

**“John the Baptist Introduced”**  
**John 1:6-8; 15**  
**(Preached at Trinity, April 6, 2016)**

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As John begins his Gospel all eyes are on Christ – “In the beginning was the Word”  
Now John suddenly does an about face and introduces one sent from God, a man with whom he shares the name John. He introduces us to John the Baptist. He is spoken of in all four Gospels, only John refers to him simply as John.  
**John 1:6 NAU** - "There came a man sent from God, whose name was John."
- I. First the Gospel describes the man John – "There came a man sent from God"
  - A. John displays a great contrast before us  
"There came a man sent from God"
    1. In **Verses 1-5** John sets before us the deity of Christ
      - He is eternal – “In the beginning was the Word”
      - He is a person distinct from the Father – “The Word was with God”
      - He is God – “the Word was God”
      - He is Creator – “All things came into being through Him”
      - He is the source of all spiritual life – “In Him was life”
      - He is the grand revelation of eternal God – the Light shines in the darkness
    2. Everything about the incarnation is glorious. It is attended by signs in the sky and the appearance of angels  
**Luke 2:13-14 NAU** - "And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."
    3. It's not until **Verse 14** that John finally declares the humanity of Christ  
"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us"  
Even then John describes it in glorious form  
"and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."
    4. As we come to **Verse 6**, however, John sets before us an intentional contrast - "There came a man"
      - a. Jesus was God, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable  
John the Baptist was but a man, finite, frail, ever changing.
      - b. The Apostle John was careful to declare this distinction  
**John 1:8 NAU** - "He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light."

- c. The greatest of men are insignificant as they stand before God. The wise man humbly bows.  
John the Baptist will declare this:  
**John 3:30-31 NAU** - "He must increase, but I must decrease. <sup>31</sup> "He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all."  
**John 1:15 NAU** - "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."
- B. But John also makes a comparison – Both Jesus and John the Baptist were sent from God
  - 1. Jesus declared continually that He was sent forth from the Father  
**John 5:23 NAU** - "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."  
**John 17:25 NAU** - "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me"
  - 2. John the Baptist was sent forth to prepare the way for the Christ.
  - 3. Both were sent by God – but Christ was Divine and John was a mere man. John was finite, Jesus was infinite.  
**John 1:15 NAU** - "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."
- C. John doesn't focus on the person of John the Baptist. His intent is to keep all eyes upon Christ. Most of what we know about John the Baptist comes from the other Gospels.
  - 1. John was a young man  
Remember, he was just little older than Jesus – at this point he was not much over 30 years old.
  - 2. We know his parents were Zacharias and Elizabeth, Mary's cousin. We know that Elizabeth conceived miraculously well after her child bearing years. Luke records that while John was still in his mother's womb Mary entered into their home and John leaped in his mother's womb.  
**Luke 1:41-42 NAU** - "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"
  - 3. Matthew records that John received a great commendation from Jesus  
There is no higher commendation than to be praised by Christ  
**Matthew 11:11 NAU** - "Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

- a. His opinion of you is ultimately the only one that matters  
**1 Corinthians 4:2-4 NAU** - "In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. <sup>3</sup> But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. <sup>4</sup> For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord."
  - b. We all spend far too much time worried about what other men think. What we should always ponder is what God thinks.
  - c. Why was John considered great?  
 First, John was greater because of his calling. He was not only a prophet, but arrived on the scene in fulfillment of prophecy as one who would prepare the way for Christ.  
**Isaiah 40:3 KJV** - "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."
  - d. 2nd, John was great because of the manner in which he fulfilled his task.
    - He had singleness of purpose – to point men to Christ. To direct men to the light.  
 He announced the arrival of the Messiah directing all attention to the Savior – none to himself.
    - He was not encumbered by the things of this world. His life was surrounded by the most basic things – camel hair clothes and locust and wild honey for food. He sought something greater.  
**Matthew 3:1-4 NAS** - "Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." <sup>3</sup> For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!'" <sup>4</sup> Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt about his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey."
    - He was great because of his message. He emphasized the necessity of repentance as the only way to enter into the Messiah's kingdom. He knew that the Kingdom of Christ would be a kingdom of holiness.  
**Matthew 3:1-2 NAU** - "Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
    - Finally, he was great in his humility - Jesus consistently equated true greatness with humility.  
**Mark 9:35 NAU** - "Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."
    - John was a great man, but still just a man.
- d. John was ushering in the beginning of the Gospel. After years of silence John crashes on the scene with a word from God. He was the last of the Old Testament prophets. That's why Jesus says the last in the Kingdom is greater than John. We are a part of the New Covenant.

## II. Second of all, the Apostle John describes John the Baptist's Message

### **John 1:7 NAU** - "He came as a witness, to testify about the Light"

#### A. John arrived as a herald

1. He came to announce the coming of the Christ, the Messiah. He came to "testify" about the Light. In other words, he came to bring verbal proclamation.
2. Matthew described the nature of his testifying – He came preaching!  
The word is κηρύσσω which describes the work of a herald.  
**Matthew 3:1-3 NAS** - "Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." <sup>3</sup> For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!'"
3. John describes it much more simply – "He came as a witness"
  - a. The meaning is the same. When a king was about to arrive he was preceded by a herald. The herald's function is to prepare the way of the king and to announce his arrival.
  - b. John came to announce the arrival of Christ and prepare the way for His Kingdom – a kingdom of righteousness.

#### B. John the Baptist's message was simple

1. His desire was to herald the coming of the Light and to draw men to the Light.  
**John 1:7 NAU** - "He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him."  
  - a. The Gospel of John uses the word πιστεύω 100 times
  - b. This is the point of his Gospel  
**John 20:31-21:1 NAU** - "these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."
2. John was a faithful witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The confidence that every faithful witness has is that when we witness Christ so that men might believe we will find those who will believe.
3. Believing or trusting in Jesus demands receiving Him as Lord and King. This is why John's preaching recorded in Matthew was a message commanding all to repent  
**Matthew 3:1-2 NAU** - "Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."  
  - a. It was not a flattering message but one that called upon his hearers to look within and turn from their wicked ways. In order to escape punishment and receive the blessings of the King it was necessary for men to undergo a radical change.
  - b. John the Baptist came preparing the way for the King. His message was submit to this King or be consumed by His wrath.

### Conclusion:

1. I've pointed out many times that while not all of us are called as official heralds, as preachers, all of us are called to testify or bear witness.
2. Look later in this chapter for evidence of this.  
**John 1:34-37 NAU** - "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God." <sup>35</sup> Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup> and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" <sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.  
  
**John 1:40-45 NAU** - "One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup> He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah " (which translated means Christ). <sup>42</sup> He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas " (which is translated Peter). <sup>43</sup> The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."
3. Then the woman at the well in **Chapter 4**  
**John 4:28-29 NAU** - "So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, <sup>29</sup> "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?"  
**John 4:39 NAU** - "From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done."
4. And then there is us. We are witness of Jesus. We testify of the Light just as John.  
**John 1:7 NAU** - "He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him."
5. James Montgomery Boice wrote: "When Jesus Christ spoke to His disciples, saying, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last." it was evident that salvation consisted no so much in the fact that they had chosen Him but that He had chosen them and commissioned them and us to the task of telling others about Him. An acceptance of this task was, many believe, the single most important factor in the astounding outreach and expansion of the early Christian church. All Christians—small and great, rich and poor, slaves and freemen—made it their consuming mission to tell others about the Lord."