‬‬‬The Gospel of John

**A LIVING SACRIFICE – JOHN 1:6-13**

***John 1:6–13 (ESV)*** *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.* ***7*** *He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.* ***8*** *He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.* ***9*** *The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.* ***10*** *He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.* ***11*** *He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.* ***12*** *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,* ***13*** *who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

**V6** – Here, John writes about another person who was sent by God. He introduces him, not as God, nor as the Son of God, nor as the Word, but rather, as a human being. He said, “*There was a man.”* He said the man’s name is John. We know this man from the other three gospels as “John the Baptist,” but the apostle John, speaking with a certain familiarity, simply calls him “John.” Evidence points to the fact that, along with Andrew, John was one of the Baptist’s disciples before following Jesus. And we’ll later see that John and Andrew were standing next right next to their mentor when he pointed Jesus out as the Messiah. That’s when John and Andrew left the ministry of John the Baptist and began following Jesus.

**V7** – John the Baptist came as a witness, to bear witness about the light (Jesus), so that people would believe in Jesus through John the Baptist’s testimony.

**V8** – Over the course of John the Baptist’s ministry, thousands of people came to hear him preach and to be baptized in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. So, because of his widespread influence and fame, and because many people mistakenly believed or heard that he was the Messiah, the apostle John wanted to put that false rumor to rest. So, in no uncertain terms, he says about John the Baptist, “He was not “the light,” but was, rather, “a witness” about the light.

**V9** – In this verse, the apostle John gives us the gist of the message that John the Baptist preached. He was saying, “The true light, which gives light to everyone, is coming … He’s coming … right here … into the world.”

**V10** – Verse 9 was the message John the Baptist preached, and in verse 10 the apostle John tells us that what John the Baptist’s prediction came to pass. He said, “Jesus was right here in the world, I’m talking about the Creator of the world, yet the world did not know who He was.”

**V11** – Notice John uses the word “own” twice in this verse. It’s interesting that, in the Greek, John first uses the neuter form of own, meaning “own things,” and afterward uses the masculine form of own, meaning “own people.” So a literal translation of this verse could be, “He came to His own things, and His own people did not receive Him.” Let me paraphrase it: “Jesus, the Creator, came to the world and all the things that He had created, and His own people, the Jews who knew He was coming, did not welcome or accept Him.”

**V12** – Like today, most people in Jesus’ day did not receive Him, but some did. And to those who did, He gave the right (*exousia* - authority, permission, the power to decide) to become children of God. The NKJV and the NASB translate the sequence of the phrases more directly. Notice the difference between the ESV and these two translations:

***John 1:12 (ESV)*** *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,*

***John 1:12 (NKJV)*** *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:*

***John 1:12 (NASB95)*** *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,*

So this verse is saying: “But for those who received and welcomed Him, to them He gave the right (*exousia* - authority, permission, the power to decide) to become children of God, and what they had to do was believe in His name.

Folks, God wants children. So much so, that He sent His Son to die to give you the right (the authority, power, and permission) to become His children, if you so choose. Notice, God has chosen to be in relationship with everyone in the world. It is not Him who rejects people, but rather people who reject Him. And the next verse makes that clear.

**2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)** The Lord is … not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Read 12 & 13 together

**V13** – In this verse John tells what happened (and still happens) to those who received Jesus and put their faith in His name. He said, “who were born, not of blood (meaning parents passing on physical life to their child), nor by the will of the flesh (a conception that resulted from sexual desire), nor by the will of man (humans deciding to have a child), but by the will of God.” Let me share how this reads in the original text: “who not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God were born.”

**Friends, to those who receive Jesus—the Light—and believe on His name, God gives you the right** (authority, power, permission) to become a part of God’s very family, not as slaves, but as His precious children. As it says in **Ephesians 5:1 (ESV)** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

So who is this “John the Baptist?”

* He was actually a relative of Jesus, likely a cousin
* He was born into a family of priests, his father, Zechariah, from the line of Abijah, his mother, Elizabeth, from the line of Aaron, the first high priest
* He was specifically prophesied about hundreds of years before he was born:

**Isaiah 40:3 (ESV)** A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

**Malachi 3:1 (ESV)** “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare 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.

John the Baptist was a Nazarite. What is a Nazarite?

According to Numbers 6:1–12, a Nazarite is a person who takes a vow and separates himself to the Lord:

* Will not drink any wine or other alcoholic drinks
* Will eat nothing produced by the grapevine, including juice, wine, grapes, raisins, seeds, etc.
* Will not cut his hair
* Must remain holy to the Lord

John the Baptist, however, was a Nazarite from birth, and for life. He was one of three mentioned in Scripture, the other two being Samson and Samuel.

Here’s how it came about: Like Samuel’s mother Hannah, John the Baptist’s mother Elizabeth was barren, so she and her husband, Zechariah, did not have children. On top of that, by the time the angel appeared to Zechariah, they were well advanced in years. But here’s what the angel said in:

**Luke 1:13–17** *“Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.* ***14*** *And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,* ***15*** *for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.* ***16*** *And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,* ***17*** *and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.” (ESV)*

So John the Baptist was raised from birth to be a Nazarite, separated from many things that normal boys do to serve the Lord.

From the time he was a little boy, his parents told him that God had a special plan for his life, and to fulfill that plan, he couldn’t do certain things that other boys did.

At some point, he deliberately embraced his calling and pursued it with everything he had. It eventually drove him to the wilderness, even before his ministry began, without question to pray and learn the message he was to preach.

**Luke 1:80 (ESV)** And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

His job was to prepare the hearts of Israel so that as many as possible would believe God when He came in human flesh.

Let’s look at:

**Matthew 3:1–6 (ESV)** In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, **2** “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” **3** For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’ ” **4** Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. **5** Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, **6** and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

John the Baptist was called to prepare people for Jesus’ coming, and he gave it everything he had and was finally martyred because of his message.

Here’s what Jesus later said about John the Baptist:

**Luke 7:24–28 (ESV)** When John’s messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? **25** What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings’ courts. **26** What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. **27** This is he of whom it is written, “ ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ **28** I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

And remember, as children, you are “in” the kingdom of God, and thus greater than John the Baptist who was not born again.

We are the body of Christ. He is still here to shine light in this world ... through us.

But wait, there’s another correlation of John the Baptist and us:

* John was called to prepare the way for Jesus’ FIRST coming
* We are called to prepare the way for His SECOND coming

**Mark 16:15–16 (ESV)** And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. **16** Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

**Romans 12:1 (ESV)** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Like John, the words we speak and the life we live influence people, even when they don’t express it, or admit it.

In Judges 2:7–13, the Bible tells us that the children of Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, but after the elders had all died, the children of Israel began to serve false gods again.

The magnetic pull of false gods is as strong today as it has ever been. The introduction of various media platforms delivers the influence of Satan himself directly to the phones, computers and televisions of everyone, including our kids.

We’re watching formerly committed believers be peeled away because of the influence they’re exposed to.

So John the Baptist yielded himself to God to fulfill his calling. He sacrificed living a normal life, allowing himself to be made fun of so that he could please the Lord and influence people to follow God and be saved. I have no doubt that John the Baptist would tell us that every sacrifice was worth it.

**EX** - I think about the sacrifices I’ve made to pursue my calling, nothing compared to John the Baptist, who eventually was martyred. I want to make the sacrifices that I must make to fulfill my calling.

**I SEE THREE RESPONSES TODAY:**

1. Be prepared yourself… make Jesus Lord of your life and be baptized in water
2. Become a member of our church family, and help us reach people
3. Partner with me to launch your own house church, and teach with me through the book of John