

# Witnesses for the Savior



## SABBATH—OCTOBER 19

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** John 1:19–23; John 1:29–37; John 1:35–39; John 1:43–46; John 3:1–21.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth. Unless [except when] you are born again, you cannot be in God’s kingdom’ ” (John 3:3, ICB).



**Both the Bible and God the Father show that Jesus is the Savior.**

**JESUS** gave people powerful proof from the Bible to support the things He said about Himself. One of the things Jesus said about Himself was, “I tell you the truth. The person who believes in me will live for ever” (John 6:47, WE).

But there’s more. Jesus turned water into wine. He fed thousands of people with a few loaves of bread. Jesus healed a Jewish leader’s son. Jesus healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda. Jesus gave sight to one who was born blind. Jesus woke up Lazarus from the dead. John writes about the stories of many people who were witnesses for Jesus. Their stories tell us who Jesus is. These witnesses include Jews, non-Jews, rich and poor, men and women, leaders, people who had an education and people who didn’t.

John also talks about how God Himself is a witness for Jesus. So is the Bible. Both the Bible and God the Father show that Jesus is the Savior.

This week, we will start with John the Baptist’s story about Jesus. Then we will look at the stories about Jesus from Andrew and Simon Peter, Philip and Nathanael, and a surprise witness, the Jewish leader named Nicodemus. Of course, we will look at one of the most powerful human witnesses of all for Jesus: the writer of the Book of John himself.

**JOHN THE BAPTIST: A WITNESS FOR JESUS  
(John 1:19–23)**

As we saw last week, the Book of John starts with Jesus Christ, who is God's Word or living truth. John tells us that Jesus was alive before He made the skies and earth. Some Jews in Jesus' time expected two Saviors to come, one Savior who was a spiritual leader and one who was a king. John teaches that John the Baptist didn't announce himself to be one of these Saviors. John the Baptist was a witness for the real Savior.

**Read John 1:19–23. How did John the Baptist explain his work for God?**

The Jewish spiritual leaders sent people to ask John the Baptist who he was. People expected the Savior to come. So, they needed John the Baptist to announce if he was the Savior. John was not the Light. God sent John to be a witness for the Light. Also, God sent John to get people ready for the coming Savior (John 1:6–8). So, John answered the people plainly: " 'I am not the Christ [Savior]' " (John 1:20, ICB).

Also, John baptized with water. But Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit (John 1:26, 33). John said, " 'I am not good enough to get down and help Him take off His shoes' " (John 1:27, NLV). Jesus was more important than John because He was God (John 1:30). Jesus was the Son of God. John was only His messenger (John 1:34).

**Read Isaiah 40:1–5 and John 1:23. What do these verses help us to understand about John's special work?**

In Bible times, roads were filled with stones. These roads also had holes. Kings sent their servants to make the road smooth. The servants went first on the road to fill in the holes and remove the stones. Then the road was ready for the king to travel on. In the same way, God sent John the Baptist first to get the hearts of the people ready for Jesus to arrive.

**In what way should we as Seventh-day Adventists prepare people for our King in the same way that John the Baptist did for Jesus?**



**Kings sent their servants to make the road smooth.**

## THE LAMB OF GOD (John 1:29–37)

The Jews looked for a Savior who would make them free from Rome. John wrote his book about Jesus to help the people know the truth about the Savior. John wanted people to see that Jesus kept all God's promises in the Bible about the coming King. The Savior was not a leader with a throne on this earth. The Savior came to keep all the Old Testament promises about Himself. One of these promises said that the Savior would give Himself as an offering for everyone on earth. The Savior would also make new the relationship between God and His people.



**“When Jesus was baptized, John announced that Jesus was the Lamb of God.”**

**Read John 1:29–37. In these verses, what announcement does John make about Jesus? What word picture does John use to talk about Jesus? Why is this word picture so important? How does it help us understand who Jesus is and His work?**

John the Baptist announces that Jesus is God's Lamb. This announcement supports the reason why John the Beloved wrote his book about Jesus' life. John wanted to help people understand who the Savior really was and the work He came to do. Jesus came to be the offering for the sins of the human family. The offerings in the Old Testament showed what Jesus would do. Jesus would keep God's promise to save sinners. God first made this promise about the Savior in Genesis 3:15.

“When Jesus was baptized, John announced that Jesus was the Lamb of God. John's announcement helped people to understand the Savior's work in a new way. The Holy Spirit helped John remember the words that Isaiah wrote: ‘He was led away like a lamb to be killed.’ Isaiah 53:7 [NirV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 136, adapted.

**Read Mark 10:45; Romans 5:6; and 1 Peter 2:24. How do these verses help us understand the work that Jesus came to do as the Lamb of God?**

For sure, John the Baptist didn't understand everything about the Savior or the work He came to do. But John understood that Jesus was the promised Savior. Also, John understood that Jesus came to keep God's promises.

**Jesus is the Lamb of God. How does this word picture help you understand the price God paid to save us?**

## THE TWO FOLLOWERS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (John 1:35–39)

The two followers of John the Baptist stood with him when Jesus came near. John announced, “‘Look! The Lamb of God!’” (John 1:36, NIV). The two followers listened to John’s message about Jesus. Jesus came to keep all the Old Testament promises about the coming Savior. The two followers left John the Baptist to follow Jesus. The two followers understood that Jesus was more important than John the Baptist. The followers also understood that Jesus was the promised Savior that John preached about.

**Read about John the Baptist’s two followers in John 1:35–39. What did these two followers do after hearing John preach about Jesus?**

The followers wanted to be with Jesus. So, they stayed with Him for the day. Who knows what amazing experiences they had, or the wonderful things Jesus taught them!

They must have had a powerful experience. Before long, the two followers wanted to tell other people about Jesus. One of the two followers was Andrew. Right away, Andrew found his brother, Simon, and said, “‘We have found the Messiah [Savior]!’ (Messiah means the Christ, the messenger of [from] God.)” (John 1:41, WE). Then Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Right away, Jesus showed that He knew Simon. “Jesus looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon, the son of John. Your name will be Cephas.’ (Cephas means Peter, a rock or stone.)” (John 1:42, WE). Jesus understood Peter. Jesus’ special knowledge about people is an important topic in the Book of John that we see again and again (read John 2:24, 25).

“What if John and Andrew were the same as the Jewish leaders? Then John and Andrew couldn’t be Jesus’ followers. They would never sit at Jesus’ feet and learn from Him. They would come to Jesus to judge His words and attack Him. . . . But John and Andrew didn’t do those things. The Holy Spirit spoke to their hearts through the preaching of John the Baptist. John and Andrew answered the Holy Spirit’s invitation to follow Jesus. Now John and Andrew knew Jesus was a Teacher from heaven. . . . Jesus helped them to understand Old Testament teachings in a new way.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 139, adapted.

The Book of John helps us to understand who Jesus is so that we may share this Good News with everyone.



**Right away, Andrew went and found his brother, Simon, and said, “‘We have found the Messiah [Savior]!’ ”**



**PHILIP AND NATHANAEL (John 1:43–46)**

**Read John 1:43–46. What did Philip’s message show about his faith in Jesus?**

Philip was from Bethsaida. So were Andrew and Peter. Philip found his friend Nathanael and told him about Jesus. John the Baptist named Jesus the Lamb of God. Andrew told Peter that he found the Savior. But Philip said that Jesus was the Person that Moses and God’s special messengers wrote about. Philip also adds the name, “Jesus of Nazareth.” When Philip says Jesus is from Nazareth, Nathanael gives Philip a sharp answer.

Nathanael’s answer shows us that he had bad feelings in his heart against the town of Nazareth. For sure, no king would come from this town! Our bad feelings about something easily can close our minds. Nathanael could not understand Jesus at this time. How does Philip answer? He doesn’t try to argue with Nathanael. Philip invites Nathanael to, “‘come and see’ ” (John 1:46, ERV). So, Nathanael went and saw.



**With the Holy Spirit’s help, Jesus saw Nathanael while he prayed and searched for truth under that tree.**

**Read John 1:47–51. How does Jesus convince Nathanael about who He is? How does Nathanael answer?**

Nathanael’s answer to Philip’s invitation is missing between verses 46 and 47. We do know that Nathanael got up and went to see Jesus. Nathanael’s friendship with Philip was more important than his feelings about people from Nazareth. Nathanael met Jesus, and his life changed in that moment..

Jesus says nice words about Nathanael. Jesus says that Nathanael is an Israelite you can trust (John 1:47). Nathanael isn’t false. He doesn’t try to fool or trick people. Jesus’ nice words about Nathanael are different from Nathanael’s words about Jesus (John 1:46). Nathanael answers Jesus with surprise because he never met Jesus before. So, how could Jesus know who he was?

Then Jesus says that He saw Nathanael under a fig tree. This small announcement convinces Nathanael. With the Holy Spirit’s help, Jesus saw Nathanael while he prayed and searched for truth under that tree (read Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 140, 141). Nathanael confesses that Jesus is a Teacher, the Son of God, and the King of Israel.

**NICODEMUS (John 3:1–21)**

**Read the story about Nicodemus in John 3:1–21. How does this story show us who Jesus is?**

Nicodemus was a respected teacher in Israel and a wealthy member of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the name of the religious government for the Jews. Nicodemus' story about Jesus is an important part of John's book for several reasons. Nicodemus says that Jesus is a "Rabbi" or teacher. Nicodemus also believes that the signs that Jesus did are proof that Jesus came from heaven. So, before Nicodemus really understood what he was doing, he gave proof to support the idea that Jesus was the Savior.

Nicodemus believed the signs were proof that God sent Jesus. But Nicodemus didn't believe that the signs were proof that Jesus also kept all God's promises about the Savior in the Old Testament. So, Nicodemus came to Jesus with some doubt. He didn't, at this time, believe Jesus was the real Savior.

**What did Jesus say to Nicodemus to show that He saw everything in his heart? Read John 3:3–21 for the answer.**

Jesus knows what is in the heart of every person. The Jews believe that the non-Jews needed to be saved. But many Jews didn't understand that they, too, needed saving. They needed new hearts. No one is born saved.

The Jews had a wonderful history that went back to Abraham. They had many spiritual blessings (read Romans 3:1, 2). But that was not enough. Jesus told Nicodemus that, as a teacher and leader in Israel, he must be born again!

Then Jesus showed Nicodemus how little he really knew about being saved. "Jesus said, 'Are you a teacher among the Jews and do not know these things?' " (John 3:10, NLV). For sure, Jesus' words surprised Nicodemus.

Nicodemus had questions about Jesus at that time. But later, Nicodemus took Jesus' side with the true followers of Jesus (read John 19:39).

**What does it mean to be born again? Why did Jesus make being born again an important part of being a Christian?**



**Jesus told Nicodemus that as a teacher and leader in Israel, he must be born again!**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “Nicodemus,” pages 167–177, in *The Desire of Ages*.

Nicodemus “searched the Old Testament in a new way. He did not look for information to help him argue his ideas or win a fight. Nicodemus read the Bible to get spiritual life. He allowed the Holy Spirit to lead him. Then he started to understand the kingdom of heaven. . . .

“Our faith helps us to accept God’s mercy. But faith is not our Savior. Faith earns us nothing. Faith helps us grab hold of Jesus and accept His offering for our sin. . . . Jesus also helps us to feel sorry for breaking God’s law. Forgiveness is Jesus’ gift to us, too.

How are we saved? Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. In the same way, Jesus was lifted up on the cross. Everyone that the snake lied to and bit may look and live. That’s why John the Baptist said, “ ‘Look! The Lamb of God! He takes away the sins of the world!’ ” John 1:29 [ERV]. Spiritual truth, the same as light, shines from the cross. This light shows us God’s love. God’s love brings us to Himself. If we accept this love, God will lead us to Jesus. Jesus will help us say we are sorry for our sins. Jesus will help us to change our behavior. These sins hurt Jesus on the cross. Then the Holy Spirit will give us new life. We will start to control our thoughts and wishes and obey Jesus. The Holy Spirit makes our hearts and minds new, the same as Jesus. The Spirit helps us to be the same as Jesus is in our hearts and minds. The Spirit also writes God’s law in our minds and hearts. Then we can say with Jesus, ‘My God, I want to do what you want. Your teachings are in my heart.’ Psalm 40:8 [ICB].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 175, 176, adapted.



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the snake lied to and bit  
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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① John the Baptist came to get people ready for Jesus. What is the human idea of success? Do you think John was a success in the way that humans view and understand success? What is your idea of “success” in spiritual things?
- ② Later, John the Baptist shared some real doubts that he had about Jesus (Matthew 11:2, 3; Luke 7:19). What caused John’s questions? What can we learn from his questions about how to stay strong in our faith?

## A POWERFUL PRAYER IN UZBEKISTAN

An ambulance rushed 36-year-old Nigora to the hospital in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Nigora could hardly talk. She had no feeling in her arms. She had trouble swallowing. The doctor didn't know what was wrong with her.

Nigora got worse over the next month in the hospital. She couldn't sleep for more than 15 minutes a day. X-rays showed that something was wrong with her brain.

Then a second doctor said Nigora was going to die. The doctor gave her no hope.

Nigora didn't believe in Jesus. But Nigora had Seventh-day Adventist neighbors who believed in the Lord. The neighbors visited Nigora in the hospital. They asked her for permission to invite their church pastor to come and pray with her. Nigora said, "No, no! I'm not well. I look terrible. Tell your pastor to come when I feel better."

But Nigora's neighbors said, "Let the pastor come and pray for you."

Nigora didn't want to let the pastor visit her. But finally she agreed to let him come. A day later, the pastor and his wife came to Nigora's bed. The pastor read Psalm 23. He put oil on the front part of Nigora's face, between her eyes. Then the pastor prayed, "Lord, give health to our sister. Give her healing so she can be well." Nigora didn't feel any different after the prayer.

The next day, the pastor and his wife came back. Again, he read from the Bible. The pastor put oil on her and prayed. Again, Nigora didn't feel any different. But that night, she slept for several hours.

The third day, the pastor and his wife came back. Again, the pastor read from the Bible. He put oil on Nigora and prayed. Again, Nigora didn't feel any different. But that night, she slept the whole night. After that, she slept well every night.

The pastor and his wife continued to visit. Slowly, Nigora's speech improved. Her arms and legs started to work again. Hospital X-rays showed that her brain was normal. The doctor was surprised.

The doctor said, "How is it possible for you to get better so fast?"

Four months after the pastor started to pray, Nigora could drive her car and went back to work.

Before Nigora got sick, she didn't believe in God. But now she praises him for healing her. She says, "God worked a miracle to heal me."

Nigora is glad she has neighbors who care about her. She says, "I'm grateful to God that He gave me these nice friends. They are the same as my family."

## INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



The pastor put oil on Nigora and prayed.



Nigora