***The Glory of the Son: Full of Grace and Truth, John 1:1-18***

**John, the Humble Witness to the Light**

John 1:6-8 “There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.”

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 1:19-23 “This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” 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?” He said, “I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”

**John the Baptist**

**1. Sent from God, John 1:6**

**2. A witness about the Light, John 1:7-8**

* **He was not the Light, only a witness**

**3. Humbly exalting in the eternal nature of the Messiah, John 1:15**

* **Examples of John’s Humility:** 
  + **“He…has a higher rank than I”**
  + **“I am not even worthy to untie His shoes”**
  + **“He must increase and I must decrease”**
  + **“I am not the Christ, Elijah or a Prophet, …I am just a voice crying out”**
* **Examples of John’s Exaltation in Christ:**
  + **“He existed before me”**
  + **“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”**
  + **“I myself have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”**

**4. Fulfillment of Isaiah’s Messianic prophecy, John 1:19-23**

* **Elijah the Prophet:**
  + **Ways in which John was Elijah**
  + **Ways in which John was not Elijah**
* **Prophecy from Isaiah 40:1-9**

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**John, the Witness to the Light**

**Scripture Reading and Prayer**

* AWANA starts back this week!
* Prayer guide: Praying through the Great Texts of the Bible
* John appears on the scene after 400 years of prophetic silence in Israel
* Like Elijah and Elisha, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, John the Baptist has some strange habits, strange living conditions, strange diet and clothing choices
* Baptism and ancient Israel – proselytes, non-Jewish converts to Judaism would baptize themselves in order to show the washing away of their prior ways and entrance into the new faith of following the God of the Old Testament
* John comes with a message calling on Jews to be baptized, as if to say, shake off your false religion and humble yourselves before God the way a pagan or Gentile or Samaritan would and truly enter into the faith of God
* It is also different in that John is the one doing the baptizing
* Proselytes would baptize themselves as they came into the Jewish faith
* John was the one doing this baptizing
* And the baptizing initially marked a person publically as one prepared for the coming of the promised kingdom
* Today, we will look at the humility of John and John’s exaltation or praise of Christ
* Next week, we will take up the prophetic issues – the reference to Elijah and reference to Isaiah 40 and all that is implied by those references to John and Jesus
* **Read John 1:6-8, John 1:15, John 1:19-23 (Slides)**

**Introduction (Header – Slide 1)**

* John the Baptist appears in all four Gospels and his significance to the nation of Israel along with his significance as a forerunner of the coming Messiah is the major emphasis
* According to this Gospel, He has been sent from God
* John’s Gospel does not include the miraculous announcement of John’s birth nor the interaction between Mary – the mother of Jesus and Elizabeth as described in Luke chapter 1
* John introduces John the Baptist this way…

**John the Baptist**

**1. Sent from God, John 1:6**

* **Read John 1:6 (Slide 2)**
* God sent John, but sent him for what purpose?

**2. A witness about the Light**

* **Read John 1:7-8 (Slide 3)**
* His task, to be a witness – to bear witness to the reality of Jesus Christ as the Son of God sent from His Heavenly Father

**3a. The humility of John**

* Are there some issues present in the early church concerning John the Baptist?
* This may be one reason the author of the prologue interrupts the Christological passage with the introduction of John as a contrasting example
* There are a few historical references to some groups forming around the personality of John – elevating John to a very prominent position almost equal or even equal to Jesus
* It seems John’s early followers may have even struggled with this identity issue as John begins baptizing the questions from religious leaders “Are you the Christ?” “Are you Elijah?” “Are you a prophet?”
* Where would these types of question emerge if not for the speculation by individuals who had been baptized by John?
* Many theologians see an undercurrent of sectarian debate within and around the early church
* I will say after reading these verses this week, I can see that from this Gospel in the way the Apostle John writes
* Consider these comparisons between the two
* **Jesus: The Word, John: A Witness (Slide 4)**
* **Jesus: Was in the beginning, John: Came into being (Slide 5)**
* **Jesus: All things came into being by Him, John: Came into being (Slide 6)**
* **Jesus: The light, John: A lamp (Slide 7)**
* Jesus refers to John as a lamp in John 5:35 “He was the lamp that was burning and shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.
* **Read John 1:7-8 (Slide 8)**
* What did John confess? What was his testimony?
* Notice the humility of John in his testimony and then we will notice the exaltation of Jesus in John’s testimony
* **Read John 1:15 (Slide 9)**
* He who comes after me…
* Time reference to the chronological ministry – John started his ministry first but he doesn’t want anyone to confuse the order of events as a measure of preeminence
* John says, “I went first in public ministry, but He is greater”
* He has a higher rank than I have
* Consider the other humbling statements of John
* **Read John 1:20-21 (Slide 10)**
* **Read John 1:22-23 (Slide 11)**
* **Read John 1:26-27 (Slide 12)**
* **Read John 3:30 (Slide 13)**
* This humility, this humble response as all of Judea is coming out to be baptized by him, many asking and speculating about John’s role in God’s kingdom

**3b. The Exaltation of John in Christ**

* It is not enough to be humble, it is not enough to be self-effacing
* Humility is a critical virtue for humanity
* Without humility no one will see God or know God
* Self-promotion, self-seeking, seeking for glory, honor, recognition wrecks our relationship with God
* But it is not enough to be humble, to think lowly of ourselves
* Godly humility comes with exaltation in God through His Son
* Even John, without the full knowledge of the death and resurrection of Jesus, knew this
* **Read John 1:15 (Slide 14)**
* **Read John 1:29-30 (Slide 15)**
* **Read John 1:33-34 (Slide 16)**
* **Read John 3:31 (Slide 17)**

Conclusion: This is an issue for everlasting joy – humility of self along with exaltation of God through His Son Jesus Christ results in joy

* **Read John 3:29 (Slide 18)**

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