

A. John 1:19-51 – A four day view into the ministry of John the Baptist

1. John 1:19-28 – Day One: John’s testimony concerning himself
 - a. John 1:19 – John the Baptist preached a message of vital importance to **Israel**.
 - 1) John 1:19a – *This is the testimony of John...* In his Gospel, John used the Greek word for testimony or witness (MARTURIA) 33 times. The repeated use of testimony and witness shows the importance John placed on having verifiable **evidence** regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:5-19
 - 2) John 1:19b – ... *when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem...* The term *Jews* in John’s Gospel typically refers to the religious **leaders**, including the priests, Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes who were hostile to Jesus and His message.
 - 3) John 1:19c – ...*to ask him, “Who are you?”* The Pharisees sent priests and Levites to investigate John the Baptist’s identity. It is evident that the leaders of Israel were **perplexed** concerning John the Baptist’s message and ministry.
 - b. John 1:20 – *And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”* Many in Israel falsely claimed to be Messiah. John the Baptist, on the other hand, clearly and emphatically **denied** being the Christ.
 - c. John 1:21a – *They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.”* The Jewish people had many expectations and speculations concerning Elijah’s **return**. Malachi 4:5-6
 - d. John 1:21b – *“Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”* John denied being the prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15. The reason for John’s short answers may have been his **disdain** for the defiant arrogance of the religious leaders who refused to repent and believe in Christ. Matthew 3:7, Luke 3:7
 - e. John 1:22 – *Then they said to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”* These emissaries were anxious to take back a satisfactory **report** to the Pharisees.
 - f. John 1:23 – *He said, “I am a **voice** of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”* To explain his ministry, John the Baptist quoted Isaiah 40:3. John knew that he was the prophesied forerunner of the Messiah. By his teaching, he was preparing the people for the coming of the Christ. Matthew 3:1-3
 - g. John 1:24 – *Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.* John, the author of this book, made it clear that it was the Pharisees who had **sent** these priests and Levites to probe into John the Baptist’s person and ministry.
 - h. John 1:25 – *They asked him, and said to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”* These leaders wanted to know why John felt he had the **authority** to baptize people. In their minds, unless he was someone great like the Christ, Elijah or the prophet of Deuteronomy, he did not qualify to baptize people.
 - i. John 1:26 – *John answered them saying, “I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know.”* Instead of answering their question concerning his authority, John shifted the **focus** to the Messiah. This was a perfect answer, since his assignment from God was to introduce people to Christ. Matthew 3:11, Acts 19:4
 - j. John 1:27 – *“It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”* John was faithful to the ministry God gave him. He always promoted the Messiah and never himself. In fact, John freely acknowledged he was not **worthy** of even performing the lowliest task for the coming Messiah. Mark 1:7; John 1:15, 3:30
 - k. John 1:28 – *These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.* Bethany was on the east side of the Jordan River; it was the **base** of operations for John’s baptismal ministry at that time.
2. John 1:29-34 – Day Two: John disclosed the identity of Jesus, the Messiah
 - a. John 1:29 – *The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* John’s statement was a reference to both the Passover **lamb** and Christ’s future substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the world.
 - b. John 1:30 – *This is He on behalf of whom I said, “After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.”* Even though John was older than Jesus and his ministry began before Jesus’ ministry, John recognized that Jesus was the eternal God and therefore infinitely **superior** to him.
 - c. John 1:31 – *I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.* Although John knew who Jesus was, and that he was responsible to prepare the way for the Messiah, it was not until John baptized Jesus that he **discovered** He was the Messiah. John 1:7, Mark 1:7, Acts 19:4

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- d. John 1:32 – *John testified saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him . Unlike Matthew’s detailed account of Jesus’ baptism, John recorded only one indispensable **detail** the coming of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at that event. Matthew 3:13-17, Romans 1:4*
- e. John 1:33 – *I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ God had told John the Baptist how he would be able to **recognize** the Messiah. Isaiah 40:3-5, Malachi 3:1*
- 1) The man on whom John would see the Holy Spirit **descend** and remain, that man would be the Messiah.
 - 2) Matthew 3:16-17 says, “As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. Suddenly the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and resting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is My beloved **Son** , in whom I am well pleased!” Matthew 17:5
 - 3) Upon seeing the Spirit descend upon and remain on Jesus, John knew, and could confidently proclaim, that Jesus was **Messiah**.
- f. John 1:34 – *I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God. John the Baptist was the first witness in scripture to **confirm** that Jesus was indeed the promised coming Deliverer and the Son of God. Luke 1:35, John 5:23*
3. John 1:35-42 – Day Three: John’s disciples follow Jesus
- a. John 1:35 – *Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples. In the Gospels the term “disciples” refers to John’s and Jesus’s most intimate and **devoted** followers. In the book of Acts, Christ’s disciples came to be called Christians. Matthew 9:14, 28:19; Acts 11:26, 14:21*
 - b. John 1:36 – ... *and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” John the Baptist pointed Jesus out to his disciples and declared that He was God’s provision to bear the sins of mankind. Since John’s mission was to prepare the way for the Messiah, he was happy for his disciples to **follow** Christ. John 1:6-7, 15, 23, 29*
 - c. John 1:37 – *The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Even though it is somewhat hard to discern from this verse, these two disciples were Andrew (Jn. 1:40) and, likely, John. In the gospel of John, the apostle John often spoke of himself indirectly in the third person. These two **men** were Jesus’ first disciples.*
 - d. John 1:38 – *And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?” Jesus questioned them to **uncover** their real motivation for following Him.*
 - e. John 1:39 – *He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. Even though Jesus’ place of lodging was likely humble, He unashamedly invited these two disciples to come see Him. He was glad to take the time to **visit** with them.*
 - f. John 1:40 – *One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother . Andrew immediately believed that Jesus was the Son of God. Andrew would soon go out and invite his brother Simon (Peter) to come meet Jesus. **Peter** became a prominent and influential follower of Christ.*
 - g. John 1:41 – *He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means Christ). Andrew immediately looked for his brother to tell him the exciting news that he had **met** the promised Deliverer.*
 - h. John 1:42 – *He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter). The Lord saw Peter for who he could be if he learned to depend on Christ. Jesus immediately nicknamed him Cephas, which is the Aramaic word for **stone**.*
4. John 1:43-51 – Day Four: Jesus left the region where John the Baptist was ministering
- a. John 1:43a – *The next day He purposed to go into Galilee... John the Baptist’s ministry was in a **region** called “Bethany beyond the Jordan,” some 60 kilometers from Jerusalem. After His baptism, Jesus decided to leave this area and head north into the province of Galilee.*
 - b. John 1:43b – ...*and He found Philip. The word found is HEURISKÓ and is in the present tense, active voice, and indicative mood, signifying that that which was found had been **pursued** or sought after. Jesus intentionally found Philip; He did not just happen to bump into him. He searched for him and found him.*
 - c. John 1:43b – ...*and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.” Jesus decisively invited Philip to be His disciple. Though Jesus does not audibly call us today, through His Word He invites every saint to a deeper walk with Him. Jesus wants us all to become His **mature** followers.*
 - d. John 1:44 – *Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. The town of Bethsaida was in the northeast corner of the Sea of Galilee. It was a fishing community. It was near this town that Jesus fed*

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the 5,000 and walked on **water**. Matthew 11:21, Mark 8:22, John 12:21

- e. John 1:45 – *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”* In his testimony about Jesus, **Philip** emphasized to Nathanael Jesus’ fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Messiah.
- f. John 1:46a – *Nathanael said to him, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”* As a **student** of the scriptures, Nathanael would likely have known that Messiah was to come from Bethlehem, not Nazareth. His derogatory statement about Nazareth (and Galilee) was common among Jews at the time of Christ. John 7:41,52
- g. John 1:46b – *Philip said to him, “Come and see.”* Rather than arguing with him, Philip invited Nathanael to find out for himself. Philip was sure that if Nathanael met Jesus, he would reach to the same conclusion he had.
- h. John 1:47 – *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”* Jesus basically said, “Look here! This is an **honest** descendant of Israel. He is a man of impeccable integrity.”
- i. John 1:48 – *Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”* Jesus’ omniscience blew Nathanael’s mind. How could Jesus have known **where** he was and what he had been doing?
- j. John 1:49 – *Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.”* Nathanael’s use of these **titles** for Jesus, showed his understanding of the Old Testament scriptures. When Nathanael saw Jesus, he instantly believed He was the Messiah, God-become-man, and the great and final King of kings. Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, 11:1, 22:22; Daniel 2:44, 9:25; Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35
- k. John 1:50 – *Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”* Nathanael responded correctly when he saw Jesus’ omniscience and believed. However, Jesus also told Nathanael that he was going to see Him do even **greater** miracles in the future.
- l. John 1:51a – *And He said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you...”* John, the author of this book, used the phrase “*Truly, truly,*” **25 times** in his Gospel as if to say, “Hey, listen up! What I am about to tell you is the truth, and you really need to know it.”
- m. John 1:51b – *“...you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”* John was referring to an important **future** event. Ezekiel 1:1
- 1) Jesus was **referring** to Jacob’s dream in Genesis 28. Had this been on Nathanael’s mind earlier that day? Had Jesus read his mind?
 - 2) In Genesis 28:12, Jacob had a dream in which he saw **angels** ascending and descending on a stairway that reached from earth to heaven.
 - 3) In Genesis 28:13 Jacob dreamed that God appeared at the top of the stairs and promised to give him and his prodigy the land of Canaan. In essence, Jesus said to Nathanael that He was the fulfillment of Jacob’s **dream**. Christ is indeed the only access (the staircase) to God. John 14:6, Acts 4:12