

John's Testimony of Christ: Part B

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[0 : 00] I want you to turn your Bible this morning to John chapter 1.

We are going to be studying the passage beginning in verse 29, John chapter 1 verse 29, and carrying a lobby. We have a collection of Gospels of John, and these Gospels put together by the, what league is that, Pastor? Do you remember? New Pocket Testament League. Anyway, an excellent little Gospel of John, and one of the things that we are encouraging all of you to do is prayerfully take one of those and then look for an opportunity where you can give it to someone in a personal way, not just kind of a drive-by shooting. You know, I threw a Gospel at you across the lobby or something like that, but make a connection and make a prayerful focus and give the person a Gospel of John and then follow up on it. And what I want to do is about a month or so from now, I'd like to kind of gather some of the stories, the little vignettes of how God has been using these Gospels in the lives of the people that you have been sharing them with. Instead of having recitations of various parts of the Gospel of John, we're going to share stories of how the Gospel of John, having given it to other people and encouraging them to focus and read that book, that's making it different in their lives. Well, let's look, if you will, at John chapter 1 and we begin in verse 29, and I'm going to read the passage just to set it in your thinking and in your mind and then ask that you join with me in prayer as we take this text to hand.

The next day, he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Heavenly Father, we are thankful for the undeserved blessing that we have of being your children, of having the Word of God in our hand and having the indwelling Spirit whose ministry includes helping us comprehend the Scriptures and helping us grow in our understanding of the glory and preeminence of Christ.

Christ. And so we, without apology and with confidence, ask that the Holy Spirit would work to give to us understanding and a growing affection for the Lord Jesus and that that understanding and growing affection would end up being an effective part of the witness that you have called us to be.

[3 : 20] And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, as we take the passage in hand and we are looking at the second part of the opening statement that is made after the prelude.

The prelude is the part where the Apostle basically introduces all of the book of John in kind of a broad outline fashion. And in verses 1 through 18, we have there all the different parts that the remainder of the book is going to cover.

Early in John's gospel in chapter 1, we were reminded of the fact that God sent John the Baptist in front of the Lord Jesus Christ and his ministry was, in essence, kind of as an announcer, as a person explaining the coming of the important individual, namely the Messiah, the one who would be the Savior of the world.

And we saw last week that one of the things that characterized John the Baptist's ministry was that he was faithful as a witness. One of the things that I trust was kind of stuck in your mind was this, is that John the Baptist in his ministry was all about Jesus, not about himself.

And I want you to understand that whenever we share our story, if we are sharing it from the perspective that John the Baptist engaged in sharing it, we're not the hero of our story.

[4 : 48] We are always pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the one and only Savior of the world and the one who I trust has made all the difference in your life.

With that as background, we see, first of all, as we saw actually, that the first part tells us that John was a faithful witness. Now, what we want to see in these verses is what John witnessed about. And if you want to know in advance or you want to make a note in your Bible so that you can kind of have these things firmly fixed in your mind and understand, one of the underlying purposes of preaching the Gospel of John is that it helps you to be more effective in what God's called us to be.

What have He called you to be? He's called you to be just like John the Baptist and a witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so if we're going to be effective as a witness, we need to understand that what John the Baptist does is model, model the characteristics of what should be said.

Number one, we find out that Jesus is the Lamb of God and He came to make sacrifice for our sins. Without question, when we share our testimony, front and center to our testimony is the fact that we had to come to the point of recognizing that we were sinners deserving the judgment of God and yet God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died in what?

[6:19] In our place. He died for my sins and He satisfied God's judgment against my sins. Jesus is the Lamb of God. Number two that we're going to see is that Jesus is the Savior.

The only one who can really save us is the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is not something that takes place because you grew up in a good home or you were a good person or you've done a lot of nice things and you've helped different situations.

You got a lot of... You're a good person. That's not what gets us to heaven. Salvation is only of the Lord Jesus Christ and He is the Savior of the world. Third, we are going to be reminded of the fact, and listen to this carefully, that Jesus is the Son of God and in making that statement, we are affirming the glory and the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of Lord, King of Kings, the one who we will enjoy and adore and worship forever.

And as you think about these things, I want you to push these things together and have them clearly in your mind, the Lamb, the Savior, and the Sovereign. Now with that in mind, I want you to pick up, if you will, and see first of all, there in verse 29, that Jesus is sin's sacrifice.

Jesus coming towards Him, John the Baptist says, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The very next day after John the Baptist had that delegation come from Jerusalem and the delegation said, all right, all right, we want to know who you are and what you're doing.

[7:54] I mean, after all, you don't have a degree from us here in Jerusalem. What is going on? And they said, are you the Messiah? Well, no, I'm not.

Are you that prophet? Are you Elijah? And in each case, John the Baptist said, no, I'm not. No, I'm not. And he said, in very, very simple terms, he says, I want you to understand all I am is somebody who's kind of walking in front, well in front of the king.

I'm a little bit like a road worker who is out there kind of saying to people, hey, make the road clear because the king is coming. He'll be here soon.

The very next day after making this very humble statement about who he was, John the Baptist sees Jesus coming and he makes this unbelievable statement.

There in verse 29, he says, look, look, and I want you to understand that the way in which the text frames it is that John the Baptist, here he was going about his normal business, and he kind of looks up and he says, whoa, there he is, that's him.

[9:03] And I trust that one of the characteristics of your testimony, and we're always engaged in testifying, do you realize that? Every day, every place we are, we are either being a good testimony or a bad testimony.

And being a good testimony means drawing attention to the Lord Jesus Christ and that's exactly what John the Baptist does. He says, behold, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

In an instant, John's message changed from get ready, he's coming, to here he is. This is the one. And I want you to remember that up to this point, John's preaching had exposed sin.

That's what he'd been doing. Make no mistake about it, as John the Baptist preached, people were convicted of the things that were going on in their lives that were wrong. They were convicted of the darkness of their life.

They were convicted of the ugliness and the shame and the horror of what they really were inside. And John the Baptist, as a result of his preaching, he had many, many people come and say, I need to be baptized.

[10:12] That baptism was not a baptism that had anything to do with salvation. It was just a baptism that was a public recognition of the need of their soul for a redeemer.

And so here it is, in the midst of this process of baptizing people, that John the Baptist stands up and he says, Jesus is God's Lamb who will be sacrificed for your sin.

Make no mistake about it. Jesus did not die just for a short list of certain kinds of sins. We have a tendency, when we think about sin, to think in terms of sins that other people do that are pretty bad.

I mean, it's a nice thing and I hope it's true that none of us sitting in here have done the filthy five or the nasty nine. You know, we're not, we don't do those things, you know, and we have an idea that, well, there are some really bad sins and, yeah, those are things that Jesus had to die for, but the rest of them, you know, they're all kind of okay.

No. Very interesting that it says here, Jesus came to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, not sins, sin.

[11 : 24] Talking about all of it, the disease, not just some of the symptoms. And so, as we look at the issue of what the Bible has to say, we recognize the Bible is very, very clear about what sin is.

I want you to think with me just for a moment to Romans chapter 6, verse 23. Take a look at it if you will. Romans, you're there in John, so turn ahead just for a second. And incidentally, as we are doing this, let me explain again.

One of the purposes of studying the book of John is that the believer would be edified. Do you know what that means? That we as believers would grow in our affection for the Lord Jesus.

Another purpose is that we would be encouraged in our evangelism. And so, as we study John's gospel, there should be, oh, man, that's how to do it.

That's what he wants me to do. And so, we're dealing with Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Romans chapter 6, verse 23, for the wages of sin is death.

[12 : 28] What's the penalty for sin? It's death. How bad is sin? It is incredibly horrible. And it's amazing that we sometimes kind of think of sin as being just something normal and natural and, well, you know, God ought to overlook it.

But I want you to understand the holiness of God cannot overlook sin without compromising his justice and his holiness. And as we see here in this passage, it tells us that sin, which is a rebellion against the sovereign and holy God, brings death.

As I was thinking earlier this week about this subject of sin and the consequences it brings, I was kind of struck by actually reading a little post on Facebook by one of the individuals that I've known for many, many years, used to be a pastor, no longer involved in ministry, and he was making a comment about the fact that hell is just something that angry people believe in.

And I thought to myself as I read through his post and the notes attached to it, I thought, you know, sadly enough, to make that kind of statement indicts Jesus as well. Do you understand that Jesus was the one that talked the most about hell?

And the reason Jesus came into the world was to keep people from going to hell by paying the penalty for their sin. And this person was talking about how can sin be so bad?

[13 : 51] Well, I want you to understand, if what you are doing is comparing sin and its effect upon us as sinners, it's not quite as significant as comparing the offense that sin is to the holiness of God.

Sin is supremely offensive to God. It is unbelievably offensive. And so, here is Jesus willing to take the penalty for us and to die in our place.

And it says, wages of sin or death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ, our Lord. For another, as we see there, God sent his son to make full payment for our sins.

When it says, the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, it's not just giving all the details of the cross, but it's speaking of it in kind of generalized terms. How is it that God could give us the gift of salvation?

It is not by overlooking our sin. His judgment and his holiness could not do that. It is because he was willing to sacrifice his son for our sins that he is able to give to us the gift of salvation.

[15 : 05] So, what Romans chapter 6 verse 23 summarizes, John introduced to the stunning Jewish audience that was listening to him. The theme of God providing a substitute for our sin actually flows throughout the Old Testament.

It is not a new surprise. Now, I have to tell you, I have no doubt that when John the Baptist made that statement, behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, it must have been stunning to his audience.

But think with me about the theme and you can go back to the book of Genesis and remember that when sin entered the world through the sin of Adam that God provided a clothing and a covering for the nakedness that sin exposed in men's lives and he did that with the skin of animals.

Later on, we find that when God called to Abraham and said, I want you to sacrifice your only son, Abraham, as he was taking his son up the mountain, he said, God will provide a lamb and God provided the ram caught in the thicket.

and then when Israel in the nation of Egypt was enduring the hardship that they were going through and God said to them, on this night I am going to bring you out and the thing that you are to do is to sacrifice a Passover lamb and you are to put the blood of that lamb on the lintel and in the doorposts and when I see the blood I will pass over that place.

[16 : 38] The Old Testament Jew understood that that lamb died as a substitute for them and then week after week time after time when the Old Testament saint had to deal with sin in a personal way they had to sacrifice a lamb.

They had to sacrifice a lamb. One of the things that I did last week was I actually went to YouTube and I watched the sacrifice of lambs on YouTube. I am not suggesting it is for weak of heart to do it but it is pretty graphic.

Do you follow that? I mean how many of you have ever seen a lamb killed by hand? Anybody in here? It is a sobering process to observe and so when John the Baptist said I will explain it to you okay yes Ethan come up here please you are going come on come on buddy he has been perpetually terrified of me I did okay come on Noah come sacrificial Noah here is what happened in the Old Testament the person who was confessing his sins put his hand on that lamb and admitted that he had committed sin and then a knife was taken and someone held the arms and the legs of that lamb hold your hands like that right there in front okay and then they bent the neck to the side and they drew the knife across the artery do you know what was happened next blood would squirt out and that lamb would shake and shake and shake and try to release itself from the bind and then it bled out and died thank you

Noah and John the Baptist says behold the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world do you know what he was saying God has provided someone to die in your place I want you to understand that when John the Baptist announced that morning behold the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world he was announcing this fact that God sent his son to die in your place there's a second piece that we need to understand and it's a little complicated here but bear with me as we work our way through it Jesus is our savior we're dealing in John chapter one and we're looking now we finished 29 but we're now looking in verses 30 through 33 30 through 33 this is he of whom I said after me comes a man who ranks before me and so John the Baptist goes on now to point out that Jesus is also the savior of the world and he begins by pointing out in verse 30 the eternity of Christ he was before me he was before me and how was Jesus before John the Baptist well the fact of the matter is that he is God the son and eternal we're not talking about birth order here because we know for a fact that in the biological sense John the Baptist was actually born before Jesus but when he made that statement he was talking about the eternity of the Lord Jesus Christ and he understood that Jesus was and is the only individual who can actually save men's souls now we understood something last week that I want to remind you of that John's baptism and the baptism of [20 : 53] Jesus were essentially different both of them were spoken of as baptism but John's baptism was merely immersion in water and it had nothing to do with genuine salvation can a person be baptized immersed in water and not be saved and what's the answer absolutely over the years of being a pastor here I have baptized a number of individuals more than once and I do want you to know I go to lengths to not do that what I mean by that is that when a person comes and says I want to be baptized we work carefully to see to it that they have a clear testimony of their faith I came to conviction realizing my sin and understood that I needed Christ as a public testimony but there are individuals that having been baptized later on 5 10 15 20 years the burden of sin in their life brings them to the point of really crying out and in genuine salvation coming to know

Christ and subsequently be baptized again John's baptism was not a baptism that saved but one of the things that we find here is John bearing testimony to the supremacy of Christ and to the baptism of Christ now there in verse 31 I myself did not know him in other words I didn't have an idea who the actual Messiah would be but I came baptizing with water that he might be!

I was preparing the way verse 32 and John bore witness I saw the spirit descend from heaven like a dove and it remained on him in verse 33 I myself did not know him but he who sent me to baptize with water said he on whom you see the spirit descend and remain this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit now if you will think with me to when Jesus came to John to be baptized after John had baptized Jesus by immersion we know that two things or several things happened for one there was a voice from heaven does anybody remember what the voice said I like this part this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased and here's the other little part listen to him and we have the spirit

descend on Jesus and abide and as we understand in verse 33 this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit now one of the advantages that believers or listeners had in John the Baptist day is that they knew the Old Testament and so when they heard John the Baptist say this is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit guess what does anybody know where their mind probably went I want your mind to go there take time to turn to Ezekiel chapter 36 verse 24 through 27 turn to Ezekiel Ezekiel chapter 36 verse 24 through 27 I want you to understand something that salvation is not a decision just to try harder salvation is just not another set of rules to follow salvation is a work that God alone can do in the sin sick soul and as John the Baptist spoke of what Jesus would do he made it clear that Jesus would fulfill the promise that God made to Ezekiel in the Old Testament now listen to it verse 24 I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land there's a part of Ezekiel's prophetic utterance that has not been entirely fulfilled yet but verse 25 I will sprinkle!

[25 : 22] clean water on you you shall be clean from all your uncleanness and from your idols and I will clean you and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful!

to obey my rules how tells us salvation is of the Lord salvation is when God works to first of all convict us of our sin and bring us to redemption and glory and he puts his spirit within us and what does his spirit help us do?

His spirit helps us be different than we once were as a sidebar someone moved the pastor's Kleenexes I can talk and get a Kleenex at the same time as a sidebar in Malachi and just taking a second to explain to you the ministry of the Holy Spirit particularly in the Old Testament in the Old Testament the spirit did not abide in general on all believers there were individuals who were enabled by the spirit for specific tasks!

God put his spirit on certain individuals to help with all the details there were times when the Holy Spirit would come on a person and he would prophesy if you want to know how important God thinks marriage is in Malachi it speaks about the fact that God in respect to the issue of marriage gives to a husband and wife a portion of his spirit that's a very interesting statement God cares so much for the outcome of a marriage that he gives you the enabling in the Old Testament he gave the enabling to the Old Testament saying of the Spirit of God to help them with that how many of you have discovered that actually an effective and God honoring marriage is not something you can pull off by yourself you need the Holy Spirit right and as you look at this passage and you're dealing with what it says here is

John the Baptist saying Jesus is the one who fulfills the prophetic utterance of Ezekiel in relationship to the fact that there will come someone who will put his spirit on you I want you to know only Jesus can truly change a sinner's heart and bless with the indwelling spirit and it follows then that those who are genuinely changed or who are genuinely saved and I want you to track this very carefully because I think I have to tell you Satan is a specialist at deception those who are genuinely saved have the spirit within them and the spirit works to help them grow and become more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ and if you are a person who does truly know the Lord Jesus then you should be able to see the evidence of the spirit at work in you do you follow what [29 : 08] I'm saying how many nod your head if you get the memo okay those who are genuinely saved have the spirit within them that's what salvation brings and the Holy Spirit helps us be different than we were prior to our salvation and all God's people said I get that and I'm a testimony of that and so we look here in John chapter 1 and the point that John makes is that Jesus who is the lamb is also the savior and he is the one who changes the sinner's heart and gives them the indwelling spirit and I want you to understand that with the indwelling spirit life change and progressive sanctification are undeniable do do we all change at the same pace and the answer is no do we all change as fast as we like to and the answer is no but if you do not see the evidence of progressive sanctification and the spirit of

God helping you grow and change then you probably ought to go back and double check the birth certificate because if he is not present and he is not working there is a problem that is bigger than you think let's come to the last thing Jesus is supreme and sovereign and I have seen and bore! witness that this is the Son of God this little passage beginning in verse 29 and carrying through to 34 is profound in declaring to us the essential pieces of the truth about who the Lord Jesus is he is our substitute he died for my sins he died for yours he is the savior and he is the only one who can

really bring salvation to the broken and the dead heart and he is the supreme sovereign lord of all the universe that little statement and I'm not going to take a great deal of time this morning to kind of break it down for you but understand that in essence John the Baptist in this little statement here in verse 34 announces the deity of Christ go back if you would just for a moment to verses 1 2 and 3 in the beginning was the word and the word was with

God and the word was God he was in the beginning with God all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made and then in verse 14 and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory what glory the glory of the son of God glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth Jesus was born of a virgin 100% man and as a result of his entire humanity he was able to die for my sins and because he was sinless he could pay for my sins do you understand that one sinner can pay for one sinner's sins by spending eternity in hell because of the immensity and the infinite nature of sin one sinner who rejects the work of

Christ will spend eternity in hell and beloved that reality ought to give us a sober and profound desire to see people delivered from the flames and from the judgment to come one sinner can pay for one sinner's sins for all of eternity one sinless man could pay for one sinner's sins by substitution but one sinless man who is absolutely God and also infinite can pay for all the sin of the world only the son of God fully God Jesus in his infinite person can satisfy the infinite burden of all the sin of the world could Jesus die for my sins and die for Mike's sins and die for Jared's sins and die for [33 : 53] Andrew's sins and die for Matthias yes because he is all man and all God and beloved this morning as we listen to the passage and we listen to what John the gospel tells us here we recognize that that John wants us to come to grips with the reality of the fact that number one God sent his son to die to pay the penalty for our sins he is the lamb of God and aren't you glad this morning you who know the Lord Jesus Christ that he died in your place I got to tell you something you should never stop appreciating that gift when I go to sleep at night you know the story I always tell my wife that I love her but I can die at night I don't care because when I wake up guess where

I will be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and why will I be there because Jesus paid the penalty for my sins and as it says in Romans chapter 8 verse 1 there is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus I want you to think with me as we close of the threat of sacrifice that I referred to that runs from Genesis all the way through to Revelation the lamb the lamb the lamb the lamb I want you to understand that in the Old Testament no Old Testament saint was ever given the idea that that actual physical lamb was an entire satisfaction for sin that Old Testament saint understood that the day would come when God would provide a perfect sacrifice and if you want to kind of imagine in your heart just for a moment just how conflicting that thought must have been think with me of

Isaiah when he had the revelation of God of Christ the pre-incarnate Christ in Isaiah chapter 6 I beheld the Lord of glory high and lifted up full of all the glory of heaven and it says holy holy holy holy is the Lord the beauty of the holiness of Christ and then he sees in Isaiah 53 Lord Lord Jesus broken for our sins sacrificed in our place as the perfect substitute for our sins and why would God send his son to die for us do you have an answer I don't but I know he did and I will never get over saying thank you that he willingly died in my place and

I will never get over telling other people the sweetness of the fact that God sent his son into the world to die for sinners that sinners may have complete forgiveness for all of their sins so how liberating is this truth in your present thinking do you follow what I mean how central is the Lamb of God the Savior and the sovereign in your thinking beloved here's the way it plays out and evidences itself number one by a growing affection for the Lord Jesus Christ that is infectious to other people make sense things we're happy about and things we enjoy and think about freely and thankfully are things that we express without being cajoled or pressured to do it you need to go out there and witness how does that help you

I've never seen it change a person you can give people a temporary guilt trip but it's only good for as long as they can hear your voice but when your heart is touched by the glory of the forgiveness of Christ and the supremacy of his sacrifice for you and the reality of his love for you it ends up being something that you talk about without being prodded and so this morning it is my prayer it has been through this week that this group of people who sit here this morning would be affected by the truth of the scriptures and the impact of the work of the Holy Spirit that the truth that he is our lamb and substitute that the truth that he is our savior and the one who redeemed us and the truth that he

is the

[39 : 30] Lord of Lord and King of Kings would be the thing that controls our life so that the unbelieving world as it says in scripture would ask us a reason for the hope that lies within us let's close in prayer