

John 1: Who is John the Baptist? **01-17-16 PM**

John 1 introduces the two most important men in history. One is the greatest man who ever lived. The other is the Son of God. We often fail to appreciate the significance of John the Baptist, a man who is central to the Gospel of John the Apostle in revealing Jesus as the Christ. There are multiple “seven” in John’s Gospel used to reveal Jesus:

- Seven signs & miracles performed by Jesus
- Seven confessions of faith
- Seven “I AM” statements
- Seven waters
- Seven life statements by Jesus
- Seven witnesses of Jesus

Of these sevens, half are introduced by Jesus, and half are introduced by John the Baptist.

To understand why John is so important, we need to examine three parts of his life: His place in prophecy; his work among the people; his duty to Jesus.

John is one of the only men apart from Christ who has a prophecy pertaining to him (consider Josiah and Cyrus as others who are subjects of prophecy). In Isaiah 40:1-11 we are introduced to the work of John. John is a road builder for God Himself. In Malachi 3:1 he is called “My Messenger” (the name “Malachi” also meant messenger). In Malachi 4:4-6 we are told that he will be (an embodiment of) Elijah; Jesus confirms that this is John in Matthew 17:10-13.

John’s duty was two-fold. He was instructed by God to baptize first to make the people ready to receive Jesus. This is his “road making”; he prepares the path Jesus will travel to the people by making their hearts ready to receive Him. In Mark 1:1-8 his work is made clear in this. In particular, it tells us his baptism (which is NOT the baptism Jesus subsequently offered, Acts 19:4-5). His baptism was one of repentance (Mark 1:4) to a people who were already in a covenant relationship with God.

But we often forget that according to John 1:31 there is a second reason John baptized. *“So that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.”* John the Baptist was told by God that one person (he repeatedly states he did not know whom it was) was going to be revealed as the Christ, and he would introduce this One as the Christ of the World.

Thus we have John the Baptist’s confession, the first of seven in the Gospel of John, the first of millions in history: “I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34).

The Seven Confessions of Christ

John - *“I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” (1:34)*

Nathanael - *“Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” (1:49)*

Peter - *“We have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (6:69)*

The Blind Man – (Jesus) said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?".....Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him. (9:35, 38)

Martha – "I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God" (11:27)

Thomas –"My Lord and my God!" (20:28)

The Reader - These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (20:31)

When John has completed his work he begins his "decrease". He is arrested and eventually put to death. While in prison, he sent disciples to Jesus in Matthew 11:1-14. They ask a peculiar question, and Jesus gives them a peculiar answer. Jesus then tells us that John is the GREATEST of all in the Old Covenant. But then even more shocking Jesus says this: the LEAST in the Kingdom is greater than John. This is us today. Not greater than the greatest man born of a woman by our own virtues, but by the virtue of having put on Christ and attained to our credit by faith His virtue.