

**Theme:** John came to prepare the way of the Lord to the hearts of men and women. He came bearing witness to the Lamb of God that he might be revealed to all true Israel. We, too, bear witness to Jesus, who takes away the sin of the world.

**Background:** Considerable attention given to John in this first chapter. We will see who he is, what his ministry was, and what his message was.

**Introduction:** The “prelude” prepares us for the principle matter.

## **I. Who Is This Man?**

### A. The Jews take notice

1. Baptizing in “Bethany” across the Jordan (28)
2. *“Who are you?”* – A reasonable question
  - Challenging their authority?
  - Causing problems with the Romans?
3. His powerful influence (Matthew 3:5; Acts 19:3)

### B. According to the Apostle

1. *Not* the Light/Word (6)
2. A witness to the light
3. Acknowledging his place (Matthew 11:11; Luke 7:28)

### C. According to John himself

#### 1. The negations

- a. Not the Christ/Messiah (20)
- b. Not Elijah (Malachi 4:5)
  - 1) John may not have seen the full significance of his ministry.
  - 2) Jesus did (Matthew 11:14; Mark 9:13)
  - 3) “In the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17)
- c. Not the “Prophet” (Deuteronomy 18:15-18)
  - One like Moses? NO.

#### 2. The affirmation

- a. “We need an answer” (22)
- b. The VOICE (Isaiah 40:3)
- c. No prominence to the preacher
  - “Make straight the way of the Lord”
  - Not just an itinerant preacher. The call predicted by Isaiah!NOTE: John gave a clarion call to the nation! Not about me personally.
- d. A monumental role (Isaiah 40-66)
  - Good news – the exiles will return to Zion/Jersalem
  - Great news – True deliverance/redemption is coming through the suffering servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)
  - Culminating in a new heaven and new earth (Isaiah 65-66)

APPLICATION: Are we living to be noticed?

## II. What Is He Doing? (25-27)

- A. You baptize Jews?
  - 1. A new line of questioning
  - 2. Jews aren't baptized
- B. By whose authority? (The central question of the Jews)
  - 1. You are *not* the Christ, Elijah, Prophet
  - 2. By the Authority of His Master (1:6)
  - 3. John answers! (26,27)
- C. But "why"?
  - 1. Make the path straight!
    - Mathew 3:2
    - Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:14
  - 2. Clear the obstacles

## III. The Witness of John (29-34)

- A. Christ's superiority!
  - Points back to 1:15
  - He who follows is greater (30)
  - Vss 26,27
- B. His great sacrifice (29)
  - Isaiah 53:5
- C. Where the Spirit rests (32,33)
  - Isaiah 42:1
- D. The unique Son of God (34)
  - Not *a* son
  - But *the* Son of God
  - Possibly "the Elect One of God" "Chosen"

## IV. Conclusion

- A. John's settled conviction (34)
  - 1. I have seen!
  - 2. I have borne witness
- B. And your witness?
  - A witness that testifies to the truth
  - The testimony of commitment