

The Rev. Jay Lawlor “Look to Jesus” Sermon for 3 Advent 2017 St. John’s Episcopal Church – Speedway, IN

The Rev. Jay Lawlor continued as visiting priest for the Season of Advent 2017 at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Speedway, IN.

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, US, February 28, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Rev. Jay Lawlor](#) preached a [sermon](#) titled “Look to Jesus” for the 3rd Sunday of Advent, December 17, 2017 as visiting priest at St. John’s Episcopal Church, Speedway, IN. The Gospel for the day was John 1:6-8,19-28.



People shouldn’t listen to us because we, ourselves, have anything to say. Our role, like that of the John the Baptist, is to point the way toward Jesus.”

The Rev. Jay Lawlor

We have again this week a story of John the Baptist. This time as recounted in the Gospel According to John. The gospel’s authorship not to be confused with the Baptizer. The Gospel According to John was written in the late first or early second century in the Eastern Mediterranean by a group of Jewish Christians who had some connection to the Apostle

John. At the time of writing the gospel, it is twenty to thirty years following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and approximately six to seven decades after the death and resurrection of Christ. They are far enough removed from those events as to realize they are living in a new age – an age where the light of the world is already shining.

And in the Gospel According to John they tell of John the Baptist and his purpose: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light." (John 1:1-6)

It is almost as if it were a trial and John is the main witness – whose testimony is key. In a way it was. In the Honor-Shame society of First-Century Palestine, John the Baptist came to honor Jesus. John the Baptist had a large following and people were coming to him to be baptized – to be initiated into John’s group. Questions arose as to who John was, and if he could be the Messiah. He wanted to set the record straight – to be clear about who was, and was not, in relation to Jesus. As recorded in the Gospel According to John:

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” (John 1:19-20)

John the Baptist is perfectly clear that he is not the Messiah. He understood that his mission was to point the way toward the light of the world. A natural follow-up question would be who, then, is the Messiah? What did it mean for John the Baptist to be testifying as a witness to the light of the world?

New Testament scholar and Anglican Bishop, N.T. Wright suggests in his book *The Challenge of*

Jesus that:

"It meant, according to [the Gospel of] John, that Jesus would be lifted up to draw all people to himself. On the cross Jesus would reveal the true God in action as the lover and savior of the world. [...] and because Jesus' story reached it's climax on Calvary and with the empty tomb, that we can say: here is the light of the world. The Creator has done what [the Creator] promised. From now on we are living in the new age, the already-begun new world. The light is now shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (N.T. Wright, The Challenge of Jesus, pp. 177-178)

So John the Baptist was pointing the world toward Jesus. He was making ready the world to receive Jesus who is the light shining in the darkness. John the Baptist was telling those who questioned him that he is not the one they should be looking at. They were to look to Jesus. It is Jesus who is the Messiah.

We should hear John the Baptist speaking those same words to us as Christians today. It isn't about us. People shouldn't listen to us because we, ourselves, have anything to say. Our role, like that of the John the Baptist, is to point the way toward Jesus. [...]

A complete transcript of the Rev. Jay Lawlor's sermon is available at

<https://www.therevjaylawlor.com/look-jesus-sermon-rev-jay-lawlor-3-advent-dec-17-2017/>

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