

Series: John the Baptist #1694

Title: John 1.6-7

God Gives Himself a Witness

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. Welcome or welcome back. I would like to begin with a question: do you enjoy reading biographies or autobiographies? Or perhaps you're not much of a reader but you enjoy watching films or documentaries, or maybe listening to podcasts is something you enjoy. Has any of this featured stories about the lives of real people in the past or present? Speaking for myself, I enjoy reading in the genre of biography and sometimes autobiography. In my current "to be read" pile, which always seems to be growing, I immediately see a biography on Augustine of Hippo and one on the former Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

The Bible is full of biography. I want to spend some time giving you a short biography of one man. I will not be saying all that can be said of him, but I will say enough to give you a sense for who he was and then we will focus on his message. The man and the message, if you will. We will see how his character is something we want to emulate as we give people the same message he did. His name is John the Baptist. Listen to this *stunning* statement Jesus made about him. I am reading Matthew chapter 11 and verse 11, **"Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist!"** Those are the words of Christ. Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist! (Matthew 11.11.)

I submit to you that Jesus' statement means it is well worth our time to get to know John the Baptist, the greatest man to ever live until the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly John is *not* greater than Jesus, as John himself will make clear very soon. Let me clarify something up front. This John is John *the Baptist*. He is a different man from the Apostle John, the disciple of Christ, the brother of James, and the author of the Gospel of John, 1, 2, 3 John, and the Revelation of Jesus Christ. This is important for you to catch because we will be reading in the Gospel of John about John the Baptist but they are two different men.

In fact, listen as I read John chapter 1, verses 6 and 7. This is John's Gospel the first chapter and verses 6 and 7, **"There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him."** Initially I want you to notice five facts within these two verses. The five facts are: first, God sent a man. Second, that man's name is John. Third, John was a witness. Fourth, John gave a testimony. Fifth, John was a witness and he gave a testimony about the Light.

This is simple and straightforward. And from these five factual statements, as the Bible presents them to us, I want to draw an important insight into God. God sends witnesses to testify about Himself. Let me say that again: God sends witnesses to testify about Himself. The Bible is replete with witnesses who testify about God. In this passage we meet one such man, and his name is John. I am going to say much more about John, but today I want to focus on two profound words in verse 7. The first word is "witness" and the second is "testify." John 1, verse 7 says, **"[John] came as a witness, to testify about the Light."**

Imagine if you would that you are in a courtroom. You're in the gallery observing the proceedings in a very important case. As you look around you see the Judge sitting prominently on her bench before you. She's holding court. To the left sits the jury. And then before you are two long tables. On the right is the defense team defending the innocence of the accused. On the left is the prosecutor and his team. The defendant (the accused) sits with the defense team's lawyers. And you listen intently as the prosecution calls its big witness to testify to the crime that the defendant has supposedly committed.

Standing up is a confident looking gentleman who takes his place in a witness box next to the judge. He is sworn in stating that his testimony is true. The tension builds. This one man has the opportunity to tell the absolute truth about how he witnessed the crime and the defendant, sitting not far from him, is definitely guilty. He witnessed the crime with his own eyes.

There is absolutely no doubt in his mind that what he says in that witness box is the whole and complete truth. The prosecutor begins to question his witness.

Friends, that is the way the Apostle John is using the words “witness” and “testify” in verse 7. In fact, all throughout his Gospel John uses these two words. The Greek words here for witness and testify are words associated with *facts, not opinions*. The use of these words indicate *facts, not opinions*. So that what John, the man sent from God, is saying about “the Light” is fact. It’s not just his personal idea or opinion of who the Light is. What he will say about the Light is factual and completely accurate.

Just like in our analogy in the courtroom. The witness has sworn to tell the court that what he witnessed, that what he testifies about is fact. Completely accurate. He saw the crime with his own two eyes and this is exactly what happened. In the Bible John is going to tell us that what he witnessed, that what he testifies about is fact. Completely accurate.

So let’s return to the Biblical text. John was a witness and John testifies about what? Well, it is not what, but who. “[**John**] came as a witness, to testify about the Light...” Who is the Light? The Light (capital L) is Jesus Christ. So that *who* John will witness and *who* John will testify about is Jesus. And this is what God does. He acts and He sends witnesses to testify about Himself. Jesus, being God in human flesh, has witnesses and testimonies that can be read and heard and explored by you and I. God has not left Himself without a witness in the world.

And that’s crucial to know, because we (today) *require* witnesses in order that we will believe in Jesus, in order that we will believe in God. Now you might say, “I am already a believer.” Yes, and how did you believe? Did you not read the witness testimony in the Scriptures concerning the Christ? I know of no Christian that has not benefited magnificently from witness testimony. In fact, I was rescued from sin when I was reading Luke’s Gospel, chapter 4. Reading Luke’s Gospel presented *the Gospel* to me in such a way that I believed Jesus. I was humbled by God before Jesus in such a way that I repented of my sin and pleaded with Jesus to forgive me of sin. I accepted that in order to live in a right and good relationship with the Living God, meant that I required Christ. Instantly, I received the gift of the Holy Spirit. And I have been serving Jesus in my life ever since.

For those of you skeptical of the truth of the Bible, for those of you still unwilling to accept or engage in a struggle to accept Jesus Christ, you will be greatly helped if you have a credible witness to His life and ministry that you can read, study, and even cross-examine in your own mind. The Scripture presents these testimonies.

Let me just give you some other examples in the Book of John of who else witnessed and gave testimony about Jesus. For today, due to time constraints, let me tell you about one. More next time. The first is the Samaritan women. Read John chapter 4. In that chapter we read about Jesus meeting a woman by a well. It’s a compelling story. Following Jesus’ encounter with the woman, she becomes a witness and testifies to the men of her city what Jesus said to her and did for her.

John chapter 4 and verses 28 and 29 says, “**So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men,** ²⁹**‘Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?’** And then over in John chapter 4, and verse 39 the text says, **‘From that city many of the Samaritans believed in [Jesus] because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all the things that I have done.’**” Notice the word “testified.” This Samaritan woman served as a witness to Jesus and she gave a true testimony about Him.

As we close, let me summarize what we have learned today. God sends witnesses to testify about Himself. You really must know this about the Living and Almighty God. The Bible is replete with witnesses who testify about God. In John chapter 1 and verse 6 we meet one such man, and his name is John the Baptist. As we read, John was a witness and he gave a testimony about the Light. Jesus Christ is the Light. When this man John speaks of Jesus he will give us *facts, not opinions* about Jesus. The same is true of the Samaritan woman also. This biography of John, the man and his message, is just beginning so invite someone to join you and be with us next time because God Is.

---END---