

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 1-30-11 AM NOTES
"THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF JESUS"
JOHN 1:19-34
#5 in Series, "Verse by verse though John"

Mark 1:12-13 (NKJV) ¹²Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. ¹³And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him."

"From out of the wilderness had come striding a spiritual giant of a man. His dress, diet, deportment, and demands made his hearers think of Elijah. His voice thundered until the windows of conscience rattled in everyone's soul. His eyes flashed like lightning, seeming to read the secrets of everyone's heart. Multitudes heard about this new prophet and flocked to hear him. The religious establishment investigated him, disliked him, feared him, rejected him, and was denounced by him. Herod on his throne was afraid of him. John the Baptist was his name—the son of a priest, married to the daughter of a priest. His birth had been foretold. He had been raised strictly with a view to his becoming a priest. He had also been raised as a Nazarite, with a view to his becoming a prophet. There were already priests after the order of Aaron—enough and to spare. Few and far between were prophets after the order of Elijah. What Israel needed was not another priest. What Israel needed was a prophet. John, by birth, training, disposition, conviction, and choice was raised up by God to be that prophet, the last of a long, illustrious line."

—John Phillips

Matthew 11:11a (NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist."

I. The Testimony of John the Baptist (vv. 19-26, 28)

A. The Testimony of Who He Was Not (vv. 19-22)

Malachi 4:5 (NKJV) "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

2 Kings 1:7-8 (ESV) ⁷He said to them, 'What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?' ⁸They answered him, 'He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist.' And he said, 'It is Elijah the Tishbite.'"

Mark 1:6 (NKJV) "Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey."

Luke 1:17 (NKJV) "He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, '*to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,*' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Matthew 11:14 (NKJV) "And if you are willing to receive *it*, he is Elijah who is to come."

"What John was to the first advent, Elijah will be to the second advent. As there are two advents, so there are two heralds."
—Augustine

Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 (NKJV) ¹⁵The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear... ¹⁸I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him."

B. The Testimony of Who He Was (vv. 23-26, 28)

1. The One Who Prepares the Way (v. 23)

2. The One Who Baptizes (vv. 24-26, 28)

Ezekiel 36:25 (NKJV) "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols."

Zechariah 13:1 (NKJV) “In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.”

Matthew 3:6 (NKJV) “and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.”

II. The Presentation of Jesus Christ (vv. 27, 29-34)

A. The Lamb of God (v. 29)

“There before John stood the One whom all the sacrifices of Old Testament times had foreshadowed. It is exceedingly striking to observe the progressive order followed by God in the teaching of Scripture concerning ‘the lamb.’ First, in Genesis 4, we have the Lamb *typified* in the firstlings of the flock slain by Abel in sacrifice. Second, we have the Lamb *prophesied* in Genesis 22:8, where Abraham said to Isaac, ‘God will provide Himself a lamb.’ Third, in Exodus 12, we have the Lamb slain and its blood *applied*. Fourth, in Isaiah 53:7, we have the Lamb *personified*: here for the first time we learn that the Lamb would be a Man. Fifth, in John 1:29, we have the Lamb *identified*, learning *who* He was. Sixth, in Revelation 5, we have the Lamb *magnified* by the hosts of heaven. Seventh, in the last chapter of the Bible, we have the Lamb *glorified*, seated upon the eternal throne of God, Revelation 22:1. Once more; mark the orderly development in the *scope* of the sacrifices. In Genesis 4, sacrifice is offered for the *individual*—Abel. In Exodus 12, the sacrifice avails for the whole *household*. In Leviticus 16, on the annual Day of Atonement, the sacrifice was efficacious for the entire *nation*. But here in John 1:29, it is ‘Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin *of the world*.’”

—Arthur Pink

*Redeemed—how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through His infinite mercy,
His child, and forever, I am.*

—Fanny Crosby (1882)

Isaiah 53:6-7 (NKJV) “⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.”

“Christ is a Savior. He did not come on earth to be a conqueror, or a philosopher, or a mere teacher of morality. He came to save sinners. He came to do that which man could never do for himself—to do that which money and learning can never obtain—to do that which is essential to man’s real happiness—He came to ‘take away sin.’”

—J. C. Ryle

Genesis 22:7b (NKJV) “...where *is* the lamb...”

B. The Superior One (vv. 27, 30)

C. The Revealed One (vv. 31-34)

Luke 3:22 (NKJV) “And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, ‘You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.’”

1 Corinthians 12:13a (NKJV) “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...”

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 1-30-11 AM
“THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF JESUS”
JOHN 1:19-34
#5 in Series, “Verse by Verse through John”

Having finished the prologue of John (V1-18) that dealt with the identity and the incarnation of Jesus Christ, we now move into the historical section of the Gospel. Using the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), let me summarize what has come before this text we are examining in the Gospel of John. Jesus had been baptized earlier by John. All three of the synoptic gospels deal with this important incident in Christ’s life. Mark then describes what happens to Jesus right after His baptism in **Mark 1:12-13 (NKJV)** “¹² Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. ¹³ And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.” Our text in John takes place as Jesus is returning from that time of victory over temptation by the devil that evidenced His sinlessness. The “John” in verse 19 is not the Apostle John who wrote the Gospel but John the Baptist. I really like John Phillip’s introduction of John the Baptist: “From out of the wilderness had come striding a spiritual giant of a man. His dress, diet, deportment, and demands made his hearers think of Elijah. His voice thundered until the windows of conscience rattled in everyone’s soul. His eyes flashed like lightning, seeming to read the secrets of everyone’s heart. Multitudes heard about this new prophet and flocked to hear him. The religious establishment investigated him, disliked him, feared him, rejected him, and was denounced by him. Herod on his throne was afraid of him. John the Baptist was his name – the son of a priest, married to the daughter of a priest. His birth had been foretold. He had been raised strictly with a view to his becoming a priest. He had also been raised as a Nazarite, with a view to his becoming a prophet. There were already priests after the order of Aaron – enough and to spare. Few and far between were prophets after the order of Elijah. What Israel needed was not another priest. What Israel needed was a prophet. John, by birth, training, disposition, conviction, and choice was raised up by God to be that prophet, the last of a long, illustrious line” [John Phillips, “Exploring the Gospels – John”, Page 35]. Remember what Jesus Himself said about John in **Matthew 11:11a (NKJV)** "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist". We looked at John in the second message in this series, but today, we are going a little deeper.

I. The Testimony of John the Baptist (V19-28)

John had a more important task than any man in history ever had – he was to announce the arrival of the Messiah. This Messiah was the one foretold by God Himself in the Garden of Eden after sin had come into the world through Adam (Genesis 3:15); this was the one prophesied by the prophets from Moses through Malachi; this was the one that the sacrifices and ceremonies of the law pictured, and John had the task of preparing the way for Him and then saying “Here He is!” After John’s amazing entry into the world through parents who were past child bearing age, he seems to have disappeared into the wilderness. Now at age 29 or 30 he reappears and all the surrounding area is abuzz about this man and his message of “Repent, for the Kingdom is at hand.”

John’s reputation had reached all the way to Jerusalem, and the religious leaders were getting nervous. People claiming to be the Messiah were a common occurrence, and they wondered if that is what John was claiming. A delegation was sent from Jerusalem to check John out. The delegation we are told in verse 24 was sent by the Pharisees. The delegation was made up of priests and Levites. All priests were from the tribe of Levi (Levites), but not all Levites were priests. The ones called Levites here assisted the priests in the temple rituals and made up the temple police force. They were probably sent to protect the priests since the common people believed that John was a prophet from God and their opposition to John would not go over well with the common people. We learn a lot about John in how he answered their questions. Their questions followed two lines: First, they were asking about John’s identity, and second they were asking about what he was teaching. Let’s examine the testimony John gave.

A. A Testimony of Who He Was Not (V19-22)

John first set them at ease that he was not claiming to be the Messiah (“Christ” is the Greek word for “Messiah”). John was a very humble man. He wanted no attention to go to himself. John consistently refused to accept accolades that should go only to Christ. John’s reply was adamant. Verse 20 is a little awkward in the English, but he is giving a three-fold denial that he is the Messiah, the Christ. We could paraphrase verse 20, “I am telling you, I am telling you, I am telling you that I definitely am not the Christ!” His denial was vehement.

The second area of questioning dealt with whether John was claiming to be the prophet Elijah who had come back. This was not a random question. Their suspicions came from **Malachi 4:5 (NKJV)** “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” Based on this prophesy, the Jews believed Elijah himself would return in bodily form just before the Messiah. Even today, many Jewish people leave an empty chair at the table for Elijah when they celebrate their Passover Seder. There were some other reasons that some would have wondered if John was Elijah returned after Elijah did not die but was taken up to heaven in a chariot. For instance, John’s appearance was much like Elijah’s. **2 Kings 1:7-8 (ESV)** “⁷ He said to them, ‘What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?’ ⁸ They answered him, ‘He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist.’ And he said, ‘It is Elijah the Tishbite.’” **Mark 1:6 (NKJV)** “Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.” The message of Elijah and John was also similar. Both were fearless and confrontive in their preaching. John denied that he was literally Elijah who had returned, but there was a sense that he was like Elijah. Jesus Himself said that John bore similarity to Elijah. The angel who announced John’s birth to his Father Zacharias said in **Luke 1:17 (NKJV)** “He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, *‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’* and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Jesus affirmed that John was Elijah in the sense of being in the spirit and power of Elijah. **Matthew 11:14 (NKJV)** “And if you are willing to receive *it*, he is Elijah who is to come.” John and Jesus are not contradicting one another. He was not the literal Elijah, but came in the same spirit and power that Elijah came in. There are many Bible scholars (and I agree with them) who say that before the second coming of Christ Elijah will come literally. Rev 11:3 speaks of God’s two witnesses just before the return of Christ to earth. Though they are not named, many scholars believe they are either Elijah and Moses or Elijah and Enoch. In the 5th Century, Augustine said, “What John was to the first advent, Elijah will be to the second advent. As there are two advents, so there are two heralds” [J. C. Ryle, “Expository Thoughts on the Gospels – Volume III”, page 50].

Thirdly, John denied that he was “the prophet” (V21b). This also came from a passage in the Old Testament. Moses wrote in **Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 (NKJV)** ¹⁵ “The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.” ¹⁸ “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.” There was no consensus in Judaism as to who this prophet was. Some believed that he would be the forerunner of the Messiah and others believed that he would be the Messiah himself. The latter group was correct since both Peter (Acts 3:22-23) and Stephen (Acts 7:37) applied the Deuteronomy passage to Jesus. Just as John denied being the Messiah and Elijah, he denies being the prophet spoken of by Moses.

Seeing that they were getting nowhere with John, this delegation asked John in **John 1:22 (NKJV)** “Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”

B. The Testimony of Who He Was (V23-28)

Watch how John refuses to turn the spotlight on himself and keeps it shining on Jesus.

1. The One Who Prepares the Way (V23)

This is a quote from Isaiah 40:3. Notice once again the humility of this man of whom Jesus said was greater than anyone born up until that time. John describes himself as a “voice”. There is an intended contrast here: Jesus is the Word; John is just a voice. Search all you want but you will never find a hint of pride in this man called John the Baptist. He is not the Messiah, he is not the Elijah who is to come; he is

not the prophet spoken of by Moses; He is just a voice – a voice crying in the wilderness. John spoke in a literal wilderness, but the spiritual application speaks of the spiritual barrenness of the day. What is the meaning of what the voice is proclaiming – “make straight the way of the LORD”? We went over this symbolism in the second message in the series. It refers to the custom of sending out a herald before the King came to a city or area in his kingdom. The herald announced the King’s coming and then he supervised the preparation for the King. He got rid of anything that could be offensive to the King. There would be the disposing of litter, the filling of holes, the straightening of roads and removing hindrances to the King’s travel. What the herald did in a literal way, John the Baptist did spiritually. His message was “repent”. He was telling them to clean the litter of sin from their heart and make their paths the straight paths of obedience. He was crying out to remove any hindrances to King’s rule in His kingdom.

2. The One Who Baptizes (V24-26, 28)

Not content to let the matter drop, these representatives from the Pharisees questioned John’s right or authority to baptize. The Pharisees were the religious group that was especially concerned with the rites, ceremonies, and rituals of Judaism. Rituals of baptism were not unheard of in Judaism. When Gentiles wanted to join Judaism, there was baptism that was a part of that process. John however was baptizing Jews! John’s answer reflected their focus away from him and onto Jesus. Instead of defending his baptism, he simply acknowledged that he baptized with water. The Old Testament did speak of spiritual cleansing that would accompany the Messiah’s coming. Baptism would signify or give testimony to that cleansing. **Ezekiel 36:25 (NKJV)** “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.” **Zechariah 13:1 (NKJV)** “In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.” We know from Matthew’s Gospel that John’s baptism was a public expression of repentance. **Matthew 3:6 (NKJV)** “and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.”

In verse 26b, John makes a very harsh but true comment about these religious leaders. The one that John came to prepare the way for was already public, already among them, but the religious leaders did not even know Him. In other words, “The Messiah you claim to be waiting for is here and you don’t even know Him.”

John’s testimony was that he was not the Messiah, Elijah, or the prophet spoken of by Moses. He was the “voice” getting things ready for the Messiah. That preparation involved repentance and baptism as a visible sign of that repentance.

II. The Presentation of Jesus Christ (V27, 29-34)

Who is this one that John is preparing the way for? Who is this one that is already among them and the religious leaders don’t even know Him?

A. The Lamb of God (V29)

One of the most interesting studies you can do is to trace the sacrifice of lambs through the Old Testament and then trace Jesus as **the** Lamb of God out into eternity. The best summary I have ever seen is by Arthur Pink: “There before John stood the One whom all the sacrifices of Old Testament times had foreshadowed. It is exceedingly striking to observe the progressive order followed by God in the teaching of Scripture concerning ‘the lamb.’ First, in Genesis 4, we have the Lamb *typified* in the firstlings of the flock slain by Abel in sacrifice. Second, we have the Lamb *prophesied* in Genesis 22:8 where Abraham said to Isaac, ‘God will provide Himself a lamb’. Third, in Exodus 12, we have the Lamb slain and its blood *applied*. Fourth, in Isaiah 53:7, we have the Lamb *personified*: here for the first time we learn that the Lamb would be a Man. Fifth, in John 1:29, we have the Lamb *identified*, learning *who* He was. Sixth, in Revelation 5, we have the Lamb *magnified* by the hosts of heaven. Seventh, in the last chapter of the Bible we have the Lamb *glorified*, seated upon the eternal throne of God, Revelation 22:1. Once more; mark the orderly development in the *scope* of the sacrifices. In Genesis 4, sacrifice is offered for the *individual* – Abel. In Exodus 12 the sacrifice avails for the whole *household*. In Leviticus 16, on the annual Day of Atonement, the sacrifice was efficacious for the entire *nation*. But here in John 1:29 it is “Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of *the world*” [Arthur Pink, “Exposition of the Gospel

of John”, page 58-59]. Catch the drama here. The Jews were very familiar with the Lamb of God and since the Passover was approaching, the Passover lamb was on everyone’s mind, and it is likely there were lambs around them being taken for the sacrifice. In the midst of this, John points to Jesus and says in **John 1:29 (NKJV)** “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” He was the Lamb of God; all the other lambs had pointed to Him. He was the substance and they were all the shadows.

In this formal presentation of Jesus to the world, why did John choose to introduce Jesus as the Lamb of God? Why not “the Word of God” or “the promised Messiah”, or “the King in the lineage of David”? It was because he went right to the heart of the world’s need. As the Lamb He took away the sins of the world. John had been proclaiming repentance, and the world needed repentance, but there was a need beyond repentance and it was redemption from the slave market of sin.

*Redeemed how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through His infinite mercy,
His child and forever I am.*

- Fanny Crosby (1882)

Mankind’s greatest need is a substitute to take for us the wrath that our sin brought upon us. Jesus is that substitute pointed to by the prophet Isaiah in **Isaiah 53:6-7 (NKJV)** “⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.” Dr. J. C. Ryle said it well: “Christ is a Savior. He did not come on earth to be a conqueror, or a philosopher, or a mere teacher of morality. He came to save sinners. He came to do that which man could never do for himself, - to do that which money and learning can never obtain, - to do that which is essential to man’s real happiness, - He came to ‘take away sin’” [J. C. Ryle, “Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Volume Three”, Page 56]. John makes it clear that it is not the taking away of the sins of the Jews only, but the sins of the world – Jews and Gentiles. He came to take away the sins of all those who would believe on Him – those from every tongue and tribe and people and nation.

What a pivotal moment in history when John points to Jesus and says, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”. In a sense, the whole Bible is about the Lamb of God. In the Old Testament, the question is voiced in **Genesis 22:7b (NKJV)** “...where *is* the lamb...?” In the four Gospels the emphasis is “Behold the Lamb”. In Revelation the cry is “Worthy is the Lamb”.

We see the presentation of Jesus as the Lamb of God.

B. The Superior One (V27, 30)

John’s humility shines through again. He wants to make it crystal clear that it was not about him; it was about Jesus. He says in verse 27 that the Messiah is so superior to him that he is not worthy to stoop down and unlatch His sandals. This menial task was considered so lowly that it was fit only for a slave. John says that Jesus Christ is infinitely superior to him. In verse 30, he repeats what he said in verse 15. Even though Jesus according to the flesh was six months younger than John, He is of higher rank because He is the pre-existent one who had no beginning and was therefore before John.

C. The Revealed One (V31-34)

John tells us how he knew Jesus was the Messiah. There had to be a confidence that the one he was presenting was indeed the one sent by God. How was the Messiah revealed? Some 6 weeks before John was speaking these words, Jesus had come to him to be baptized. The Apostle John doesn’t detail this since that was done in the other Gospels. The sign that Jesus was the one, is that the Spirit like a dove descended on Him. Listen to Luke’s account. **Luke 3:22 (NKJV)** “And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, ‘You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.’” This visible display and the voice was not for Christ’s sake; it was for the sake of those witnessing it, and especially John. Now he knew this was the one.

In verse 33, the Lord reveals to this last of the Old Testament prophets that this was the one who would administer a baptism – not of water as John did, but with the Holy Spirit. John administered water

baptism to repentant sinners; Jesus would administer Spirit baptism to regenerated saints. The fulfillment of this promise came at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit baptized believers into the body of Christ. It was when the Spirit came to indwell believers and unite believers to Christ so that true Christians are said to be “in Christ”, “united to Christ”, and “identified with Christ”. This baptism is not a second work of grace, but something that every born again person receives at salvation. **1 Corinthians 12:13 (NKJV)** “For by one Spirit we were **all** baptized into one body”.

In verse 34 John the Baptist gives a witness – a confident eyewitness to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. Here is my question for you – do you know Him? Is He personally the Lamb of God who has taken away your sins? (3474)