

“Worthy Is The Lamb”
John 1:19-28

Introduction:

1. **IE:** When Tom Brady Announced His Retirement From Football - At Age 42 - Just A Few Weeks Ago - The Debate Started All Over Again - As To - Whether Or Not - He Was Football’s GOAT - Or - “Greatest Of All Time!” - Well - Love Him Or Hate Him - He Currently Holds 54 NFL Records! And - Has Plenty Of Championship Rings - To Support That Claim!
 - But - In Football - Or In Any Other Sport:
 - The Definition Of Greatness:
 - Is Achievement & Success!
 - Championships!
 - World Records!
 - Gold Medals!
 - And The Prestige & The Money:
 - That Goes Along With That Success!
 - In This World:
 - Success Is The Standard:
 - Of Greatness!
 - This Is True - Not Just In Sports:
 - But In So Many Other:
 - Pursuits As Well!
 - And - All Too Often:
 - We Succumb To The World’s Definition:
 - Of Greatness:
 - Even When It Comes To:
 - The Things Of God & His Church!
2. But - The One Who Is **Truly** Great:
 - Is Great - Not In The Eyes Of Men:
 - But - In The Eyes Of God!
 - And - In Luke 7:28 - Jesus Himself:
 - Tells Us About Someone Who Was:
 - Truly Great!
 - “For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist!”
 - In God’s Eyes:
 - John The Baptist:
 - Was Great! Even:
 - The Greatest Prophet Of All Time!
 - But - When John The Baptist Was Alive:
 - What Kind Of Man Did The People See?
 - Jesus Asked - “But What Went Ye Out For To See? A Man Clothed In Soft Raiment?” (Luke 7:25)
 - Who Had Achieved Prosperity In This World?
 - No - Because - His Raiment Was Made Of Rough Camel’s Hair!
 - Was He A Man - Who Had Achieved:
 - Power In This World? Living In A Palace As A King?
 - No - Because - He Made His Home In The Wilderness!
 - Was He A Man - Who Had Achieved:
 - Prestige Among The Many Who Went To See Him & Hear Him & Be Baptized By Him?
 - No - Because - His Main Course In Every Meal Was Still “Locusts & Wild Honey!” (Yum!)
3. But - No Matter What The World:
 - Thought Of John The Baptist:
 - The Testimony Of God Was That:
 - He Was The Greatest Prophet Of All Time:
 - And - One Of The Greatest Men:
 - Of All Time!

- John The Baptist:
 - Was A Truly Great Man:
 - According To God's Own Definition:
 - Of Greatness!
 - But - As We Return To The Gospel Of John:
 - What Did John:
 - Think & Say About Himself?
- 4. Now - In The First 18 Verses Of This Chapter:
 - Which Is The Prologue Of This Book:
 - The Writer Of John Already Introduced Us:
 - To John The Baptist:
 - In 1:6-8 & 1:15!
 - 5. Well - Now - In 1:19-28:
 - John The Beloved:
 - Gets Into The Heart Of The Message:
 - Of John The Baptist!
 - And - As We Read Through These Verses:
 - Notice What This Great Man:
 - Great In The Eyes Of God:
 - Thinks Of His Own Greatness!
 - "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 sayest thou of thyself? / He said, I am the voice of 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 baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? / John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one 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 Jordan, where John was baptizing!"
 - So - What Did John The Baptist:
 - Think Of His Greatness?
 - **It** Was Nothing, Because **He** Was Nothing:
 - In Comparison With:
 - The One Who Was To Come After Him!
 - 6. Of Course - We Already Know:
 - Who That "One" Is!
 - It Was Jesus! The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - Who - From The Testimony Of John Himself:
 - Is Greater Than Him - And So:
 - Is The Greatest Of All!
 - And - As We Just Read In 1:19:
 - "This Is The Record Of John!"
 - This Is His Testimony!
 - The Testimony Of His Words - And:
 - The Testimony Of His Life!
 - And - John Was Given The Opportunity:
 - To Share His Testimony About Jesus:
 - When - 1:19 - "The Jews Sent Priests And Levites From Jerusalem To Ask Him" - Some Questions!
 - Three Questions, In Fact!
 - But - Using These Three Questions:
 - John The Baptist:
 - Keeps Pointing Us To Jesus! Because:
 - 7. Jesus Christ Is Truly The Greatest Of All!
 - And - He Deserves:
 - Your Devotion & Worship & Praise!

* First - Jesus Christ Is The Greatest:

1. *In His Own Person!*

- And - We Learn This From The First Question:
 - About John's Own Person & Identity:
 - In 1:19-21 - "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!"
 - It Is Clear - From This Account:
 - And From The Other Gospels:
 - That The Ministry Of John The Baptist:
 - Created Quite A Stir:
 - In Israel!
 - In Matthew 3:5-6 - We Are Told:
 - "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, / And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins!"
 - Well - The Religious Leaders In Jerusalem:
 - Heard About This:
 - And Were Curious And Concerned!
 - So - They Wanted To Find Out More About This Strange Man & His Message!
 - The "Priests" Would Have Been Able To:
 - Test His Orthodoxy - While:
 - Some Of The "Levites" - May Have Been There:
 - As Part Of The Temple Guard - In Case Things Got Out Of Hand!
 - And - When They Got There:
 - The First Question They Asked Was:
 - "Who Art Thou?" (1:19)
 - There Was Obviously Some Question About Whether Or Not He Was:
- The Christ!
 - Or - The Messiah - The Anointed One:
 - That God Had Promised To Them:
 - Who Would - One Day:
 - "Judge The Ends Of The Earth!" (1 Samuel 2:10)
 - And - Restore The Kingdom:
 - To Israel - To All Of Its:
 - Promised Glory!
 - But - John Was Clear In His Answer!
 - 1:20 - "And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ!"
 - "Denied Not" - Simply Means That:
 - He Did Not Deny Their Request For Information!
 - John Had Nothing To Hide!
 - And - He Didn't Want Anyone:
 - To Get The Wrong Idea About:
 - Who He Was!
 - He Was Not The Christ!
 - Well - If Not The Messiah - Maybe He Was:
- Elias!
 - The Great Prophet - Who - Was Also Promised To Return:
 - Some 400 Years Earlier - By The Last Known Prophet - Malachi!
 - Malachi 4:5 - "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD!"
 - So - If John Wasn't The One:
 - Who Would Set Up The Final Kingdom:
 - Maybe He Was The One:
 - To Prepare The Way:
 - For Their Final King!
 - After All - Based On Their Understanding Of The Old Testament:
 - Not Only Did John Preach Like Elijah:
 - He Probably Even Looked Like Elijah!

- “Clothed With Camel’s Hair, And With A Girdle Of A Skin About His Loins!”
(2 Kings 1:8 / Mark 1:6)
- He May Have Even Been Preaching & Baptizing:
 - In The Same Place Where Elijah:
 - Had Been Taken Up To Heaven:
 - By A Whirlwind In A Chariot Of Fire! (2 Kings 2:11)
 - According To 1:28:
 - “In Bethabara / Bethany Beyond Jordan!”
 - So - They Asked Him:
 - 1:21 - “Art Thou Elias?”
- Again - John Was Clear & Concise In His Answer!
 - 1:21 - “And He Saith, I Am Not!”
 - So - Now - The Jewish Leaders Were Even More Puzzled! So - Maybe He Was:
- The Prophet!
 - That Is - The Prophet That Was Promised:
 - All The Way Back In:
 - Deuteronomy 18:18 - When The Lord Said To Moses - “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him!”
 - So - The Jews Were Expecting & Anticipating:
 - All Three Of These Men To Come:
 - And Restore The Glory Of Israel!
 - So - They Asked Him Again:
 - 1:21 - “Art Thou That Prophet?”
 - But - Once Again - John:
 - “Answered, No!”
- John The Baptist Knew:
 - That The One Who Would Come After Him:
 - Was The Christ & The Prophet:
 - He & His People Were Looking For!
 - And So - He Recognized:
 - The Greatness & Worthiness:
 - Of Jesus - In All Honesty!
 - You See - Even Though:
 - John Was Great - He Knew That:
 - Jesus Was Greater!
 - And - John Knew His Place!
- And - What Was True For John:
 - Is To Also Be True For You!
 - Jesus Christ Is The Greatest Of All!
 - And - He Is Worthy:
 - Of Your Honesty:
 - About Who He Is - And:
 - About Who You Are!
 - You Need To Be Honest About:
 - Who You Are - *Without* Christ!
 - Romans 7:18 - “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing!”
 - This Kind Of Honesty:
 - Brings Honor To Christ! But:
 - You Also Need To Be Honest About:
 - Who You Are - *In* Christ!
 - When You Believe In Him - You Are “Accepted In The Beloved! In Whom We Have Redemption Through His Blood, The Forgiveness Of Sins, According To The Riches Of His Grace!”
 - This Kind Of Honesty:
 - Brings Honor To Christ As Well! But:
 - You Also Need To Be Honest About:
 - Who You Are - Before The World!

- Luke 17:10 - "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do!" (Ephesians 1:6-7)
- This Is Your Highest Calling & Vocation:
 - In This World!
 - "Ye Serve The Lord Christ!" (Col. 3:24)
- And - Its All Because:
 - Jesus Christ Is The Greatest Of All:
 - In His Own Person!

* Jesus Christ Is Also The Greatest:

2. ***In His Own Purpose!***

- And - We Can See This In The Second Question:
 - Posed To John - About His Purpose & Activity!
 - In 1:22-23 - "Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? / He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias!"
 - At This Point - Those Jewish Religious Leaders:
 - Were Even More Puzzled:
 - Than When They Had Left Jerusalem!
 - And - Perhaps - A Bit Frustrated With His Blunt But Elusive Answers!
 - So - This Time:
 - They Ask A More Open-Ended Question!
 - A "Probing" Question - Not Just About:
 - ***Who*** He Was - But:
 - ***What*** He Was All About!
 - "What Sayest Thou Of Thyself?"
 - And - This Time - John Answers:
 - With His Own Understanding:
 - Of His Person & His Purpose, His Identity & His Mission!
 - And So - He Quotes From:
 - Isaiah 40:3 - And In Doing So:
 - He Points Out That:
 - They Are Asking The Wrong Questions To The Wrong Person!
 - Because - Everything:
 - He Said - And - Everything:
 - He Did - Was - Not For Himself:
 - But For Another!
 - So - He Told Them - In 1:23:
 - "I Am The Voice!"
 - Or:
 - "I Am - ***A*** Voice!"
 - Not Just "The" Voice That Was Prophesied:
 - By Isaiah - But Just:
 - "A" Voice - And - Nothing But:
 - A Voice!
 - But - What Is A Voice?
 - A Voice *Is* Nothing:
 - Without Something To Say!
 - A Voice *Means* Nothing:
 - Without A Message & A Word To Communicate!
 - In This Way:
 - The Writer Of John Wants You To See That:
 - John The Baptist Was Just:
 - A Voice - To Bring To You:
 - "The Word!"
 - The "Word" Who Was:
 - "In The Beginning!" And:

- The Word Who Was “With God” And “Was God!” (1:1)
- In This Way:
 - John The Baptist Tells Us:
 - His Purpose - And - What He’s All About!
 - He’s Just A Voice!
 - But Jesus Is The Word!
 - He Also Told Them - In 1:23 - That:
- “I Am – One Crying!”
 - That Is - He Was One Who:
 - Lifted Up His Voice:
 - So That People Might Hear:
 - His Message!
 - As We Learned Earlier In This Chapter:
 - John The Baptist’s Cry - Was A Cry:
 - Of Clarity & Conviction!
 - But - It Was Still:
 - Just A Cry!
 - But - His Cry - Was About:
 - A Coming - The Coming Of Someone:
 - Greater Than He!
 - “Make Straight” - He Said - “The Way!”
 - **IE:** “Make Straight” Here Means To Get Things Cleared Away - So There Are No Obstacles On The Path - For Someone Important Is About To Come By!
 - And So - In This Way:
 - John The Baptist Tells Us:
 - His Purpose - And - What He’s All About!
 - He’s Just The Announcer!
 - But Jesus Has Arrived! Jesus Has Already Come!
 - But - Also In 1:23 - He Told Them That:
- I Am – In The Wilderness!”
 - John Was Just A Man:
 - Living In & Preaching In:
 - The Wilderness!
 - But - This Was Nothing:
 - Compared To The Condescension:
 - Of The One Who Would Come:
 - Who Was The “Lord” Himself!”
 - “Prepare Ye The Way Of The Lord!”
 - The Lord - Who Came All The Way From
 - The Glories Of Heaven:
 - To The Wilderness Of This World!
 - To Save Us From Our Sin & From Ourselves!
 - And - John The Baptist Recognized:
 - The Greatness & Worthiness:
 - Of Jesus Christ:
 - In All Humility!
 - Even Though John Was Great:
 - Jesus Was Greater:
 - In His Own Purpose!
 - How Have You Responded To:
 - The Purpose Of Christ - And His Coming?
 - Is There Still Something:
 - In The Way - Keeping You From:
 - Believing In & Submitting To:
 - The Greatness & The Glory Of Jesus Christ?
 - Is There Pride In The Way?
 - Or - Some Other Sin In The Way?
 - Is Your Family, Your Career:

- Or Other Cares Of This World:
 - In The Way?
- Remember That - The Message Of John:
 - And - The Mission Of Jesus:
 - Was For Your “Comfort!”
- “Make Straight The Way Of The Lord!”
 - Into Your Heart & Life!
 - Clear Out Any Obstacle!
 - Because - From Isaiah 40:2:
 - “Your Warfare Is Accomplished” & “Your Iniquity Is Pardoned!”
- Because - Jesus Christ Is The Greatest Of All:
 - In His Own Purpose!

* He Is Also The Greatest:

3. ***In His Own Power!***

- Because - In The Third Question Posed By The Jewish Leaders:
 - And Especially - The Pharisees Who Were Among Them:
 - They Questioned His Power & Authority:
 - In 1:25-27 - “And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? / John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one 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!”
 - Now - The Pharisees:
 - Considered Themselves To Be The Guardians:
 - Of God’s Law - And Were Focused On:
 - Its Strict Interpretation & Application!
 - And So - They Saw John:
 - As A Threat - Because He Was:
 - Operating Outside Of Their Official Authority!
 - So - They Challenged Him - “Why Baptizest Thou Then?”
 - Under Whose Authority:
 - Are You Performing This:
 - Ritual Of Cleansing?
 - Well - To Answer This Question:
 - John Offers:
- His Own Admission!
 - 1:26 - “John Answered Them, Saying, I Baptize With Water!”
 - He Didn’t Deny The Charge:
 - Nor Did He Deny:
 - That He Had Authority To Do What He Was Doing!
 - But - As He Did With:
 - The Other Questions:
 - He Kept Diverting & Directing Them:
 - Away From:
 - His Person, His Purpose, And His Power:
 - To Another!
 - So - He Provides:
 - His Own Account:
 - Of The Person, Purpose, And Power:
 - Of Christ!
 - In 1:26b - “But there standeth one among you, whom ye know not!”
 - Back In Deuteronomy 18:15:
 - Moses Told The People What The Lord Told Him:
 - That - “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken!”
 - But - Here - John Told His Interrogators:
 - That - At That Very Moment:
 - “There Standeth One Among You!”

- The Promise Was No Longer In The Future:
 - The Promise Had Come To Them In The Present!
- But - Instead Of Them:
 - Hearing Him - John Told Them:
 - You Don't Even Know Him!
- By This Time:
 - As We Can Glean From The Other Gospel Accounts:
 - John Had Been Preaching:
 - About Jesus:
 - For Some Time!
 - John Had Even Baptized:
 - Jesus - At Least:
 - 40 Days Earlier!
 - There Was Even A Voice From Heaven:
 - "Saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" (Matthew 3:16)
- The Message Of John Was This:
 - The Prophet You Have Been Waiting For:
 - Is Here! And:
 - You Don't Even Know It!
 - But - **He** Is The One:
 - You Need To Go To!
 - **He** Is The One:
 - You Need To Hear!
 - **He** Is The One:
 - You Need To Know!
 - And - **He** Is The One:
 - You Need To Honor!
- Because - 1:27:
 - **He** Is The One - "**He** it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose!"
- **IE**: During The Time Of Jesus:
 - If You Didn't Take Your Sandals Off Yourself:
 - It Was One Of The Most Menial Tasks:
 - Reserved For A Slave!
 - So - What John Was Saying Is That:
 - Jesus Christ Is So Great:
 - That He Was Not Worthy:
 - To Even Be Christ's Slave!
- John The Baptist Recognized:
 - The Greatness & Worthiness:
 - Of Jesus Christ:
 - In All Honor!
 - John Admitted That:
 - He *Was* Nothing - He *Had* Nothing:
 - And - He *Could Do* Nothing:
 - That Is Worthy Of The One:
 - Who is Both Human & Divine!

Conclusion:

1. And - All Of This:
 - Was The Point Of The Ministry Of John The Baptist!
 - 1:19 - "This Is The Record Of John!"
 - Jesus Christ Is The Greatest Of All!
 - He Is The Greatest:
 - In His Person!
 - In His Purpose! And:
 - In His Power!
2. And That Is Why:

- He Deserved:
 - John's Devotion!
- And That Is Why - He Deserves:
 - Your Devotion As Well!
 - In All Honesty!
 - In All Humility! And:
 - In All Honor!

3. Because - Revelation 5:12:

- "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!"
 - Jesus Christ Is Worthy:
 - Of Your Faith, Your Devotion, Your Worship & All Your Praise!

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