

John the Baptizer - vs' 6, 7, 15, 23, 26, 27.

John was born 6 months before Jesus of Zachariah and Elizabeth (Mary's sister). The birth and its announcement was no less than divine intervention by the Lord. The couple were old and had despaired of being childless when an angel of the Lord announced to Zachariah that they were going to have a child and that child would be no less than the fulfillment of Malachi's predicted coming of Elijah - long awaited return of all of Israel. He was the last of the Old Testament prophets and some bible students say the first of the New Testament. He certainly was the predicted forerunner of Isaiah 40:1-3:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. [2] Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. [3] 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."

John the Apostle - vs' 1 - 5; 9 - 14; 16 - 18.

John was today's equivalent of a middle-class self-employed business man. He enjoyed some status in his environs, Bethsaida. When he responded to the call to discipleship he left his father Zebedee *and hired servants* at the ship.¹ There are other passages that point to his relative personal wealth including reference to his mother Salome who assisted in Jesus' ministry² - he had a home where he took Mary, Jesus' mother after His death.³ He was also at least acquainted with Caiaphas, the high priest.⁴

Andrew, Peter's brother - 40, 41.

Andrew was Peter's brother and friend of Philip. He was never mentioned after the reference found in Acts 1:13 but his evangelistic ministry toward Philip was indeed no small thing.

Philip - 45.

Not to be confused with Philip the evangelist in Acts - never mentioned after Acts 1:13.

Nathaniel - 49.

Praised by Jesus for his integrity - indeed Nathanael was an Old Testament believer. He was also known as Bartholomew.

I would like to approach the rest of chapter 1 as though we were looking at several witnesses regarding the Lord Jesus Christ. I will be presenting the Gospel of John as a presentation of the Person of Jesus Christ. Chapter 1 sets the tone of the rest of the Gospel.

¹ Mark 1:20.

² Cf. Matt 27:56 with Mark 15:40, UNGER'S BIBLE DICTIONARY, page 955.

³ Mark 1:20; Luke 8:3; John 19:27.

⁴ John 18:15.

Their Witness.

The witness of John the apostle. We have already covered some of this material but let's review it anyway. The Logos was a title given to Jesus. Most have this assignment as coming from John in reference to the past, even eternity past, but take a look at Rev. 19:11-13:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. [12] His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. [13] And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

Here we have the victorious "Word of God" taking vengeance against all evil. The assignment of Logos - is every revelation of God to man including here the final say that God has to man. It is certainly the antitheses of Philo's representation - even to the point that the Word of God is going to hold all men accountable to their evil *and their rejection of salvation and light that was offered to them*. John also introduces the Creator role of Jesus Christ. We have already covered the first reference to Jesus Christ's role as creator in verse 3 but there is another important reference to be found in this chapter:

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. John 1:10.

The greatest of tragedies is the care with which Jesus Christ left His imprint in creation and the utter disregard that man, in his sinful pursuits has attempted to erase that imprint. Paul says of this censorship:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; [19] Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. [20] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: [21] Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Romans 1:18-21.

The Psalmist says that:

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." (Psalm 19:1;) "The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory." (Psalm 97:6).

The ultimate revelation of the Logos to the world (make that mankind) was His incarnation - that's what this tenth verse is talking about. Jesus presented Himself to the world and the world - man - rejected His presentation. When verse 10 says the world *"...knew him not..."* the action of not knowing is constative aorist - that is, take all the presentations, revelation of the Logos - as the revealer of God - take all these presentations - roll them all into one ball and on every occasion the world (man) knew him not! I know this seems to be a contradiction of verse 11. But we have to understand the true nature of

man. Paul describes man's condition / action in this way:

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. [12] They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Romans 3:11-12.

Were it not the active convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit, none of us would have realized the truth of John 1:11.

The witness of John the Baptizer. John had a very important ministry. First, as we covered last week, he was to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. Not only that but as we see this week - there is another witness that John introduced that did fly in the face of the popular concept of the Messiah - that of Jesus Christ being the Lamb of God:

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 1:29.

This was not the popular image that the people had of the coming Messiah - a point missed entirely of the Christ but certainly predicted by the prophets of old. Isaiah for example:

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. Isaiah 53:7.

The Jewish people were not ignorant of the scriptures - they were just selective in their formation of who the coming Messiah was to be. Isaiah certainly did predict the atoning work that Jesus Christ was to do as the coming, victorious "Arm of the Lord" and, indeed, He was prophesied to be great (no small description of the coming Messiah).⁵ But they chose to miss entirely the atoning work that Jesus Christ had to complete before He would be the victorious Messiah who would divide up the booty - an image of a victorious general who claimed the riches of the vanquished.

This same Lamb is portrayed in Revelation as victorious even though having been slain. This paradox has been covered in a previous lesson.⁶ Indeed, the whole idea of the Lamb of God entirely escaped the apostate Jewish religion of the day. To their narrow view - how could Jesus be slain as a sacrificial lamb and at the same time be the victorious conqueror that they were looking for.

The Witness of the Disciples.

Andrew and Philip were noted for their early evangelistic efforts in introducing Jesus to others. Andrew referred to Jesus as the Messiah. Philip said to Nathaniel that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets:

⁵ "Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors." Isaiah 53:12 (NASB).

⁶ <http://www.w1vtp.com/victory.htm> See especially Rev 5:6.

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." John 1:45.

There must have been a lot of talking going on as the result of John the baptizer's ministry. Let us not forget that we have only a snapshot of John's ministry on the Gospels. He didn't just stand on the corner with a sign and call everyone a sinner and that they were going to hell - although that certainly hit the mark. No. He was also busy with his ministry to the everyday life of the Jews of the day and certainly preached on the coming Messiah and Lamb of God. These early disciples must of picked up on this - indeed, one bible student said of Philip that he was probably a disciple of John.⁷

The Witness of the Godhead.

I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' [34] I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." John 1:33-34.

A most curious verse, indeed. This is John the baptizer speaking. He would not have known that Jesus, his cousin was the coming Christ except for the "...one who sent..." John to baptize told him that the man whom he was to see the Holy Spirit descending upon was the object of his witnessing ministry. That "one" was non other than God the Father - who apparently spoke to John just as the prophets of old were spoken to. The result was that John was able to make the amazing statement that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

"and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'" Luke 3:22;

"Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him." John 1:32.

This was certainly the testimony of the Godhead declaring Jesus Christ as the Son of God and that the Father was very pleased with His Son.

Jesus own testimony of Himself.

Interesting that when He spoke of Himself He completely identified Himself with man:

Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. [51] And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. John 1:50-51.

The writer of Hebrews stated it succinctly:

And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. [14] Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of

⁷ Holman New Testament Commentary, Kenneth O. Gangel.

death, that is, the devil; Hebrews 2:13-14. In the end, Jesus Christ, the Lord of Lords, has become flesh and blood so that He could be our Lord, Savior and friend.