

## High Level Outline of the Gospel of John

I. Prologue (1:1-18)

II. Jesus's Public Ministry (1:19-12:50)

➤ 1:19-34 (today) The testimony of John <== **You are Here**

➤ 1:35-51 (next session) The call of the disciples (aka the testimony of the called)

III. Jesus's Ministry to his own (13:1-20:31)

IV. Epilogue (21:1-25)

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The trajectory of John's testimony:

- Who he is not (1:8,20)
- Who Jesus is (1:29-34)
- Sends his followers to follow Jesus (1:35-36)

John the Baptist Background

- Marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Peter and Paul in acts, and the disciples when replacing Judas)
- His appearance was like fire on dry tinder (Mal 4:5)
- Eschatological focus of his teaching (Luke 3)
- His baptism a new thing, but with analogies from existing Jewish practice
- Jesus's baptism was the apex of John's ministry.
  - On to Samaria, back to Perea, then executed
  - Believers in Ephesus 25 years later had received John's baptism

The Pharisees come to question John (1:19-23)

- Is it legitimate for them to question John?
- John answers with who he is not. Why do they ask him these things?
- Are you Elijah?
  - Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. Mal 4:5 (Jesus: Mt 17:10)
- Are you the Prophet?
  - Calvin reads this as "a Prophet." John is not an OT prophet with a specific message for the people. He is simply a herald of Christ.
  - He is not the Prophet (foretold in Deut 18:15-18, quoted in Acts 3:22, noted by the people in Jn 6:14; 7:40)
- So who are you?
  - The voice of one crying in the wilderness
  - Is 40:3. Refers to the restoration of God's people. Joyful voices. A turning point in Is.
  - Literal wilderness is a figure for the miserable wilderness of this age. The meaning is that the Lord will find a road through regions in which there is no road

The Pharisees challenge John's right to baptize (1:24-28):

- John's answer: I baptize with water.
- 1) He claims Christ as the authority for his baptism. 2) He is only administering the outward sign. The power and efficacy are in the hands of Christ alone. John is baptizing just as we do now. He is merely a minister, and Christ is at work in those he baptizes.
- Should the Pharisees have accepted this? On what basis? He is pointing them to another.

The baptism of Jesus (1:29-34)

- When the Pharisees question him, he did not know who the coming one was (v 31 I myself did not know him). But the next day Jesus appears.
- John bears witness now because the One who sent told him that the one on whom the Spirit descends is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.
- The Lamb of God who takes away sins:
  - Perhaps John was mostly picturing judgment and did not understand that Jesus came to bear the judgment in his first appearing.
  - This explains John's question to Jesus from prison (Mt 11:2-6, Lk 7:18-23), and it is supported by John's emphasis on final judgment (cf Lk 3:7-17)
  - To "take away" the sin of the world could refer to judgment of sin in John's mind
- How did John know that Jesus was the One before he baptized him (I should be baptized by you) when he did not see the Spirit descend until after the baptism? Calvin: John had an inner witness, and the Spirit was given for our benefit.
- Jesus did not only receive the Spirit now for his ministry. It was given to reveal him and his ministry to Israel, just as John says in v 31. Thus the Spirit also is a witness, testifying that Jesus is the Christ.

Takeaway: John the Baptist is a witness testifying to us who Jesus is and what he came to do. John did not testify of his own accord, but was sent by God. This is the beginning of the witness theme that will be developed throughout the Gospel.