



Summer 2017 – **John 1 & 2 ... Part Three**
(the 10: 25 June 2017, Paul Langham)

Readings: John 1:6-8; 26-27 & 29-42

John 1:6-8

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

John 1: 26-27 & 29-51

²⁶‘I baptise with water,’ John replied, ‘but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.’

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’ ³⁰This is the one I meant when I said, “A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.” ³¹I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptising with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.’

³²Then John gave this testimony: ‘I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.” ³⁴I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.’

John’s disciples follow Jesus

³⁵The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God!’

³⁷When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸Turning round, Jesus saw them following and asked, ‘What do you want?’

They said, ‘Rabbi’ (which means ‘Teacher’), ‘where are you staying?’

³⁹‘Come,’ he replied, ‘and you will see.’

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ). ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas’ (which, when translated, is Peter).

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, ‘Follow me.’

⁴⁴Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and told him, ‘We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’

⁴⁶‘Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?’ Nathanael asked.

‘Come and see,’ said Philip.

⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, ‘Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.’

⁴⁸‘How do you know me?’ Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, ‘I saw you while you were still under the fig-tree before Philip called you.’

⁴⁹Then Nathanael declared, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.’

⁵⁰Jesus said, ‘You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig-tree. You will see greater things than that.’ ⁵¹He then added, ‘Very truly I tell you, you will see “heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on” the Son of Man.’

INTRODUCTION

Today, we conclude our brief, 3-week series on John chapter 1.

This week's readings are all about witness ... or testimony.

The 2 key questions about witness / testimony are

- witness by whom?
- witness to whom?

WITNESS BY WHOM?

What do we learn about what it is to be a witness?

- 1 John the Baptist (6-8)
his primary purpose is to bear witness

Can we say that?

- 2 John the Baptist (26-27)
John points away from himself, despite the opportunity to do the opposite
We didn't read the argument he has with the religious bigwigs (19-25), who offer him every temptation to say he is the main man
John is entirely happy to fade from focus once he has brought Jesus into focus

26 'Teacher,' they said, 'the man you pointed out has started baptizing and people are flocking to him.'

27 'That's just the way it should be,' John told them. 'All we can hope to accomplish is whatever God gives us to do. 28 You know I've always said "I'm not the Saviour, just his herald." 29 I'm more like the best man at a wedding, helping to prepare for the big day. When the bridegroom makes his appearance, the best man's job is nearly done. I'm delighted that Jesus has come. 30 From now on he must take centre stage, while I step back into the wings. (John 3:26-30, PL translation)

Can we say that?

- 3 John the Baptist (29-34)

'Look' (29)
'I have seen and testify' (34)

Can we say that?

We proclaim event not theology ...

Baptismal candidates have all done just that ...

What do we learn about the effect of witness?

- 1 John the Baptist's followers ... (35-39)

... become Jesus' followers (influence)
Jesus says, 'Come and See'

Can we say that?

2 1 of those followers is called Andrew (40-42)

he in turn uses his influence ... with his brother Peter
“we have found ...”

Can we say that?

‘brought him to Jesus’ (not theology, not preaching ... bringing!)
Clergy Cricket Selection ...

3 Philip (43-52)

‘Follow me’ (not, initially, believe, or behave ... follow ...)
Philip uses his influence ... Nathaniel
“we have found ...”

Can we say that?

WITNESS TO WHOM?

What do we learn about Jesus from this testimony?

- He is THE light (last week) (6-8)
- He offers a baptism of power by the Holy Spirit to which water baptism points (26-27, 33)
- He is the Lamb of God (the sacrifice to make us clean, holy, God’s children, safe for ever)
- He is pre-existent (30): if you’ve ever paid attention during the readings at a Christmas Service, you’ll know that JB was conceived and born before JC: yet JB says ‘he was before me.’ We considered this 2 weeks ago ...
- He is the One on whom the Holy Spirit remains ... (33)
- He is God’s Chosen One ... (34)

CONCLUSION

From our study over the past two weeks, we’d add 3 final things ...

- a word about water jars ...
- He is the one who gives a new name to those who follow him (ancient tradition)
- He is the Gate – remember our brief study of Jacob’s dream of the ladder in Genesis 28 ...? When he saw the angels descending and ascending, he realized, ‘This is none other than ... the gate of heaven ...’

⁵⁰ Jesus said, ‘You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig-tree. You will see greater things than that.’ ⁵¹ He then added, ‘Very truly I tell you, you will see “heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on” the Son of Man.’

- Our previous house – hearing the gate opening ... children coming home ...

Anyone want to come home?

QUESTIONS

1. Talk together about your witness: what was most helpful from this talk ...?
2. Alongside all the other things we need to do in life, do we understand that witnessing to Jesus is a primary purpose for each of us while we are on Earth?
3. John points away from himself, and is entirely happy to fade from focus once he has brought Jesus into focus. Can we say that?
4. John says, 'Look' (29) & 'I have seen and testify' (34). Can we say that?
5. Jesus says, 'Come and See' ... Can we say that?
6. Andrew & Philip both tell others that, "We have found ..." Can we say that?
7. Both 'brought' others to Jesus. Can we do that?
8. In other words, witness does not require us to be masters of theology, biblically trained or eloquent of speech; the categories of witness are rather
 - pointing to Jesus – 'Look!'
 - testifying to what we have seen of his work in our lives
 - inviting people to 'Come and see'
 - telling others what 'we have found'
 - bringing people to Jesus
9. Have a look through the list of things this passage declares to be true about Jesus
 - He is THE light (last week) (6-8)
 - He offers a baptism of power by the Holy Spirit to which water baptism points (26-27, 33)
 - He is the Lamb of God (the sacrifice to make us clean, holy, God's children, safe for ever)
 - He is pre-existent (30): if you've ever paid attention during the readings at a Christmas Service, you'll know that JB was conceived and born before JC: yet JB says 'he was before me.' We considered this 2 weeks ago ...
 - He is the One on whom the Holy Spirit **remains** ... (33)
 - He is God's Chosen One ... (34)
10. Which are the easiest for you to use in your own witness ...?

Paul Langham, June 2017