

THE WITNESS TO THE WORD

LESSONS FOR THIS SERIES —

1. John the Baptist's story shows how a person can understand and accept their role in the Kingdom and then fulfill it.
2. When someone looked at John the Baptist, they saw Jesus. What do people see when they look at me?

THE WITNESS TO THE LIGHT

"There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through Him all men might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light." - John 1:6-8

Who was John the Baptist?

"In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' ³This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: 'A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him.'"⁴ John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey." - Matthew 3:1-4

- After 400 years of silence, Israel has a new prophet. - Matthew 11:9
"...what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet."

- His message was "doomsday", but it was predicted.
- His ways were unusual, but he was extremely popular.
- He was the greatest man that had ever lived.

"I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist..." - Jesus, Matthew 11:11

- Some became followers of John the Baptist and missed Jesus.

"He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John." - Acts 18:25
"So Paul asked, 'Then what baptism did you receive?' 'John's baptism,' they replied. ⁴Paul said, 'John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.'" - Acts 19:3-4

- Contrast Between John and Jesus:

- John was a human; Jesus was both human and God.
- John was sent from God; Jesus was God.
- John testified to the Light; Jesus was the Light. (φωσ)

"John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light." - John 5:35

- John came to show people the light. *Why?*

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." - 2 Corinthians 4:4

THE REJECTION OF THE LIGHT

"The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. ¹¹ He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him." - John 1:9-11

- Jesus was the true light and mankind's only hope.
- Jesus had made the world, and His very creation rejected Him.
"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." - John 3:19
- Jesus came to His own, but they rejected Him. *Who is "His own"?*
"You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins." - Amos 3:2
"The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." - Isaiah 1:3

THE RECEIVING OF THE LIGHT

"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God — ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." - John 1:12,13

- If we believe and receive, God accepts us as His children.
 - You aren't God's child because of your lineage, because of your parents' plan for you, or because you were "unplanned".
 - You are only God's child when you are born of God, born again.

THE NATURE OF THE LIGHT

"The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John testifies concerning Him. He cries out, saying, 'This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.'" ¹⁶From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known." - John 1:14-18

- The Word (Jesus) became a human and lived among us.
- Yet, even while Jesus was in flesh, He was God!
 - John the Baptist knew and taught that Jesus was God. *A riddle!*
- Jesus' nature is glory, and this glory is grace and truth.
 - We all continue to receive that grace moment by moment.
 - Moses gave the O.T. law, but Jesus gave grace and truth.
 - You must choose one or the other.
"If by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace." - Romans 11:6

LET'S REVIEW:

John the Baptist came to present Jesus. Many people rejected, while some believed. Now we must decide how we will respond!

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