

LESSON PLAN

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matthew 3:1-17; Mark 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-22; John 1:15-34

Lesson Memory Verse: Romans 1:16a - "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes..."

Lesson Aim: We are to tell others about Jesus Christ and His salvation.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Begin the class time by asking the students if they have ever seen a car accident. (Let them tell their experiences. Ask them to tell exactly what they saw as they are relating the accident to you.) After you have given each student an opportunity to tell about their experiences, explain to them that they were witnessing to you. They were witnessing to you about things that they had seen and knew were true. This is what a witness is. He is a person who tells others what he knows is true about Jesus.

HE (for Authority): Just as each of you told me about an accident that you had seen take place, God now wants each of you to tell others about what has happened to you when you received Jesus Christ as your Savior. This is something that you should be happy to tell to other people. You should never be ashamed to witness for Jesus. He saved you from going to Hell. Our memory verse for today tells the Apostle Paul's secret for being a good witness for Jesus Christ. It says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes..." The Apostle Paul was not ashamed to be a witness for Jesus Christ. He was glad to tell everyone he met about the great salvation that Christ had given to him. We also should be proud that we know Jesus Christ and glad to be a witness for Him.

Explanation of difficult words and phrases:

"Ashamed" – embarrassed

"Gospel of Christ" – the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 15:1-4)

"Power of God unto salvation" – the power that God has to save people from going to Hell

"To everyone that believes" – those who trust Jesus Christ to save them

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. In our Bible story today we will learn about a man who was a good witness for Jesus Christ.

I. Prophecy Concerning John the Baptist - Malachi 3:1-4; 4:5-6; Isaiah 40:3-11

Many years before John the Baptist was born, God had told His prophets to write in the Bible that there would be a man during the time of Jesus who would tell others to believe in Him. The prophets said that this man would be a "voice crying in the wilderness" with a special ministry of telling others about Jesus Christ. This man was John the Baptist. Therefore, when John the Baptist came telling others about Jesus, he was obeying what God wanted him to do.

WE: We are to be witnesses for Jesus Christ after we are saved. If we truly appreciate what Jesus did for us when He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins against God, we will be happy to witness to others about Him. When we are afraid to tell others what Jesus did for us, we need to ask God to help us be bold. Then by faith we need to step out for Christ and obey His command to let others know what Jesus can do to save them (Matt 28:19-20). Be a witness for Jesus Christ like John the Baptist was.

II. Purpose of John the Baptist - Matthew 3:3-4, 11

When John the Baptist came witnessing and telling others about Jesus Christ he was dressed in a very humble way. He wore a rough coat made of camel's hair and had a leather girdle wrapped around his waist. He also was humble by the food that he ate. He did not eat the type of food that the rich people and kings ate. His food was locusts (grasshoppers) and wild honey. His purpose (goal) in life was not to please himself by being well-dressed and having costly food. His only purpose was to tell others about Jesus Christ so they could receive Him as their Savior and King. He did not ask people to follow him to make him look important. Instead, he wanted people to repent of their sins and begin doing what was right. He wanted people to follow Jesus. John the Baptist never pretended to be someone great. He told people that he was not even good enough to untie Jesus' shoes. He let everyone know that Jesus was

LESSON PLAN

much greater than he was. He only wanted to be a witness and tell his nation about Jesus Christ so they could be saved from their sins.

WE: We need good goals to guide us in life. What are your goals? Our goal in life needs to be the same as John the Baptist's: we need to be a good witness for Jesus Christ. We need to look for opportunities to tell the people that we meet how Jesus can save them from their sins and from Hell. We need to be firm in our message as we witness to them. We also want to be humble as we witness so that we focus their attention on Jesus Christ and not on ourselves.

III. Preaching of John the Baptist - Matthew 3:5-12; John 1:23-24

As John the Baptist began preaching in the wilderness of Judea, many people went out from Jerusalem, and all Judea, and from the land around the Jordan River to hear him. He told them that they needed to confess and turn from their sins to flee from the wrath of God. If this was their sincere desire, he baptized them in the Jordan River as a testimony of the change they wanted to make in their lives. Some of them followed the preaching of John and wanted him to baptize them. However, many people did not like what John was preaching. Among them were the Pharisees and Sadducees who thought that their sins were removed by their religious works; they felt that were better than other people and did not need to repent. When John saw them come to hear him preach, he asked them, "Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Then he told them to show proof that they were sincere by confessing their sins and truly desired a change in their lives. However, if they were not sincere and wanted to repent, they would be cut down like a tree and cast into the fires of Hell.

One day when John the Baptist was preaching to a group of people, Jesus appeared, walking toward them. John pointed to Jesus and said to all the people, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:19). When he said this, he was telling the people who Jesus was. He was the Lamb of God, the true Lamb that could take away their sins. The blood of animal lambs could only cover sins, but it could not take away sins. It took the blood of a perfect human Lamb to take away the sins of imperfect people. The Lamb of God was God's sinless Son who became a man and died on the cross for the sins of all people. God's Son was Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God. He was sacrificed on the cross to take away our sins. John the Baptist was a true witness for Jesus Christ.

WE: We also need to be true witnesses for Jesus Christ. We need to let people know that Jesus is the only One who can take away their sins. He is the sinless Son of God who died on the cross for the sins of all people. We must tell them to turn from their sins and take Jesus Christ as their Savior. But, if we are a true witness, we must be like John the Baptist and warn people what will happen to them if they do not turn from their sins and take Jesus as their Savior. We must tell them that they will be sent to Hell, because God cannot allow anyone in Heaven with their sins. Be a good witness like John the Baptist.

BE (for Action): In our story today we learned why John the Baptist was chosen by God to prepare the way for Jesus to be presented to the Jewish people. He was a good witness for Jesus Christ. That was John the Baptist's goal in life. What did he tell people in his preaching? (He told them to turn from their sins and flee from the wrath of God by receiving Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God.) Tell others about Jesus Christ whenever you can. Witness to your friends by telling them how you got saved from the penalty of your sins. Tell them that they also need to be saved. Ask a few of the students to give their testimony of salvation to the class. Then review the Gospel Hand tract with them (or some other simple plan of salvation) and give everyone two tracts to give to their friends. Ask them to witness to their friends as they give out the tracts. Tell the students that you want them to tell what happened in their witnessing when you meet for Sunday school the next week.