

JOHN 5:31-35
TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 5 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

As the chapter opened up we saw Jesus heal a lame man at the pool of Bethesda, a man who was lame for thirty-eight years!

We also saw that even though the Jewish religious leaders could not help this man, heal this man, they were upset that this healing was done on the Sabbath! They were so mad that Jesus would do something like this that they wanted to *KILL* Him!

I like how Jesus brings healing into our lives and religion brings death and destruction!

As we have also seen in this chapter how Jesus gives to us several reasons why He is Almighty God, something that the Jewish religious leaders rejected. And they rejected that so much, that He being a man made Himself equal with God, that they wanted to *KILL* Him even more!

We saw this in John 5:18 where we are told, **“Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”**

It is out of this that Jesus shows them, without a doubt, that He is Almighty God!

Listen to what Jesus said in regard to His deity, that He and the Father are equal.

EQUALITY WITH THE FATHER IN CREATION!

EQUALITY WITH THE FATHER IN POWER!

EQUALITY WITH THE FATHER TO JUDGE!

And we covered those points over the last few weeks.

Now, even with all that proof, some may not believe, some may feel that Jesus is just making this up. As the old Wendy's commercial said, "*Where's the beef!*"

And Jesus is going to show them even more proof that He is Almighty God! He is going to give the testimony of four witnesses, and five if you count Moses in John 5:45-46!

Now, what is a testimony?

According to Noah Webster, this is his definition of a "*testimony.*"

A solemn declaration or affirmation made for the purpose of establishing or proving some fact.

- Noah Webster, American Dictionary of the English Language – 1828

And this was important for Jesus to show them that this was not just His testimony but when you look at what others have said, it verifies what Jesus is saying. Not that He was lying, but the Jewish religious leaders did not believe Him and thus, He gives even more evidence that He is Almighty God.

Think of it like this. If I told you that I was a nuclear engineer and I spoke some words that sounded like I was a nuclear engineer, some of you might believe me. Most of you wouldn't because you know me, and we would be in serious trouble if I was a nuclear engineer.

But if I brought testimony of others who could testify that I was a nuclear engineer, it would be easier to believe it.

That is what Jesus is doing here. He is sharing the witness of others to show that He is Almighty God. That is why it always amazes me when people say that Jesus never claimed to be God. That is a lie and if they were truly honest, they would see that Jesus, over and over again, claimed to be Almighty God!

Over the next several weeks we are going to go through these testimonies to show that Jesus is Almighty God. We will be looking at,

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

THE TESTIMONY OF MIRACLES

THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHER

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

Again, this is so important because so many today are trying to deny the deity of Jesus Christ. That is why we are taking our time going through this.

This report is from 2020 and listen to what it says.

Historically, evangelicals have affirmed the authority of the Bible and salvation by Jesus Christ. The Bible testifies often to the deity of Christ; He is God incarnate, the Word made flesh (John 1:1; 8:58; Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:1-4). It may be unsurprising that the majority of the general U.S. population rejects the deity of Christ, but now almost a third of evangelicals agree that He was merely a great teacher.

- <https://thestateoftheology.com/>

Can you imagine that almost a third of evangelicals believe that Jesus was not Almighty God! And I think those numbers are changing rapidly and not for the good as less and less churches are teaching the Word of God and they are more interested in entertaining their people.

That means the less people know about the Bible, the more they are open to false teaching and thus, they are tossed to and fro by these false winds of doctrine that blow through the church.

Why am I making such a big deal about this? And maybe you are thinking, ***“Is it really such a big deal?”***

You bet it is. If you deny that Jesus is Almighty God, you are not saved, you will die in your sins.

And isn't that just where Satan wants people to be, thinking they are saved, and they are not!

Again, listen to what Jesus said in John 8:24, and you will see how important this is and why John spends his entire Gospel showing us that Jesus is Almighty God. Jesus said, **“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins.”**

Keep in mind that the ***“He”*** was added for clarity, but it is not there in the original writings. Jesus is saying if you don't believe that **“I AM”** you will die in your sins or if you don't believe that He is Almighty God, the voice from the burning bush, you will die in your sins!

So this is very important for us to understand and believe and that is why we are taking our time going through this and Jesus is laying it all out so they can clearly see this!

This morning, as we look at the – *TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST*, we will break these verses down into several points. And they are,

SELF WITNESS – JOHN 5:31

OUTSIDE WITNESS – JOHN 5:32

WITNESS OF JOHN – JOHN 5:33

JOHN'S WITNESS SO OTHERS WOULD BELIEVE – JOHN 5:34

JOHN LIGHTED THE WAY FOR JESUS – JOHN 5:35

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in John chapter 5, beginning in verse 31 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through the Gospel of John and we look at the topic, the – *TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST!*

JOHN 5

VERSE 31

Remember that I have called this verse – *SELF WITNESS!*

And the reason is simple. Jesus just got down spending some 12 verses explaining that He is Almighty God! He was a witness of who He is!

And then we read here that Jesus said, "**If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.**" John 5:31.

Now as you read that you may be wondering what in the world Jesus is talking about. Is He saying that His words are not true, that the things that He says can't be trusted, that He is not trustworthy?

That is an interesting point and please understand that Jesus can't lie, He is Almighty God and God can't lie! In other words, what Jesus said is - ***TRUTH!***

In John 8:14 we are told, **“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.’”**

So what is the point then?

He is acknowledging that the Jewish religious leaders and maybe even some of the Jews, the common people, were having a hard time believing that He is God Incarnate. Think about that, it was a big deal and remember what the Bible says.

We are told in Deuteronomy 19:15, **“one witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.”**

In other words, the Jewish Law dictated that at least two or three witnesses were needed before judgment could be legally rendered in a Jewish court of law.

It could not be established by just one witness, even if that person had all the evidence.

In fact, that is something that the Pharisees, the Jewish religious leaders, tried to use against Jesus when they came after Him to bring Him down. They told Jesus in John 8:13, **“... ‘You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.’”**

They understood the Jewish Law and they told Jesus that if He is the only one who can testify of these things, that He is God in the flesh, then how can they believe what He is saying. They needed witnesses to testify of what He is saying is true.

And the witness that Jesus brings forth in John chapter 8 is one He will bring forth here in John chapter 5, God the Father. In John 8:18 Jesus told these Pharisees, **“I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.”**

And I will expound on this Testimony of the Father regarding Jesus more in a few weeks.

But Jesus wants them to understand that it is not just what He is saying, but God the Father also testifies to these things, that Jesus is Almighty God!

Make no mistake about it, Jesus is a reliable witness of Himself because what He says is true, but the Jews would not accept that, they would not believe Him.

Ray Stedman put it like this in regard to people hearing the truth but not always assimilating the truth into their lives, not always believing it. He wrote,

I have noted a strange phenomenon over the years. People can hear the truth right out of the Scriptures for years and years and never seem to believe it, until they hear it from another voice.

That is why it is a good thing to have other speakers come to a church. Oftentimes I have had other speakers preach the same truth I had been preaching for years, and seen people's faces light up at the revelation they had just heard.

Afterwards they say, “I never saw that before!”

I always want to ask them. “Where have you been! I have been preaching that for ten years!”

After the first service this morning, a couple who had been in this congregation for years told me they had gone away to another city and had heard some great truth. They recognized that they had been hearing it here for years, but this time it got through and had changed their lives.

I have learned to rejoice in that, because that is the way God works. I have found that we in turn are often the ones who are a confirming word for others. We must not get upset when people do not believe what we say, for God has ordained that “out of the mouths of two or three witnesses let every word be established,” (Matthew 18:16 KJV).

- <https://bit.ly/3infaye>

That is funny to me because I have seen that over the years. I will be talking with someone and they will tell me, ***“I heard one pastor say . . . and I don’t remember who it was, but wow, it just ministered to me so much!”***

And I chuckle inside because that is exactly what I have been saying!

So Jesus is not going to let this go, He wants them to clearly understand that even though His testimony is true, He will give them not just two witnesses of who He is, but four, and again, if you count Moses in John 5:45-46, then there are five witnesses!

And like I have said, these witnesses are John the Baptist, the works of Jesus, God the Father, and the Word of God itself, and I believe Moses as well as I have said!

And in this section, really in John 5:19-47, we see Jesus speak with such boldness. How can He speak with that kind of boldness?

Because if you have the truth, which He did, then you can speak with boldness.

I know that over the years some feel that I speak with a lot of passion, with boldness I guess you can say, and some don’t like it.

But think about that for a minute. If I have the truth, which you have as well because it is in the Bible, then do you want me to teach it without passion, without boldness. ***“Yes, it does seem to say that Jesus is God, but you know, we all have our ideas about this and, whatever!”***

I don't think you would want me to teach that way and I will be honest with you, I will **NOT** teach that way. I am representing the Lord and I am going to give you the Word of God, because it is truth, with passion and boldness!

Let me also say this. There are those who claim things about themselves and when you look at them, you have serious doubts about what they are saying.

It would be like me saying that I am the middle linebacker for some football team. Look at me, do I really look like a middle linebacker? Of course not!

And I would need to have the testimony or witness of others to prove that I am a middle linebacker for a football team. I would need the witness of other players, maybe my coach or even a news reporter or articles about me that testify that I am a middle linebacker to substantiate my claim!

And if I don't have any, which I don't, then there is no evidence that I am a middle linebacker for a football team!

For these Jewish religious leaders, they wanted proof of what Jesus was saying was true and thus, Jesus is going to bring forth witnesses to testify to the fact that He is Almighty God!

So this first witness that Jesus is going to bring forth is John the Baptist and I have called this verse – ***OUTSIDE WITNESS!***

VERSE 32

Keep in mind that the Jewish religious leaders were not going to listen to what Jesus had to say about Himself and thus, we see Jesus bring forth witnesses who will testify of who He is.

And the first one, like I have said, is John the Baptist, although we are not told that here in this verse.

What Jesus is doing here is He is setting the stage as He brings forth this witness. And He wants these Jewish religious leaders, as well as the other Jews who were listening, to understand that the witness He is bringing forth will speak the truth about Him.

In fact, they already heard this witness and what he had to say, and we will deal with that more as we move on.

But Jesus is telling these Jewish religious leaders, ***“Look, if you don’t believe what I have to say, then you need to listen to what this witness has to say!”***

And again, this first witness is John the Baptist and for the Jewish religious leaders to deny what John had to say was trouble for them because the people saw John as a prophet!

So let’s look at this next point, the – ***WITNESS OF JOHN!***

VERSE 33

Now let’s be honest here, there are many people who don’t tell the truth, who are false witnesses, so why should we believe what John the Baptist is saying.

That is a good question.

But remember that John was a man of God and we are told in Leviticus 19:16, **“You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord.”**

That is a command from the Lord and I believe, when you see the testimony that John the Baptist gives of Jesus, you will see that the Scriptures agree with what John the Baptist is saying!

I think that is an important point because, over the years I have heard people make all kinds of Biblical claims and yet they go contrary to the Scriptures! Thus, they are not a true witness.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

At least seven men around the world claim to be Jesus Christ reincarnated, and many have a following of devoted believers.

From a retired Siberian traffic cop named Vissarion to a cross-dressing former British spy David Shayler - these men all claim to be the son of God.

Jesus of Kitwe, Zambia, the taxi driver who was originally beaten by townsfolk for claiming to be Jesus, now says he is even more senior to Jesus in the hierarchy in heaven.

Near Brazil's capital, former waiter Inri Cristo gets around in a white robe topped off with a plaited white crown.

His devoted female disciples, who live with him in a small compound behind an electrified fence, push him around on a fringed red satin platform on wheels.

Norwegian photographer Jonas Bendiksen has travelled the world photographing these different Jesuses in England, Brazil, Russia, South Africa, Zambia, Japan and the Philippines. He has captured Jesus Matayoshi of Japan, a former politician, standing atop a mini-van amid Tokyo's commercial heart calmly spreading his Gospel.

- <https://bit.ly/39O1A2q>

Now they can make all the wild claims that they want, but do they have witnesses that can testify that they are the Son of God? Absolutely not, the evidence does not support their claim. And what I mean by that is yes, they can have people say that this is true, but what is the evidence for what they are saying, do the Scriptures support their claims, and they do not and thus, they are not God, not even close!

But here we see John the Baptist who bore witness of who Jesus is even though the religious leaders did not accept it.

And in Matthew chapter 21, when Jesus questioned them about the witness of John they refused to answer because if they said John was of God then they needed to believe what he was saying about Jesus. If they rejected that John was of God, then the Jews themselves would have been angry with them because they believed John was a prophet of God! The witness was there, they just did not believe it!

We see this played out for us in Matthew 21:23-27, **“Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?’ But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John - where was it from? From heaven or from men?’ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, “From heaven,” He will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?” But if we say, “From men,” we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.’ So they answered Jesus and said, ‘We do not know.’ And He said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’”**

We are towards the end of the earthly ministry of Jesus and He just cleansed the Temple from the money changers. Now the Jewish religious leaders wanted to know by what authority He did those things and who gave Him this authority!

And Jesus points them back to John the Baptist and the message he spoke forth about Jesus. And to do this He asks the Jewish religious leaders about the ministry of John the Baptist, if it was from God or just from men, something that John the Baptist just wanted to do?

And you have to love their reasoning. If they said that it was of God, then they needed to believe what John was saying about Jesus!

But if they rejected what John was saying and they said that his ministry was not of God but of men, then the people would come against them because they saw John the Baptist as a prophet from God.

So they just said, **“We do not know.”**

Now that was not true. They knew but they rejected the truth and since they were not interested in the truth, Jesus was not going to tell them by what authority He did what He did!

What we see here in John chapter 5, this witness of John the Baptist, is that John’s witness was based upon four specific things regarding Jesus.

The first one is simple. John the Baptist claimed that Jesus is the Messiah, the one that the prophets spoke of. And to show this to be true, John the Baptist quotes out of Isaiah regarding himself and what he was to do. We are told, **“He said: ‘I am ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord.’”** (Isaiah 40:3, Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23)

God had been silent to the children of Israel for over 400 years and here comes John the Baptist and he is a prophet of God who is speaking forth the words of God!

That had to bring excitement to the people because John was proclaiming that the Messiah who was predicted to come, is here!

We see this in John 1:6-7, **“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.”**

And this is the fulfilment of what Malachi 3:1 tells us, **“Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,’ Says the Lord of hosts.”**

John came to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah!

In John 1:15-18 we are told, **“John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, “He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.”’ And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”**

The second point is that John said that Jesus is **“the Lamb of God.”**

Listen to what we are told in John 1:29-34 we are told, **“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, “After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.” I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.’ And John bore witness, saying, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, “Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”**

Obviously this was not something that John figured out on his own, but God spoke to him, revealed to him that Jesus is that sacrificial Lamb who would not just cover their sins, but He has come to take away their sins!

That is something that the Old Testament sacrifices could never do. That is why there were the daily sacrifices and there were no seats in the Temple because the work was never done! (Hebrews 9:11-28)

The third point that John the Baptist made is that Jesus would baptize us with the Holy Spirit. We see this in John 1:33 where we are told, **“I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”**

The living water will fill our lives and satisfy our thirsts, John is saying!

And the fourth point is that Jesus is **“the Son of God.”** We see that in John 1:34, **“And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”**

You see, John the Baptist testified to the Jews and these Jewish religious leaders that Jesus is the Son of God, or equal with the Father because He is Almighty God!

Now some may argue that these Jewish religious leaders may not have heard what John the Baptist said. But they did. Let me show you.

We are told in Matthew 3:4-6, **“Now John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.”**

So, because of this huge following that John had, the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem were wondering what was going on and in John 1:19 we are told, **“Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’”**

So these Jewish religious leaders were there and they heard what John the Baptist said about Jesus, they just refused to believe his testimony, even though the truth was right before them. In fact, John the Baptist said that he testified of this ***TRUTH!***

So, John bore witness that Jesus is the Messiah, He is the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world! He is God!

Thus, the – ***WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST!***

As we read on, we will see – ***JOHN’S WITNESS SO OTHERS WOULD BELIEVE!***

VERSES 34

Let me ask you this question. Did Jesus need the witness of John the Baptist or for that matter, any other witness to prove who He is?

Not at all! The evidence was overwhelming who He is, the Son of God! His life was a testimony to that fact, but here is the problem many times.

I am not sure why this happens, but it does, and we have probably done it many times ourselves, especially before we were saved, but I tend to think even after we were saved as well.

People have a hard time paying attention to what God is saying, they tend not to listen to what God is saying.

Again, don’t be shocked by that, it is true and we ourselves have done it.

So we see here that Jesus does not need the testimony of others to prove who He is, not at all.

Then why in the world is He using these witnesses to testify of Him? Why is He using John the Baptist, the miracles that He did, the testimony of God the Father and the testimony of Scripture to show that He is Almighty God? Why did He do that?

We don't have to guess because we are told here in John 5:34, "**... but I say these things that you may be saved.**"

That is the bottom line. Because people don't like listening to God, because they don't want to hear from God, Jesus is allowing the witness of others to speak for Him and show the people that He is Almighty God and that through Him, through Jesus they may be saved!

You see, Jesus allowed this because of His love for sinful man and His desire to see them saved!

We see God's love for sinful man in Ezekiel 18:31-32 where we are told, "**'Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,' says the Lord God. 'Therefore turn and live!'**"

I want you to notice that God gets no pleasure in the death of the wicked, none at all. And yes, He is specifically speaking of Israel here, but this can apply to all of mankind, that we need to turn to Him and receive that new heart, that new birth, be born again to live in Christ!

We see this love for sinful man in Ephesians 2:4-7 where Paul wrote, "**'But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.'**"

Look at the great love that God has for us. We were sinners, in rebellion against God and God was willing to become flesh and go to the cross of Calvary and die for our sins so that we can live with Him!

That truly is love and God wants to display this love as we sit together with Christ in heaven and the angels witness the tremendous love that God has for us, who truly don't deserve it!

We see God's love for sinful man in Galatians 2:20 where Paul wrote, "**I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**"

God loves us so much that He gave Himself so that we might live with Him! That truly is love, not just a word, but action!

We see God's love for sinful man in Romans 5:8 where Paul wrote, "**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**"

Once again we see how much God loves us. We were still sinners, we were in rebellion against God and we in no way deserved salvation, but we deserved death, eternal separation from God. And yet, God saved us because He loves us!

We see God's love for sinful man in Romans 8:37-39 where Paul wrote, "**Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**"

Let me ask you this question. Is there anything that can separate us from the love of God?

What about when we blow it, when we sin? Then God doesn't love us, right?

Wrong!

Paul said *NOTHING* can separate us from the love of God which is based in Jesus Christ. I pray that if anyone is struggling here because you don't match up to some standard that you set and think God wants you to accomplish, that you remember that *NOTHING* can separate you from the love of God – *NOTHING!*

I know we are going over a lot of verses, but believe me, when it comes to the love of God, we are just scratching the surface. That is how much He loves us!

We see God's love for sinful man in I John 4:9-11 where John wrote, **“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”**

Once again we see how much God loves us, even before we loved Him. And once we come to Him, once we receive the love of God into our lives, that love that is based in Christ, then we are to let that love flow from our lives and touch the lives of others, we are to love one another!

And just one more. We see God's love for sinful man in I John 4:16, **“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.”**

Again, once you have received the love of God into your life, what should flow from your life is the love of God!

Let me share this with you regarding the love of God for sinful man and this will help sum up what we have been talking about here. We are told in an article titled – *“Why Does God Love Us?”* This is what we are told,

This short question is among the most profound questions ever asked. And no human would ever be able to answer it sufficiently.

One thing is certain, however. God does not love us because we are lovable or because we deserve His love. If anything, the opposite is true. The state of mankind since the fall is one of rebellion and disobedience.

Jeremiah 17:9 describes man's inner condition: "The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" Our innermost beings are so corrupted by sin that even we don't realize the extent to which sin has tainted us.

In our natural state, we do not seek God; we do not love God; we do not desire God. Romans 3:10-12 clearly presents the state of the natural, unregenerate person: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

How then is it possible for a holy, righteous, and perfect God to love such creatures? To understand this we must understand something of the nature and character of God.

First John 4:8 and 16 tell us that "God is love." Never was a more important declaration made than this - God is love. This is a profound statement. God doesn't just love; He is love. His nature and essence are love. Love permeates His very being and infuses all His other attributes, even His wrath and anger.

Because God's very nature is love, He must demonstrate love, just as He must demonstrate all His attributes because doing so glorifies Him. Glorifying God is the highest, the best, and the most noble of all acts, so, naturally, glorifying Himself is what He must do, because He is the highest and the best, and He deserves all glory.

Since it is God's essential nature to love, He demonstrates His love by lavishing it on undeserving people who are in rebellion against Him. God's love is not a sappy, sentimental, romantic feeling. Rather, it is agape love, the love of self-sacrifice.

He demonstrates this sacrificial love by sending His Son to the cross to pay the penalty for our sin (1 John 4:10), by drawing us to Himself (John 6:44), by forgiving us of our rebellion against Him, and by sending His Holy Spirit to dwell within us, thereby enabling us to love as He loves.

He did this in spite of the fact that we did not deserve it. "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

God's love is personal. He knows each of us individually and loves us personally. His is a mighty love that has no beginning and no end.

It is this experiencing of God's love that distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. Why does God love us? It is because of who He is: "God is love."

- <https://bit.ly/3uv0T7t>

Exactly! That is why Jesus allowed these witnesses to testify of Him, of who He is, because He loves us so much He wants man to hear the truth and receive the truth into their lives so that they may be saved! That truly is love!

So God's love is out there, the truth is out there, not just in the Bible but with the testimony of others who have come to saving faith. And if you want to ignore what God is saying, maybe you will listen to what others are saying of their faith in Jesus Christ.

You see, each person must decide for themselves what they are going to do with Jesus who is called the Christ.

And we now come to our last point – ***JOHN LIGHTED THE WAY FOR JESUS!***

VERSE 35

Notice how Jesus starts out here as He speaks of John the Baptist. He says that “**He was the burning and shining lamp . . .**”

Again, we might not read too much into that but the point that Jesus is making is that John was not the light, Jesus was!

Then what was John?

John was a lamp that shined the light of Jesus to others. And that is what a lamp does, it bears the light, but it is not the light!

That is what we read in John 1:6-9, “**There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.**”

Here we see that John wants us to be clear about this man named John the Baptist. That he was a man sent from God for a work. His work was to bear witness of Jesus or the Light and just like we talked about this morning, he did so that others may believe!

He bore witness of the Light and this Light, Jesus, is for every single person on this planet, if they only would repent of their sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of their lives!

Let me expound on this for a minute.

We saw John witness of the Light; he was the lamp from which the Light brightly shined through!

Now let me ask you this question. What about us?

Are we just a lamp and yet we are not shining brightly for Jesus? Think about it. If you have a lamp that is not shining, it is of no use. It is not doing anything.

Make no mistake about it, we are to shine brightly for Jesus wherever we go.

In the workplace. In our homes. In our neighborhoods. In our schools. At the store. When we are in our cars! I know, a tough one, but we are to shine even in our cars! And you get the idea, our lives should be continually shining Jesus, the Light of the world!

If you are not shining, you may be wondering what you can do about it?

First of all, you need to let the truth of God fill your life and rekindle those embers inside of you so you can burn for Jesus.

Think about it like this. When there is a fire, people come and watch it burn. I don't know why, they just do.

If you are on fire for Jesus, burning bright, people will come and watch you burn. They are intrigued, they want to figure out what makes you tick and thus, you become a witness of Jesus because you are on fire for Him!

Remember the song, *"This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!"* That is what we need to do – burn for Jesus and let the Light of the world shine not only in you but through you for others to see!

That is what John the Baptist was doing and the people rejoiced in his light or his witness of the Messiah, of Jesus!

That word “**rejoice**” in John 5:35 is interesting. Adam Clarke said this about this word. He wrote, “To *jump for joy*, as we would express it. They were exceedingly rejoiced to hear that the Messiah was come, because they expected him to deliver them out of the hands of the Romans; but when a *spiritual deliverance*, of infinitely greater moment was preached to them, they rejected both it and the light which made it manifest.”

And that is interesting to me because I only read part of their rejoicing. Listen again to what John 5:35 says, “**He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.**”

You see, this joy, this excitement, only lasted for a time, it was short lived. Why was that?

Because Jesus did not do what they wanted Him to do, He didn't meet their expectations and thus, they rejected Him.

Warren Wiersbe put it like this. He wrote,

John was a “burning and a shining lamp” (Jesus is the Light, John 8:12), and the Jewish people were excited about his ministry.

However, their enthusiasm cooled; and nobody lifted a finger to try to deliver John when he was arrested by Herod.

The leaders looked on John as a “local celebrity” (Matt 11:7-8), but they did not want to receive his message of repentance.

The publicans and sinners accepted John's message and were converted, but the religious leaders refused to submit (Matt 21:28-32).

Whenever God raises up a spiritual leader who commands attention, there is always the danger of attracting people who want to bask in his popularity but not submit to his authority.

A “mixed multitude” followed Moses and Israel out of Egypt, people who were impressed with the miracles but not yielded to the Lord. The prophets and Apostles, as well as the great leaders in church history, all had to put up with shallow people who followed the crowd but refused to obey the truth.

We have them in churches today.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 246

How true that is. Everybody came to see John and yet, when he was thrown in prison, nobody wanted anything to do with him. And it was not that they were just rejecting John the Baptist. They were rejecting his message of Jesus being the Messiah, the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world!

And we see that so often in churches today. People come and go and many times they come until they hear something that convicts them, something they don't like, and they are gone.

Some are believers that don't like the conviction, they don't like the challenge.

But others are not believers and they come to church, they pretend to be saved or think they are saved, but when things don't go the way that they want, when God exposes areas in their lives that they don't want to let go, when they don't get what they want, they are gone.

It is as John said in I John 2:19, **“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”**

John is speaking of unbelievers here and they left the church because they were never of the church or the body of Christ, they were not saved!

One writer summed this up for us like this regarding the people, not just the Jewish religious leaders, but the Jews in general, rejecting the message. But in regard to the Jewish religious leaders he wrote,

The Lord ended His tribute to John with a rebuke of the Jewish leaders, noting that they were willing to rejoice only for a while in his light.

Like moths to a lamp, the people flocked excitedly to hear John who . . . was the first prophet in nearly four hundred years.

Their excitement peaked when he proclaimed the imminent arrival of the long-awaited Messiah (Mark 1:7-8).

But his stern call for personal repentance (Matt 3:1-2), his stinging denunciation of the nation's hypocrisy (Matt 3:7; Luke 3:7), and his shocking practice of baptizing Jews (the Jews baptized Gentile proselytes, but regarded fellow Jews as already part of God's kingdom people, and hence not in need of baptism) alienated many of the people.

Eventually, John's fearless condemnation of Herod Antipas's unlawful marriage (Mark 6:17-18) led to his arrest and execution.

The thrill seekers may have rejoiced temporarily in John's ministry, but they missed its purpose - to point out Jesus as the Messiah. They were superficially drawn to John (cf. those similarly drawn to Jesus in 2:23-25), but they lacked genuine repentance.

Ultimately, they turned away from the light of truth that John reflected, because they loved the evil deeds of darkness (3:19).

John MacArthur, John 5:35

Let me say this. People will reject the message we have, the testimony we share with them, the light we are shining upon them, but don't let that stop you. You just burn for Jesus and let people come and watch you burn!

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST!

And I will close with this, ***THE TESTIMONY OF . . . !*** (Put your name there!)