



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA
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The Gospel of John

John the Baptizer pt.2

John 1:24-34

Related Topics: Zechariah; Elizabeth; John the Baptizer; Angel Gabriel; Testifying About Jesus; Self-Identity; Humility; The Greatness of John the Baptizer; Parental Influence; Pharisees; The Book of Revelation; The Lamb of God; Sacrificial Lamb; Genesis 3; Exodus 12; Passover; Genesis 22; Abraham on Mt. Moriah; Isaiah 53

REVIEW

Last week we were introduced to the cousin of Jesus — John the Baptizer.

His coming was promised in the Old Testament (Malachi). He was brought into the world by way of divine intervention — His dad and mom (Zachariah and Elizabeth) were “stricken in years” and incapable of conceiving. He was faithful to his mission — to prepare the way of the coming of God Incarnate.

We were able to laugh at the very real peculiarities of John (The under the overpass prophet — including his weird diet and his weird wardrobe). At the age of 30 John steps onto the scene of history — Itchy — bad wardrobe — bad hair — locust legs stuck in his beard. Kind of crazy looking and got a bad case of the shakes from all that honey — Yelling REPENT at the top of his lungs!

Though he was an ODD man he was GOD’S MAN! He’s not afraid of the politicians (Herod Antipas). He’s not afraid of the Army. He’s not afraid of the religious leaders. He can’t be bought. He belongs to no one. He just

serves God and does what God tells him to do. That's John. Over a period of 18 months maximum it is estimated that John baptized between 200,000 and 500,000 people.

The religious establishment of Israel sent a delegation to John — a “fact-finding” team” so-to-speak.

"Are you the Messiah?" — "No, I am not."

"Are you Elijah?" — "I am not."

"Are you the prophet?" — "No."

John has NOTHING to say about himself because he understood that he was sent to talk about Jesus! The ONLY thing John said about himself was who or what he **wasn't!** *I'll tell you **who I'm not** and **what I'm not** just so that I can tell you **who Jesus is!** I'm not here to talk about me — I've been sent to talk about Jesus. I'm just a voice — Jesus is the Word!*

²⁴**(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.)**

QUESTION: were the Pharisees the good guys or the bad guys?

That's a problematic question even in our times. Because (even in our times) — quite often the good guys are tagged as the bad guys. And the problem with the bad guys is that they always think they're the good guys.

We only use the term Pharisee in a derogatory way because of what we know of them in the Gospels — and that is not a pretty thing. But they didn't START that way.

We might say in our vernacular that the Pharisees started out as the back to the Bible club. THAT should scare you and me. How did the group who wanted to get people serious about as the archenemy of Jesus? If you are a person who believes that God speaks and the Bible is true and we should do as it says — (that would be us) — we have the potential of becoming Pharisees.

These were the guys who said – *we're sick of people not reading the bible, we're sick of people not obeying God, we're sick of people not respecting God and doing what he says. People need to get serious.*

IS THAT BAD? No! But what they BECAME is really bad! These men began to ADD to the Word of God. They began to make rules to explain God's rules — and then they made rules to explain the rules that explain God's rules. And, before you know it, you have rules that explain the rules, that explain the rules, that explain the rules, that explain the God's rules.

Sadly — They got to the point where they placed their rules above God's Word.

MUCH MORE TO SAY ON THIS when we come to Nicodemus in John 3.

They based their sense of righteousness on things external — on the keeping of their man made rules. If you didn't adhere to every detail of their rules you weren't righteous. Everybody in Israel thought of the Pharisees as THE most righteous people in the nation. But Jesus said they were clean on the outside but were filthy on the inside

Matthew 23:27:28 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

LOOK at this delegation —

FIRST — They come to John as those who know God's Word — They even come with a list of Biblical questions to ask him. But when the John quotes from Scripture to identify himself (**v. 23**) we will see in **v.25** that they ignore it entirely.

In reality — they aren't really concerned about the Scriptures and what God might want to say to them through the Scriptures. **LIKE TODAY** — People can say they value the Bible — even use *Bible-Speak* — but they really aren't interested in what the Bible says to their own lives.

SECONDLY — Their lack of genuine openness to truth of Scripture is matched by a lack of personal desire. The religious leaders of Jerusalem are

not even interested enough to come themselves (v. 19). And even those who did come have no personal interest— they only want to have an answer for those who sent them. One commentary referred to this as spiritual voyeurism.

FINALLY — They also would have been upset with John because John wasn't just baptizing non-Jewish people — he was baptizing everybody. Men and women who would have been considered exemplary descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Good Hebrew mom's and dads. But he was calling THEM sinners and dunking them in the Jordan! **WHY?** Because ALL of them were sinners who needed to prepare their hearts for the coming Jesus! They were **all** wicked and depraved.

*Wait, you're saying that everybody is evil? That's exactly what John was saying — That **everybody** needs cleansing — and by the way — you Religious leaders, you're spiritually sick too, and YOU need to prepare your hearts to meet your Savior!*

²⁵They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”

You you've got a problem with me — you haven't seen anything. I'm the guy singing the National Anthem before the game. I am nobody. We haven't even started.

And, about this one who is coming after me — I'm not even worthy to untie his sandals!

The most common and menial job for a slave was to untie his master's sandals. In our vernacular it would be like saying — *I'm not even good enough to empty His bed pan.*

You think I'm a prophet? I'm not a prophet. I'm not Elijah. I'm not Jesus. I'm nobody. I'm just a voice who's not good enough to be a janitor for Jesus Christ. That's what I am.

CRUCIAL: John had this tremendous understanding of his own humility in light of Jesus.

THAT is the only place we become HUMBLE. Jesus called that attitude of heart — POOR IN SPIRIT. The ONLY place one gets the sense that he/she is spiritually bankrupt is in the light of who Jesus is. **EXAMPLE:** [Isaiah 6](#)

[28](#)These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

John the Apostle records that this took place at a very significant spot, in Bethany, beyond the Jordan. The old name for Bethany is Bethabara, which means, "the place of passage." Tradition held that this was where Joshua led the Israelites into the promised land. **BIG STUFF HERE** — Moses — who represents "the Law" was not the one to lead Israel into the land of promise. It was a man named Joshua (which is Hebrew for Jesus) who led them in. The Joshua of the O.T. was a TYPE or a foreshadowing of our Joshua — our Jesus who would lead us into eternal life and abundant life. You see the Law can't give you life — it can only condemn. We are *saved by grace* — Saved by Jesus who is *FULL of GRACE and truth*.

As we move forward in the narrative we want to look at it much like like the director of a movie. John's down by the river — wild hair — bugs stuck in his beard — people coming and repenting of their sins — there are people lined up in droves watching John

And then Jesus walks over the hill — and John sees his cousin!

[29](#)The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him

The camera has been focused on the one sent by God to PREPARE the hearts of the nation for the coming of Jesus — the man miraculously brought into this world by God to BEAR WITNESS of Jesus.

Suddenly the figure of John blurs and there is a tightly focused shot of Jesus.

We DON'T want to MISS THIS — Jesus walks on to the stage of John's Gospel. Here is the **FIRST** time that John the Baptizer can point out and identify the One whose way he has been preparing

WHAT does John say — **HOW** does John IDENTIFY God Incarnate?

The **WAY** that John identifies Jesus is **MINDBLOWING** for every Jewish person standing there.

²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John did not identify Jesus as **any old lamb** — to somehow tell the multitudes that Jesus was meek as a little lamb.

In the last book penned by John — The Book of Revelation — John tells us that he is caught up into heaven — and his **FIRST glimpse** of Jesus in heaven matches the **first identifying words** upon seeing Jesus at the Jordan.

Rev. 5:6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain,

Did you know that **TWENTY-EIGHT** times in the Book of Revelation Jesus is identified as **A LAMB**? The last book of the Bible is literally titled **THE UNVEILING OF JESUS**. The night before Jesus died on the Cross He said that it would be the work of the Holy Spirit to point us to Jesus. When God the Holy Spirit breathed out — inspired — the last book of the Bible — He **EMPHASIZED** the identity of Jesus as **THE LAMB**.

Jesus has from eternity been **THE LAMB SLAIN!**

THAT is why **THE LAMB** was **HUGE** in the history of Israel as an animal to be sacrificed.

In light of the **Book of Revelation** I believe that it was not just ANY animal the God had slain in order to provide covering for the nakedness of Adam and Eve. I believe it was a lamb.

In **Genesis 22** Abraham had promised that God would one day provide Himself as a sacrificial lamb on Mt. Moriah (which is where the Temple was built).

Then in **Exodus 12** we there was *the lamb without spot or blemish* that was sacrificed in Egypt — and its blood plastered on their doors so that the angel of death would pass over their houses

Then there were the lambs sacrificed every morning and evening in the Tabernacle in the wilderness and ultimately in the Temple on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem.

There was the Lamb of which Isaiah had prophesied (**Isa. 53**) 700 years before John 1 — who would **like a lamb** *"brought to the slaughter." (Isaiah 53:7.) He would be WOUNDED for our transgressions and CRUSHED for our iniquities — the chastisement for our peace would be laid upon Him — and by the stripes laid on His back WE would be healed.*

By the way — REMEMBER — John is from a priestly family in Israel. He knows all about the sacrificial system — the temple ministries — and the priesthood.

I think that the average Bible student has a very sterile and sanitary picture of the temple and the sacrifices offered there. It was NOT a neat and tidy thing by any stretch of the imagination. THINK BUTCHER SHOP. It was a bloody mess. Live animals tied to the horns of the altar — slitting their throats — cutting them into pieces. Josephus tells us that the amount of blood shed at Passover made the Brook Kidron flow RED with blood. It wasn't pleasant to any of the senses.

When faced with this scene in the Old Testament people ask — HOW in the world is that going to fix anything? Well — those sacrifices didn't fix anything — they were looking forward — they were a PICTURE of — the ONE and ONLY remedy for sin that God was going to provide.

There in the Old Testament — When you had sinned you would bring this innocent, naïve, pure, unblemished, lamb to the priests. You put your hand on the head of the animal as a sign of your sin being placed upon that innocent victim. THEN — the priest would brutally slaughters him — it's blood is shed and it's body torn to shreds. From the Book of Exodus forward — that is what was done every day — countless times a day — in the tabernacle and ultimately in the Temple in Jerusalem — RIGHT UP TO THIS DAY in John 1.

Jesus (returning from 40 days in the wilderness where he was tempted by Satan) walks onto the set (so-to-speak)

John says — LOOK! There is THE LAMB of God!

QUOTE: *The Old testament can be summed up by the question — "WHERE is the Lamb." The New Testament can be summed up by the declaration — "THERE is the Lamb!"*

Every lamb sacrificed in the history of the nation was pointing to THIS man! HIS body is going to get broken open by the Roman Scourge. and HIS blood is going to get shed and by HIS death God will pay the price for the sin of the whole world —

The sin of Hitler and Mussolini — Stalin and Mao

The sin of Charles Manson and Dommer

Every rape — Every Abortion — Every murder ever committed

The totality of everything that **you** and **I** have done — past, present and future — **everything** was laid upon **HIM** as a substitute

He was crucified and died in our place.

REMEMBER — John has been calling upon people to address the issue of sin in their lives. It was not water baptism that could cleanse them. THAT was just preparing the way for the ONLY ONE who could wash away sin!

KNOWING THAT — John said — *behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*

*You want to get clean? You need **that guy** to die for you. You need his blood to be shed for you.*

HUGE — We don't know ANYTHING about Jesus if we don't see Him as John did.

Churches are filled with men and women who embrace the example of Jesus — who embrace the matchless teachings of Jesus — but they do not see Him first and foremost as God who became man — so that He might be THE LAMB who would die for our sins.

WHAT IS THE FIRST THING that YOU think about when you think of Jesus?

John did NOT say — *Behold the great teacher* — or *Behold the perfect example*.

He said — BEHOLD — Here is the REMEDY for your sins.

QUOTE: F.B. Meyer Gospel of John □: The Life and Light of Men □ — Love to the Uttermost — *Look into these words; the Gospel glistens in them, as the whole sun in a single dewdrop. They tell us that the sacrifice of the cross is the outcome of the thought and preparation of the infinite God. Jesus is the Lamb of God.*

1 Peter 1:18-20 ¹⁸knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. ²⁰He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake,

QUOTE: F.B. Meyer — *They remind us that his propitiation for sin is not for ours only, but for the whole world. They give a clue to the cause of that mysterious anguish which at times overwhelmed Him... O blessed Lamb! what shall we say of Thee or to Thee? Words fail us. Thou wast made sin for us. Thou hast washed us from our sins in thy blood. Thou has put away sin by the sacrifice of Thyself. Thou art longing that every soul of man should know and rejoice in thy yearning love, thy*

glorious work. We praise, and adore, and worship Thee. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!

³⁰This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’

John says – you know, I was born a few months before Jesus, but he’s eternal. He’s timeless, he just happened to come into the earth at a particular time and place. He is far greater than I.

³¹I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.”

Can you imagine John looking back? I’m sure that at certain points, John and Jesus, growing up as kids came together — maybe around the three major feasts of Israel. John says – I had no idea.

I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed in Israel.

John says – ***NOW*** I know what was going on. **All** of what I was doing, all of what I was preaching, all of what I was proclaiming, that was just so that people could see Jesus, that’s all.

Then John looks back to an event that took place some 40 days earlier. It was in that event that John the Baptizer came to know that Jesus is the SON OF GOD.

³²And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’

He heard the voice of God the father. The same voice that came to him at some point in his wilderness living that said – you are going to be my prophet. You go prepare the way. You are going to be Isaiah, 40:3. You go baptize people and tell them they need to be cleansed.

³⁴And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

We are told in Matthew 3 and Mark 1 that when John baptized Jesus, and Jesus came up out of the water that the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove. And, that God the father cries out from heaven – this is my son! This is my son.

THIS IS AWESOME — In this great moment, you see the totality of the one true God — God the father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit.

So John **KNOWS** that Jesus is **THE SON OF GOD**.

John **KNOWS** that **THE SON OF GOD** is **THE LAMB OF GOD!**

CLOSING —

As your pastor — One of my responsibilities is to remind myself and all of you that we are sinful — we are wicked — we are worse than we could possibly believe. Why is the world a bad place? Because we are in it! We all need cleansing. We all need healing. We all need forgiveness. **We all need Jesus.**

None of us is able to save anyone — but at our best moments we can do like John did — and point other people to Jesus. That's where people get healed. That's where people get saved. That's where people get cleansed, released, forgiven, renewed!

IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS! John knew that more than anything!

But I'm sure John also had his temptations!

The political leaders could have told him — *look John, join our team, bring your followers... there will be some opportunity here.*

The religious leaders could have told him — *look, you're a priest's son, you can be a priest... just come back into the fold. Don't be talking so much about sin. Kind of let things settle down. There's a good, long future for you, just like there was for your dad.*

But John wasn't interested in any of those things!

John just wanted people to know that they were sinful and that Jesus was THE LAMB OF GOD who could TAKE AWAY ALL of their sin. That's all he wanted people to know.

What a great passage to bring us to the Communion Table.

QUOTE: J.C. Ryle *Expository Thoughts On the Gospels Volume 3* — *Let us serve him faithfully as our Master. Let us obey Him loyally as our King. Let us study His teaching as our Prophet. Let us walk diligently after Him as our Example. Let us look anxiously for Him as our coming Redeemer of body as well as soul. But above all, let us prize Him as our Sacrifice, and rest our whole weight on His death as an atonement for sin. Let His blood be more precious in our eyes every year we live. Whatever else we glory in about Christ, let us glory above all things in His cross. This is the corner-stone, this is the citadel, this is the rule of true Christian theology. We know nothing rightly about Christ, until we see him with John the Baptist's eyes, and can rejoice in Him as "the Lamb that was slain."*

COMMUNION and OFFERING