

John the “Confessor”

GOSPEL OF JOHN SUMMER SERIES

Psalms 2 Isaiah 40:1-8 John 1:19-34

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One of the interesting things that happens in the Gospel of John is that John the Baptist never baptizes Jesus! ☺ The Gospel of John picks up the story after Jesus has been baptized! The focus is on how John the Baptist understood the Baptism of Jesus and its significance. The overwhelming emphasis is on “John the Confessor,” rather than “John the Baptist”!

“John the Confessor” means that John is the official witness to the Baptism of Jesus and he testifies to what he has seen and to what it means. **He was officially sent from God¹** to authenticate and affirm that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Savior of the World.

Remember that John the Baptist is the **hinge** between the Old Testament and the New Testament. He is the last, great Old Testament Prophet; but at the same time he is the first, great New Testament witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what the Gospel of John focuses on! John the Baptist is John the Confessor! Here are some examples:

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to witness concerning that Light, so that through Him all might believe. He himself was not the Light; he came only as a witness to the Light. John 1:6-8

Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He confessed, He did not deny; rather, he confessed, “I, I am not the Messiah!” John 1:19-20

I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God!” John 1:34

¹ John the Baptist and his role as the “forerunner” and testifier to Jesus is the subject of Messianic prophecy; Isaiah 40:3-5, Malachi 3:1, 4:5. John says, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John” (John 1:6). Even at birth, his father Zechariah was filled with the Spirit and declared, “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High” (Luke 1:76).

John bore witness about Jesus to the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people. We get to eavesdrop in on that testimony through Holy Scripture, and we hear John testifying to us also that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world!

It was at Jesus' Baptism when John knew that Jesus was the One. When Jesus was baptized, God the Father spoke from Heaven and said, “*This is My Son, with whom I am well pleased.*” At the same time the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove and landed on Jesus; indicating that Jesus was anointed to be the Savior of the world, that He was the long awaited Old Testament *Messiah*, the *Christ* sent from God²!

John the Baptist has ever since pointed to Jesus and said “This is the One! This is the Savior !” and he does that for us today as well . *Hear his voice in Holy Scripture and believe his testimony!* Jesus is the Messiah of the Old Testament! He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is the Son of God who gives life and salvation to all who believe! His death and resurrection has rescued you from the power of sin, the control of the devil, and the fear of death. In Him, you have forgiveness, peace and eternal life!

Just as God sent John the Baptist to the Jews to witness and testify about Jesus, so too God has sent him *to us today* and we hear his voice in Holy Scripture .

Believe the eyewitness!

Trust the one that God *officially* sent to confess the truth to you!

² The Baptism of Jesus is a perfect visual of the word Messiah. The word “Messiah” means anointed, and in the Old Testament, Kings, Priests and Prophets were anointed with oil for their office and work. In Jesus' Baptism, He is anointed with the **Holy Spirit** for His office and work as the Messiah, the Savior of the world. The word *Messiah* is a Hebrew word for *anointed*; the Greek equivalent word is *Christ*.

Through faith in Christ, all of us now confess that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world! We know and believe that He has forgiven our sins and reconciled us to the Father. As we confess the truth of Christ with our words and in our lives, we are helping other people to learn about Jesus so that they too can believe in Him and have their sins forgiven! Never underestimate your confession of Christ! it is important! People need to hear it! The Holy Spirit works through the confession of His people, echoing Holy Scripture, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world! Be bold and confess Christ with your words and in your life!

There is a postscript to John the Baptist's story.

John the confessor who faithfully bore witness to Christ *in his life*, also bore witness to Christ *in his death*. John the Baptist was a martyr³. He was beheaded by the wicked King Herod for boldly proclaiming the Word of God⁴. John condemned King Herod's adultery and depravity; he was put in prison, and killed for his confession of Christ and His Word. *John the confessor* is now *John the Martyr*.

John's martyrdom reminds us that those who confess Christ will be hated by the world, and even persecuted. The world hates Christ, and it hates His people. The Word of God is a light that shines into the darkness of

³ The Greek word martyr means "witness". In the Christian faith, it is used to describe those who remain faithful to Christ even if that means death by persecution. Their death is a witness to Christ, and His truth. The faithful believe in Christ and His Word more than they love their lives . . . and that is a powerful witness. **John the Baptist**, who lived as **John the Confessor**, died as **John the Martyr**! His martyrdom is told in Mark 6.

⁴This sordid and depraved story is told in Matthew 14:1-12 and Mark 6:14-29. Using our terms today, John was martyred for preaching the Law of God and condemning the sin of King Herod. But it is still the preaching of the Word of God, and even the Gospel in a more "wider" sense. The unbelieving world cannot distinguish between the Law and the Gospel; they rebel against and hate all of God's Word.

people's lives, and it exposes their sins. People love their sin and so they reject Christ, His Word and His People. When you live a faithful Christian life in words and actions, you can expect to be persecuted. That persecution could be hatred, slander, labelling, ridicule, or even excluded ... or should I say "*cancelled*"?! Perhaps someday before we die, some of us may be martyred.

The battlelines in our culture are forming up against us. Homosexuality, Transgenderism, The Equality Act, The Critical Race Theory, and Wokeism --> these are the "King Herods" of our day that want to take our heads.

These are very real dangers to Christians; these things are darkness and they are satanic, *and they all are trying to silence any confession of Christ and His Word ... just like King Herod tried to silence John the Baptist.*

If you take a stand on God's Word and faithfully confess Christ, expect to be persecuted⁵! The battle is real, and it is coming towards us like a tidal wave. Stand strong, and don't waver in your faith!

We learn from John the Baptist that faithfulness to Christ is more important than physical life and well-being. Not only do you live for Christ, but you may have to die for Christ as well. Stand strong in the face of persecution, and don't waver in your faith!

In the Gospel of John, [John the Baptist](#) is [John the Confessor](#)!

May you learn from him to boldly confess your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: with your words, in your life, and maybe, even in your death ...

Amen!

⁵ The Bible in many places teaches us to "expect to be persecuted." For instance, Jesus warns us in Matthew 5, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Holy Spirit, we thank you for John the Baptist and his faithful witness to Christ. Fill us with Your power so that we may boldly speak and live holy lives in Christ that bring glory to our Father in heaven. Defend us in times of persecution, and allow us to stand firm on your Holy Word and boldly confess your Holy Name like John the Baptist did. We pray this in Jesus name, Amen!

Psalm 2

1 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. 5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 6 "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." 7 I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." 10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Isaiah 40:1-8

1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." 6 A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

John 1:19-34

And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 22 So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." 24 (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) 25 They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" 26 John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, 27 even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." 28 These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. 29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."