

# The GOSPEL of JOHN

SO THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

## A Burning Witness to the Light

### Scripture

*John 1:6–9 (ESV)*

*“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.”*

### Sermon Guide

#### Historical Progression

John 1:1 places the origin of Jesus Christ in eternity past: *“In the beginning was the Word.”* When the beginning happened, the Word already “was.” Then comes Christ’s role in the work of creation: *“All things were made through him”* (John 1:3). Next, John speaks of Jesus’ coming into the world, as a light shining in the darkness (1:5). Now, in John 1:6–9, we enter the record of history with the witness of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ.

#### The World’s Great Need

As John introduces the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, it is clear what he considers to be the great need of our world. According to the Gospel of John, the world’s great need is belief in Jesus Christ. He wrote his Gospel to show *“that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name”* (John 20:31).

#### **The biggest, ugliest, most devastating problem in the world is that we are alienated from God because of our sin.**

God is holy, and the guilt of our sin has placed us under his just condemnation. Meanwhile, the power of sin works evil throughout our lives, so that John could say in his first epistle that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). If these are our great problems—God’s condemning judgment and the insidious effects of sin—the answer is Jesus Christ, the Savior whom God has sent as a light to this darkened world. John’s most famous verse declares, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

#### 1. God Sent a Human Witness

John makes it crystal clear from the very outset that God’s way of letting the light of Christ shine in the world is by human witnesses. God’s way of pushing back the darkness is by human witnesses.

This general principle is even more clear because John was sent to testify to the light while the light was there. As soon as the light was in the world—as soon as Jesus came—God prepared and sent a human being right alongside the light to bear witness to the light.

#### Be Alert to the Possible Call of God in Your Life

**One is that you should be alert to the possible call of God in your life. All Christians are to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:16). All are called to witness to the light (Acts 1:8, 1 Peter 2:9). God still calls some in a special way and for special tasks.**

We are meant to talk to people about the Lord Jesus Christ and to tell them he is the Son of God and that he has come into this world in order to save men and women. . . . We are meant to tell men exactly why the world is as it is; we are meant to tell them about sin in the human heart and that nobody and nothing can deal with it save the Son of God.

#### Be Ready to Hear the Testimony of Others Sent to You

The other implication is that you should be ready and open to hear the testimony from others who are sent to you. God means to communicate to you not merely through your own private Bible reading, but also through other people. We should be aware that it is God’s way to communicate with us through those that he calls and sends.

Be ready and open to God's call on your life to send you to bear witness to the light; and be ready and open to recognize the word of God to you when it comes from others that God has sent to you.

## 2. To Bear Witness to the Light

### God Spoke to John and Gave Him a Sign

God uses people to promote the light by their testimony. John was a witness. A witness is a person with some experience and knowledge that can help establish the truth of some fact that is in dispute. God had spoken to John in the wilderness about the coming Messiah, and his meeting with Jesus at the baptism gave him the experience he needed to be a bona fide witness.

### God showed John the Baptist many magnificent things about Jesus.

- [John 1:23](#), he is "the Lord." John identifies himself as the voice crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord." This is an amazing thing because in [Isaiah 40:3](#) "the Lord" was a reference to God himself. John was applying it to Jesus.
- [John 1:27](#), Jesus is so great John is not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal. John speaks of Jesus as, "He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."
- [John 1:29](#), Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. John says, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John had probably discovered this in meditating on [Isaiah 53:6–7](#).
- [John 1:33](#), Jesus is the one who is going to baptize his people with the Holy Spirit. John says, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." He pours out the Spirit. He is the source of the Spirit.
- [John 1:34](#), Jesus is the Son of God. John testifies, "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." This fits well with Jesus being called "the Lord."

### John's life as well as his message was a faithful testimony to the truth.

- **John's simplicity.** He had lived in the wilderness for years. He dressed in simple leather clothes (Mark 1:6). He ate honey and locust (Mark 1:6). His whole life stood over against the luxuries of his day (Luke 7:25–26). This gave a tremendous power to his prophetic message when he said to the multitudes, "*He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none*" (Luke 3:10–14).
- **John's humility.** In a sense John's role was tragic—the last prophet before the Lord and killed for it while the Christian movement he served was just getting started. John said in 3:29–30, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full. He must increase, but I must decrease." John's testimony was burning with authenticity because he was a truly humble man.
- **John's courage.** John held to his message of righteousness to the end, and it cost him his life. How many reasons we could think of why it would not be prudent to cry out against Herod's sin in taking his brother's wife!

## 3. That We Would Believe

**Verse 7:** "*John came for testimony, to bear witness to the light that all might believe through him.*" Notice: "*through him,*" *not on him.* The aim of his testimony was that we all believe on Jesus.

John's whole life pointed to the truth and worth of the One that was to come after him, Jesus. God sent him so that we would believe in Jesus.

### The True Light

**John 1:9:** "*The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.*" The word *true* carries the idea of "genuine" or "real." The great need of this world is to believe in Jesus Christ, the true light.

**If you are not a believer, your greatest and most urgent need is to believe on Jesus.** Do you not realize that you have sins that must be either forgiven or punished by the wrath of a holy God? Without the cleansing blood of a true Savior, what will you do with your sins when you die and stand before God's throne? If you expect God to admit you to heaven apart from faith in Christ, do you not realize that this is a fantasy spread by others also seeking to avoid belief in Christ and that it flies in the face of God's revealed Word?

**"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him" (John 3:36).**