



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

JOHN 1:15-28

LESSON: THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN—December 6, 2020

INTRODUCTION:

John the apostle writes Jesus as...

- The *Living Word* (1:1-5); • The *Light of the World* (1:6-8); • The *Light of Men* (1:9-13);
- The Word Made Flesh (1:14-18); • The Messiah, The Lord (1:19-28); • The *Lamb of God, The Son of God* (1:29-34); • The *Messiah, The Christ* (1:35-42); • The *One Prophesized* (1:43-45);
- The *Son of God, The King of Israel* (1:46-49); • The *Son of Man, God's Mediator* (1:50-51).

This epistle writing concerns John the Baptist who came to bear witness concerning the Light! *Jesus was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* The true God showed up and many didn't know or receive Him! Not everyone rejected Christ; many did, but it was only a few received Him. So, When a person receives Christ into his life (as LORD), Christ gives that person the power and right to become something he is not—a child of God or sons of God *even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* You see, we must be born of His Spirit to be sons of God. If we are never reborn of the Spirit, then we remain flesh; and flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God **(1:6-13).**

And the Word was made flesh. He became "**Incarnate**"—a deity or spirit embodied in flesh; in human form, fleshly, mortal, bodily form (God embodied in flesh). The "**Word**" is Jesus Christ, took on the form of flesh and dwelt here on this earth with us. *And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth* — God's glory was seen. John said we beheld, looked at Him; His presence, essence; His splendor and majesty; His Divine power. The essence of Jesus' presence as of the only Incarnate; only begotten Son of the Father was full of grace and truth. He brings in Him the embodiment (the incarnation) of grace (*the gift of God's mercy that saves sinners*) and truth (*the Son of God who saves sinners*). All was in Jesus; in His person and being, character, and behavior **(1:14).**

LESSON: I. JOHN'S WITNESS ABOUT JESUS JOHN 1:15-18

1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. Witness—a person who sees an event, typically a crime or accident, take place. John the Baptist had told the people that the Messiah was coming. This was his calling. John is trying to get them to see who he talked about earlier (1:7) when he says that "he was to bear witness of the Light, that all men through Him might be saved." This is who I spoke of, meaning the Light; this is the Messiah he talked about. "This is the One I've been leading you to. He is much greater than me. I came first. But he existed before I was born! This is He that came after me, but He's the One preferred before me." This means Jesus' time and existence was before John, but He had a special time to come after John. John's role was to be the "Forerunner" before Jesus and Jesus would come afterwards. However, He already existed in eternity, both in time and importance before John.

Time:

- Christ was first in time—existed in the beginning.

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PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

Importance:

Christ was first in importance—in superiority, Being, Person; His very name is the First and the Last; Alpha and Omega; the Beginning and the End. Jesus was mightier, more important in being, rank and deity.

All things take place in God's timing, even the witness of the Messiah's coming! This wasn't something he chose to do, but this was something chosen for him. This was his calling; his assignment!

GALATIANS 4:4 BUT WHEN THE FULNESS OF THE TIME WAS COME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON, MADE OF A WOMAN, MADE UNDER THE LAW, 5 TO REDEEM THEM THAT WERE UNDER THE LAW, THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION OF SONS. 6 AND BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, GOD HATH SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON INTO YOUR HEARTS, CRYING, ABBA, FATHER. Then we can say....

1:16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. "Fullness" means the sum total or totality. This shows us that the plan of God had already been at work. This plan was before the heavens and the earth were created. God's plan to reconcile humanity was already in place. God's ways are not our ways. There was a timing when John saw the Messiah. There was a timing when Jesus came to be baptized by John. There was a timing for Grace. This Grace was free to us. It wasn't something we deserved; nothing we had to work for or was entitled to. When the first Adam failed God had a plan. He sent the second Adam.

1 CORINTHIAN 15:45 says AND SO IT IS WRITTEN, THE FIRST MAN ADAM WAS MADE A LIVING SOUL; THE LAST ADAM WAS MADE A QUICKENING SPIRIT. God always has a plan and He's always in control.

1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. It was God who gave the Law to Moses, but it's by Jesus Christ that grace and truth came. Why the Law? We the people don't know how to behave. They needed instruction, direction, correction, moral standards. They needed to put God first. The Law of Moses was temporary. Jesus was its fulfillment. He did not come to replace the Law, but to make it complete. Everything God made is good! All our needs are now met in Jesus, not in the offering and sacrifices of animals. We have stepped up to a new level of getting to God. It was God's plan. He has given us GRACE, the undeserved favor of God AND TRUTH revealed unto us by His Spirit. This all came by Jesus Christ.

1:18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. Even though no man had seen God at any time, God had declared Him to come. The Messiah had already been declared by prophets and in the written Word, but God revealed the only begotten Son who was in the bosom of the Father to John at a particular time. John only knew that a man would come after him, but existed before him to fulfill God's plan. He only knew he had to do what God instructed him to do. He had to make Jesus known to Israel. He prepared the way for them to meet their Messiah as He baptized the people with water (1:31). The Jews were patiently waiting for His coming.

II. JOHN'S CLARIFICATION ABOUT HIMSELF JOHN 1:19-23

1:19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? — Clarification—to give a clearer interpretation. An explanation made clear. This is the record, the witness, the testimony, the truth of John. The people thought a lot of him caused they were listening. They heard everything John was giving witness concerning the Messiah, but the Jews needed clarification; a clearer interpretation, so they send priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask a

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

question of John. Now, John was not your particular well-dressed man giving a speech or lecture in the halls of temple. No, he was one crying out in the desert wearing clothes made from camels' hair and eating locust and wild honey. The Pharisees didn't quite believe he was telling the truth. They asked, "Who are you?" They needed clarification or they just wanted to cause trouble.

1:20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. When they asked "*who are you*", John never said who he was. He confessed and denied nothing. He only gave one single confession, "*I am not the Christ!*" The word "*Christ*" and "*Messiah*" are the same word. "*Messiah*" is the Hebrew word and "*Christ*" is the Greek word. Both words refer to the same person and mean the same thing: "*The Anointed One.*" Many arose claiming to be the Messiah and led the gullible followers into rebellion against the Roman state. John flatly said that he was not the Christ! He knew who he was and they weren't gonna make him say otherwise.

1:21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. This was an unending interrogation. They continued to question him by asking, "*What then are you Elias?*" John flatly said I am not. Another question; "*Are you that prophet?*" And John answered No!

- John is not the Messiah.
- John is not Elias, which is the Greek way of writing Elijah. Elijah was expected to precede the Messiah, that is, return from the dead to proclaim the coming of the Messiah (Malachi 4:5). Jesus did later identify John with Elijah (Mark 9:11), however, what Jesus meant was that John was Elijah in spirit, not in person; he ministered in the spirit of Elijah.
- John is not "*that prophet*." This may refer to Christ in which he had already answered no. or "*that prophet*" may be either Jeremiah or an older prophet.

1:22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?— The interrogation got so rough till they were frustrated themselves in asking these questions. They blurted out "*Who are you—Give us an answer so we can give it to the ones who sent us—What do you have to say for yourself?*" The Pharisees had missed the point. They wanted to know who John was, and John wanted them to know who Jesus was.

1:23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. John answers with the words of Isaiah 40:3. He was simply a voice to make straight the paths or prepare the way of the Lord. He clarifies to them as to who he was.

III. JOHN'S EXPLANATION ABOUT BAPTIZING JOHN 1:24-28

1:24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. Explanation— a statement or account that makes something clear. They had not given up. These Jewish leaders that had sent the priests and Levites were of the Pharisees. They were apart of the Sanhedrin Council—a court of religious leaders in charge of the nation's spiritual welfare. Many of them outwardly obeyed God's laws to look pious, while inwardly their hearts were filled with pride and greed, entitlement and ignorance. The Pharisees thought that their own oral traditions were just as important as God's inspired Word.

1:25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?— The last question: **Why are you baptizing if you aren't the Christ, or**

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE



Elijah of the Pitwms that prophet? The Pharisees are now shocked and have a question about John's baptizing. You see John was baptizing Jews. The sect of Judaism (the Jewish religion) practiced baptism for purification, but normally only non-Jews (Gentiles) were baptized when they converted to Judaism. So, why was he baptizing God's chosen people? It was a shocking practice for the Pharisees to see or hear about a baptism for the remission of sins meaning when a person wanted God to forgive his sins, the person made the decision to repent and turn from his sins and change his life. John then immediately baptized them, thereby proclaiming that the person became a follower of the Messiah after hearing John preach and they believed.

ROMANS 10:14 says HOW, THEN, CAN THEY CALL ON THE ONE THEY HAVE NOT BELIEVED IN? AND HOW CAN THEY BELIEVE IN THE ONE OF WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD? AND HOW CAN THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER? 17 SO THEN FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.

1:26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;— John lets the Pharisees know that he baptized with water which was a symbolic act of repentance. But he also says there is one among you whom they know not that stands and will fully forgive sins, a role only the Son of God—the Messiah could fill. What John was doing was only a sign of what Christ will do with the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8).

1:27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. Referring back to verse 15, John says again that He (Jesus, the Messiah) is the One who comes after him (John), but is really before me (John) that even His (Jesus, the Messiah's) shoe latch John is not worthy to unloose.

1:28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. John was ministering in Bethabara beyond Jordan which meant that it was a great distance from Jerusalem in which he was baptizing. He faithfully witnessed and ministered in that place.

SUMMARY:

John the Baptist is bearing witness and crying out in the wilderness to the crowd. This was something he did not choose to do, but God chose. This was his calling. To the people he says that this is the One he spoke earlier about, meaning *"The Light."* *"He came after me, but He's the One preferred before me, for He was before me. And of His fullness we have all received grace upon grace, for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared him."* God declared and revealed Himself to man in the form of Jesus and He dwelt among us **(1:15-18)**.

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

¹The Sanhedrin is alarmed at the ministry of John the Baptist, so they send a delegation of theologians to question him. Their first question was, *"Who art thou?"* His answer was short and simple; *"I am not the Christ."* Then they asked him; *"Art thou Elias (Elijah)?"* The Prophet Elijah was expected because of Deuteronomy 18:15. John stated that he was not any of the expected prophetic figures. He explained, however that his ministry was described in the Old Testament, (Isaiah 40:3) and that he was a fulfillment of that prophecy. The Pharisees then asked, *"Who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?"* John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah: *"I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, Clear the way for the Lord's coming!"* (NLT) **(1:19-23)**.

The priests and Levites were sent by the Pharisees. And it is evident that this investigating committee is also very concerned about all the people John is baptizing so they ask *"Why baptizest thou then?"* John explains that his baptism was in water, but Jesus would come and baptize with a Spiritual baptism. What he was doing is only a sign of what Christ will do with the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8). John told them, *"There is someone in our presence that I'm not even worthy to be His slave and untie the straps of His sandal"* This took place in Bethabara, an area east of the Jordan River near where John was baptizing. *"Bethabara"* and *"Bethany"* are names for the same place **(1:24-28)**.

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/john-was-asked-why-baptize/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>