

SUNDAY SCHOOL

H

A.P. 08-05-2018

HIGHLIGHT: John 1:19-34

¹⁹This is John's testimony when the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?"

²⁰He did not refuse to answer, but he declared: "I am not the Messiah."

²¹"What then?" they asked him. "Are you Elijah?"

"I am not," he said.

"Are you the Prophet?"

"No," he answered.

²²"Who are you, then?" they asked. "We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What can you tell us about yourself?"

²³He said, "I am a voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord—just as Isaiah the prophet said."

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵So they asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you aren't the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?"

²⁶"I baptize with water," John answered them. "Someone stands among you, but you don't know Him. ²⁷He is the One coming after me, whose sandal strap I'm not worthy to untie."

²⁸All this happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is the One I told you about: 'After me comes a man who has surpassed me, because He existed before me.' ³¹I didn't know Him, but I came baptizing with water so He might be revealed to Israel."

³²And John testified, "I watched the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He rested on Him. ³³I didn't know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The One you see the Spirit descending and resting on—He is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴I have seen and testified that He is the Son of God!"



EXPLAIN

The last words that Israel heard from God before a period of deafening silence were scathing, to say the least. The Priesthood had blasphemed the altar of the Lord for the final time, securing the period of silence that followed. But before God gave them the silence they deserved, He made a promise: the Messiah was coming, and there was going to be a man before Him, clearing a path for Him to walk through. In today's passage, at long last, we get to see both of those men: John the Baptizer, and Jesus, who is the Messiah.

- v.19 The first use of “Jews” in John’s Gospel does not speak to the nation of Israel or to Jews in general, but a particular section of them. John speaks particularly of the religious elite in Jerusalem. John presents them at the beginning of his Gospel for the same reason that he includes anything: so that we may know that Jesus is the Messiah. Here is why:

There were a number of false Messiahs before Jesus came, so the religious establishment had to have a way to know whether they were dealing with the real deal or not. So the religious establishment in Jerusalem would send out teams to investigate Messiah claims. They question John in this section. They were who Jesus was talking to in Luke 5:17 in the crowded house where He healed a paralytic man. They investigated His healing of a man born blind with annoying fervor in John 9 (because healing a man born blind was one of the *Messianic miracles*, or signs only God could do. At each turn, these investigators are skeptical and unable to disprove anything that Jesus does, lending significant credibility to His ministry.

- v.23 Though John made disciples and had followers during his ministry, it was not his purpose to teach lessons or to instill a code of ethics or to ensure his disciples could hold their own in a debate; it was his only purpose to point people to Jesus, and he did it gladly.

This answer comes in response to those from Jerusalem who were asking about who he was. John understood their motives, though (Matthew 3:7 records that he called them a “brood of vipers”), and wasn’t interested in talking about himself. He only talked about his mission, which was to prepare the way for the Messiah.

- v.26 John’s humility is remarkable, and also points to what Jesus is going to do. John’s baptism is merely with water—the best he can do is keep people clean, much like the animal sacrifices in Jerusalem produced spots of momentary cleanliness before God. Jesus, however, is going to baptize with fire, which purifies and hardens those who can withstand it—those with the Spirit of God inside of them.



A**APPLY**

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you read in the text?
2. John's introduction of Jesus when he finally saw Him was short but powerful. If someone were introducing you, what would you want them to say?
3. John's gospel was written so that we may know that Jesus is the Son of God (John 20:31). Why do you think that he began with this account of John the Baptist? What does it reveal about Jesus (and about Scripture)? How does it affect you today?
4. John could've said anything about Jesus when He showed up, but He chose "Lamb of God." What role does a lamb play in regards to sin? How is "Lamb of God" a great, quick summary of who Jesus is?
5. How do you think the average churchgoer sees Jesus—as the "Lamb of

R**RESPOND**

- Is your view of Jesus supported, as John the Baptizer's was, with Scripture?
- How would seeing Jesus as John introduced Him change your view of Him?

