each day is an important focus for us to consider. Remember, John A.’s purpose for writing is evangelistic. He wants people to believe that Jesus is the Christ. Here is and additional testimony from another to validate that claim.

**3 Days of testimony to 3 different groups of people regarding 1 message: Jesus is the Christ**

1. **Day One—to the delegation (Jews): A VOICE**

**John 1:19-31***—This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”****20****And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”****21****They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he \*said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”****22****Then they said to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”****23****He said, “I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”* ***24****Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.****25****They asked him, and said to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”****26****John answered them saying, “I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know.****27****It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”****28****These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

* 1. John B.

*testimony*—words related to fact, not opinion; to give a testimony; legal language as in a courtroom setting.[[1]](#footnote-1) John B. is John A.’s first witness to testify to the truth about Christ. John A. uses this term some 75 times in his writings.

1. The Jews

***Jews***—although the term could be used to refer to the Jewish nation, it primarily is used in John’s gospel to refer to the religious authorities (particularly those in Jerusalem) who opposed Christ and His message. The religious leaders consisted of the Sanhedrin—the supreme governing body of the Jewish faith. John uses the term some 70 times in his gospel.

* + - * 1. Priests   
             
           They were the human intermediaries between God and man; officiated at the religious ceremonies; theological authorities in Israel; lived throughout Israel as local experts on the faith.
        2. Levites

They assisted the priests in the temple rituals; they likely acted as the temple guards as well (Luke 22:4; Acts 4:1; 5:24).

* + - * 1. Pharisees

They were the experts in the OT law; they had a very strict observance of the traditional and written law; they believed themselves to be superior in their view of themselves; they were self-righteous; they were very concerned with authority and power as reflected in the line of questioning here.

1. The Questions
2. *Who are you?*  
   The implication is that they thought he was The Christ (cf. vv 21-22).   
   1. *I am not the Christ*Again, his response would go toward the implication that he was the Messiah.John A.’s use of “he confessed and did not deny, but confessed” is a 3-fold emphatic denial of such a thought.
3. *Are you Elijah?*  
   **Malachi 3:1**—*“Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the Lord of hosts.*

**Malachi 4:5**—*“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord”*

**Mark 1:6**—*John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and his diet was locusts and wild honey.*

**2 Kings 1:8**—*They answered him, “He was a hairy man with a leather girdle bound about his loins.” And he said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.”*

**Matthew 3:2**—*“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*   
 **1 Kings 18:18**—*He said, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and you have followed the Baals.*

1. *I am not.*

**Luke 1:17**—It is he who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

**With the coming of Messiah:**

* **First Time:** He is preceded by one in the spirit and power of Elijah
* **Second Time:** He is preceded by Elijah himself

1. *Are you the Prophet?*  
   **Deuteronomy 18:15**—*“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.”*

(**Fulfilled in Jesus***—*Acts 3:22 with Peter’s message; Acts 7:37 with Stephen’s message)

1. *No.*
2. *Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us?*
3. *A voice of one crying in the wilderness*

**Isaiah 40:3-4**—*A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.* ***4****“Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley*

His response is one of a true preacher/believer: **HUMILITY**

**James 4:6**—*But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”*

**John 1:15**—*John testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’”*

**John 3:30**—*He must increase, but I must decrease.*

**Ephesians 3:8**—*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ*

**Luke 17:10**—*So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.’”*

1. **Day two—to the crowd: BEHOLD**

**John 1:29-34**—*The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said* [to the crowd], *“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!****30****This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’****31****I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.”* ***32****John testified saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.****33****I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’****34****I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”*

***Lamb of God****—*a title only used in John’s A’s account. The sacrificial lamb was one very familiar to the Jews. The lamb was God’s mean of removing man’s sin and the resulting separation from God. It was the means of atonement introduced by God through Moses in Exodus. However, the only sufficiently perfect sacrifice to definitively take away sin is found in THE Lamb of God—Jesus Christ. He alone takes away the sin of the world.   
  
**John 14:6**—*Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*

***After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me***—John B. was born some 6 months after Jesus. This is a clear reference to Christ’s eternality and Deity.

***I did not recognize Him*** *(vv 31, 33)—*a clear reference to the humanity of Jesus.\*Please note—Jesus did not have a distinguishing halo around His head.

***He who sent me to baptize****—*John was commissioned by God Himself. The authority that the Jewish delegation was requiring came not from the religious elites, but from the One to whom they would say they represent.

1. **Day three—to His disciples: FOLLOW**

**John 1:35-37**—*Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples****36****and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”****37****The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*

***Behold, the Lamb of God!****—*John B. repeats what he said earlier to the crowd on day two.

**Two of his** [John B’s] **disciples**—Andrew (v 40) and John A. (who doesn’t identify himself in any of his writings by name) became followers of Jesus.

**Matthew 4:18-22**—*Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.****19****And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”****20****Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.****21****Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them.****22****Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.*

1. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, John MacArthur, John 1-11, p. 31 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)