

Behold the Lamb of God

Գառն Աստուծոյ

John 1:19-34

Every time the siren of I hear firetruck, an ambulance, or a police vehicle, I remember the firefighters, the police and all the first responders. I pray for those people and their safety. And if I am driving and I hear sirens or see the emergency vehicles behind me, I quickly pull over to clear the way for them.

1. John the Baptist - the Voice

1. Յովհաննէս Մկրտիչ՝ Չայնը

Last week we started a new series on the Gospel of John. We covered the introduction, the prologue. John introduced us the **Logos, the Word, the Christ, the divine presence of God** on this earth bringing **life and light into this dark world**. Let us continue from verse 19.

Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." ²² Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

²⁴ Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶ "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

In the prologue that we studied last week, we found that John the Baptist came as a witness to testify for the light (1:7).

An interesting person is John the Baptist. From the Levite tribe (Luke 1:8 John is Zechariah's son, the priest), John B is like a "siren" who is preparing the way for coming of the Lord.

In the other Gospels we read more about his mission who was preaching to the Israelites to repent and turn to God. He was a bold preacher. He too had his followers and disciples. Obviously, that did not please the Pharisees, or the Priests. There was a delegation that came to investigate to see who this was.

- "Are you the Messiah (Christ in Greek)?" Remember they were expecting the Messiah. He is not the Messiah. (*political savior*)

- "Are you Elijah?"

Why would they see him as Elijah? The Jews read in the Bible that one day Elijah would be back before the Day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5); Elijah was taken up to heaven (2King 2:11); Jews were expecting his return one day. John said, "No."

- "Are you the prophet, like Moses?"

In Deuteronomy 18:15-18, we find that God promised that He would raise up a prophet like Moses to lead the people. Again, the answer is no. John the Baptist did not want to be identified with any eschatological figure. No.

Yet, his answer from Isaiah is on target to lead us to Jesus.

"I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" (John 1: 23 NIV 11)

John the Baptist is quoting from Isaiah 40. Let me read more...

A voice of one calling:

"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the LORD;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.

⁴Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

⁵And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,

and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”
6 A voice says, “Cry out.”
And I said, “What shall I cry?”
“All people are like grass,
and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.
7 The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the LORD blows on them.
Surely the people are grass.
8 The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God endures forever.” (Isaiah 40:3-8 NIV 11)

Isaiah is “the voice” ... like the TV show *the Voice*. The TV show helps bring forth the voices of unheard people.

John the Baptist is the voice reminding his audience:

Make the way, hear ye hear ye, make the way.....The Messiah, the Lord is coming. And this Logos, the Word of God will endure forever.

They knew that John B is quoting from Isaiah. They recognized:

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word (*dabar*) of our God endures forever. (Isaiah 40:8 NIV 11).

John is preparing the way for the WORD, the Logos. Everything around us will be withered except the Word.

How true is this? Look around you people. Look how the pandemic reminded us how fragile life is. What is stable?

John had a mission of leading people to repentance. But his main mission was to prepare a place for Jesus to enter. Why? The following paragraph will tell us more.

I am humbled by this phenomenon. He had an audience, followers, disciples, yet he knew that he was not the “*main dish*”. I remind myself often that I should lead my people to Jesus and not to me. Woe to me if I am doing the opposite, and please remind me if I do that. Please.

Let us continue how John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus.

2. The Lamb of God and the Spirit of the Lord

2. Աստուծոյ Գառը եւ Տէրոջ Հոգին

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward 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 baptizing 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 baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

Here John the Baptist continues revealing who is this LORD.

Behold, look, attention see **the Lamb of God, not any lamb, a the lamb that takes away the sin of the world (cosmos), not just the Jews, but the world.**

John the writer is introducing the main themes of his Gospel by telling us how John the Baptist brought forth a very important theological reality. Jesus came to die a sacrificial death for the sins of the world.

I mean, we are in the first chapter and we are introduced to many topics: **life, light, the sacrificial lamb for the redemption of the sins of the world.**

I am not sure here the lamb is the Passover lamb, but at least in the end of his Gospel John will draw that picture, the final sacrificial lamb, and that is **the lamb of God who paid for our sins.**

-The Spirit of God

“I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.”

The last picture that John the Baptist draws is the baptism.

In the Synoptic gospels we find that John the Baptist actually baptizes Jesus. “John does not emphasize the voice from heaven or the baptism in the river, as do the synoptics. Instead, three times he refers to the coming of the Spirit on Christ. The OT expected the messianic era to be a day of renewal when the Spirit would not only transform Israel (Isa. 32:15; Ezk. 36: 26-27; 37:14) but would rest mightily on the Messiah himself (Isa. 11;2; 42:1)”¹

You see here we find an important concept about the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit descended and remained on him. **This is permanent anointing**. Now, after the Pentecost event, because of Jesus' permanent anointing, we are baptized and the Spirit will be over us, in us. The Spirit will transform our lives.

Witness of John the Baptist: **I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."**

This statement will bring to the mind Isa 42:1

**"Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will bring justice to the nations.**

How much I cry out to the Lord and ask His Spirit to be over us. To anoint us, to heal us, to transform us, to remain in us, and to help us to be instruments of justice in this broken world.

I am humbled and happy to introduce you this humble man called John the Baptist. He does not elevate himself. No, he is the voice for the Messiah.

Application:

How do we become part of this?

In the prologue he already introduced the role of believing in Jesus:

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:12,13 NIV 11)

This invitation is to all of us. John's testimony about Jesus as Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world is an invitation to come to Jesus; not only to come, but to know Jesus and understand who He is and be follower daily

1 Gary M. Bruce, NIV Application Commentary p74