

A Study of John's Gospel

Lesson 2: The Beginning Public Ministry of Jesus (1:19-51)

December 11, 2011

John records details of an eventful week- when men first recognized Jesus as the Messiah (1:19 - 2:11). We too remember the specifics of great events that have impacted our lives.

“A Voice Crying in the Wilderness” (1:19-28)

John the Baptist clarifies beyond any shadow of doubt, that he is not the Christ. He taught the imminent coming of the kingdom and established a following of penitent Jews longing to see their King. John explained to those sent from the Pharisees that he was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Isa 40:3-4); he was the one preparing the path for the coming Messiah.

“Behold, the Lamb of God” (1:29-34)

On the next day, John sees Jesus coming and proclaims to all that He is the Messiah, the one sent from God to take away the sins of the world. Referencing Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist further explains how he was confident of Jesus' identity. God told John that His son is the one “you shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon Him.” John knew and proclaimed that Jesus was someone who John could never be, the Savior of men.

“We Have Found the Messiah” (1:35-42)

The following day, John the Baptist encourages two of his faithful followers to transfer their allegiance to Jesus. These two disciples (Andrew and possibly John the apostle and author of this gospel) were able to spend an evening with Jesus. Can you imagine the discussions of that night? So convicted by his experience with Jesus, Andrew immediately searched out his brother Simon (renamed Peter) to break the news that the prophesied Christ had indeed appeared.

“You will see Greater Things” (1:43-51)

Two more disciples (Philip and Nathanael) were found by Jesus before heading to Galilee. Nathanael, having his understanding clouded with prejudice, could not imagine the coming Messiah could actually be from Nazareth. Though the miraculous evidence subsided Nathanael's unbelief, Jesus knew what these men were about to experience through the next three years of inspired teaching.

Questions:

1. Summarize the discussion between John the Baptist and those sent from the Pharisees. How does John's denial of being Elijah coincide with Jesus' claim for John in Matt 11:13-14; 17:10-13? See also Luke 1:17. How does John the Baptist fulfill the prophesy of Isaiah 40:3-4?
2. What is meant by identifying Jesus as “the Lamb of God”?
3. What evidence does Philip provide to Nathanael to convince him that Jesus was the Christ?
4. How does Jesus describe the “greater things” that Nathanael would witness? What do you think Jesus meant by this?