

Title: THERE WAS A MAN SENT FROM GOD, JOHN 1:6
(Chatham, NJ; 12/14/14, AM) [Pc – Narrative Analysis]

Theme: The story of Christ begins with the story of a man, John the Baptist, who was called by God to perform the mission of preparing people to meet and accept Jesus.

Purpose: To examine the story of John, and to engage our desire to live by stories of great people on missions of great importance.

Introduction:

1. The evolutionary theory of humanity relies on a strictly utilitarian idea that only the strongest survive, but it cannot explain why we love compelling stories with meaning and significance.
2. Think about the beginning of this story: "There was a man sent from God," John 1:6.
3. With simplicity and power the Gospel of John opens his story of Jesus with a sub-story, and this simple sentence almost begs the writer to tell us more.
4. "A man" – Who is this? A hero? A villain? Where did he come from?
5. "Sent" – It sounds like his is on official business? A mission? A quest? An adventure?
6. "From God" – How do we know his cause is just and justified by God? Don't a lot of evil people claim that their cause is righteous?
7. Let's find out.

I. His Name Was John, John 1:6

- A. His biography, Luke 1
 1. Conceived by a righteous priest and his wife, 5-6
 2. An angel announced his birth, 11
 3. The child will be great, filled with the Holy Spirit, 15
 4. He will come with the spirit and power of Elijah; he will change hearts
 5. The worshippers knew Zechariah had a vision: this helps drive the story
 6. Though they didn't know what it meant, they wanted to see the significance of the vision and the ultimate outcome
- B. His birth, Luke 1:57-66
 1. Zechariah and Elizabeth called him John despite objections, but this was an order from on high, 1:13 (because he wouldn't be like any relative?)
 2. Zechariah gets his speech back (a direct result of obeying the angel)
 3. Fear came upon all the neighbors, 65 (Is this the fear of knowing that God has done something marvelous? Or the fear of not being able to explain it and know the outcome?)
 4. Their talk (65) spreads the interest and keeps the story alive.
 5. They must have watched John closely to see what would become of him, 66.
 6. This child was growing into a legend.

II. Sent

- A. Others want to know his mission
 1. Who are you? (John 1:19)
 2. He dispels several myths: not the Messiah, not the prophet, not Elijah
 3. He is a voice, a herald, someone who announces something else, 1:23
 4. Jesus called him a prophet unlike any other, Mt. 11:7ff.
 5. He is Elijah personified, a fulfillment of Malachi 4
 6. His true calling was turning hearts to God in order to prepare them
 7. Change the hearts of men: a challenging task!
- B. But I'm not the one you want – his mission points elsewhere

1. Someone is coming, more worthy than I, 26
2. He was not the light, 1:8
3. The one who comes after me ranks before me, 1:15, 30
4. John's purpose is also to point to Jesus: "Behold, the Lamb of God," 29

III. From God – divinely sanctioned

- A. His calling was recognized by many
 1. The authorities didn't want to commit, Luke 20:1-8
 2. But the common man knew
 3. His message of sin and repentance resonated intuitively with them
 4. Many others would have believed the story of his early life (people talked)

- B. His work pointed to being born of God, 1:13
 1. Because of him we have the right to become children of God, born of the Spirit
 2. Through John God has ordained the privilege of being born of his Spirit: the power of God is unleashed upon the world
 3. God's power in John is seen in the wilderness, in rough clothing, and austerity
 4. God's power is seen in us in jars of clay, 2 Corinthians 4:7

Conclusions:

1. Don't be concerned that people see our lives as fragile and imperfect, for in our weakness the power of God can be seen.
2. The man, the mission, and the divine sanction lead us to Christ.
3. Christ's coming affords us the opportunity and power to become children born of God, not men, John 1:13.
4. John contributed to God's grand design for adopting us.
5. His story compels people even today to know the love of God in Christ.
6. Be a part of the continuing story.