

# John 1:19-34

CG Discussion Guide// Week of October 2, 2022

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## INTRODUCTION:

- Icebreaker: What is your go-to dance move?
- Take some time to pray for one another's needs and requests (refer to Prayer Guide as needed)
- Choose either discussion questions and abide time questions depending on your group's needs

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

**Vv. 19-23:** John the Baptist is again introduced to us, and we're given his dialogue with representatives of the Jewish religious establishment ("Priests and Levites"). The big question of the day: John the Baptist, WHO ARE YOU? John the Baptist is asked about three distinct identities. He denies each one: John the Baptist is not the Christ, he is not (literally THE) Elijah (see Matt. 11:11-15 and Matt. 17:11-13 to see Jesus' interpretation of John the Baptist's ministry), and he is not "The Prophet" (most likely an allusion to Deut. 18:15-19, about a future Moses-like Prophet whose every word is directly from God). So who is John the Baptist? JB identifies himself as the "voice crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord'"--the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3.

- *John doesn't give as many details about John the Baptist's ministry as the other gospel accounts do. In fact, John's writing seems to assume that the readers have some knowledge of who John the Baptist is. What does this tell us about John's approach to writing about Jesus' life?*
- *What strikes you about how John the Baptist identifies himself? About his attitude?*
- *What does it mean for John the Baptist to make straight the way of the Lord (see Isa. 40:3-5)?*

**Vv. 24-28:** After identifying himself, John the Baptist is further questioned by the Pharisees: "Why do you baptize if you're not the Christ, Elijah, or the coming Prophet?" Baptism by water wasn't an unknown practice at the time, but the nature and mode of John's baptism (which was innovative) made the leaders take note: John was baptizing Jewish people as a sign of repentance in preparation for the coming of the Kingdom. To the Jewish leaders, this constituted a claim to end-time realities (the coming Kingdom, the Day of the Lord, etc.), and if John the Baptist wasn't the Christ, Elijah, or the coming future Prophet, then by whose authority is he baptizing? Curiously, John the Baptist doesn't give a direct answer, but rather, he points to a future Person, "unknown" by the leaders (sounds like John 1:10-11 eh?), whose glory and standing is such that the mere act of lowly service towards Him is considered too high for John ("not worthy to untie"). This encounter happened in Bethany on the other side of the Jordan (not the same Bethany that would later feature in John's gospel, which was located east of Jerusalem).

- *How does John's indirect answer to the Pharisees strike you? Why wouldn't John just give a direct answer? What would the direct answer have been?*
- *Why would John point to this future Person? Connect this with the role that John had as "the wilderness voice."*
- *As people who tell others about Jesus and His work, what can we learn from John the Baptist's attitude and approach?*

**Vv. 29-34:** The very next day, we finally see the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ, enter apostle John's narrative on our side of reality--introduced by none other than John the Baptist. But instead of calling Jesus "the Christ" or "Lord," John calls Him "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"--a term not used at the time to refer to the Messiah, which points to the fact that we see in the Gospels that most of Jesus' contemporaries had a very different view of the Messiah, and thus a different view of what the Messiah would come to do. John the Baptist glorifies Jesus by highlighting Jesus' preexistence ("In the beginning was the Word."), and points to Jesus as the very reason he was baptizing in the first place--repentance for the forgiveness of sins is now possible because the Lamb has come to take sin away. John's baptism was a revelatory act. Furthermore, John the Baptist had further confirmation of Jesus' identity: he saw the very Spirit of God descend and remain (literally same word in the original language as "abide"-- IMPORTANT KEY WORD IN JOHN) on Jesus in the likeness of a dove. Even though John confessed ignorance of Jesus' identity, he knows now who Jesus is: the very Son of God (a direct Messianic title) who baptizes with the Spirit of God, the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

- *How could a lamb take away sin, especially in that context (think OT passages about sacrifices; cf. Isa 53: 7)? What does that imply about Jesus as the Lamb and how He takes away sin?*
- *Read Isa. 11:1-5 and Isa. 42:1-4. How does that give context to the Holy Spirit descending on and abiding in Jesus?*
- *Why is Jesus' identity so important for John to highlight? How does our current ways of presenting Jesus highlight who He is?*

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**Abide Time: John 1:19-34**

- What realities are you facing this week? What is occupying your thoughts? How do you feel?
  
- Read the passage and let God speak to you in your reality through his Word. Write down your reflections as God shepherds you:
  - What does the text say is true about God and his character?
  
  - What does it say about the world around you?
  
- How do your reflections above speak to your reality?
  
- What did you experience in your heart and soul as God spoke to you and your reality?
  
- What did you experience in your body, given your reflections and what you experienced in your heart and soul?
  
- How is God inviting you to live differently?
  
- What does all of what you shared above say about God and his relationship with you?

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## WEEKLY PRAYER GUIDE

*The Bible promises that anything we ask for in Jesus' name – that is according to His will – shall be granted to us (John 14:13-14). In view of this great promise, the prayer requests are all grounded in Scripture. When we pray Scripture, we can be certain that we are praying according to God's will.*

*That does not mean God will grant our requests in our preferred time or according to our frail wisdom; but it does mean that we can pray confidently knowing that God delights to answer these requests, for they are His words.*

*Use the accompanying Scripture verses to shape and inform your prayers.*

### **PRAY FOR YOURSELF & YOUR FAMILY:**

- That your daily life will bring honor to the name of Jesus – (2 Thess. 1:11-12)
- That you will cast all of your anxieties on God – (1 Peter 5:6-7)
- That you will consider your trials as an opportunity for joy – (James 1:2-4)

### **PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH:**

- That the power of Christ will rest on our church and ministries [Worship Gathering, Community Groups, Men/Women, Youth, Children, etc.] – (2 Cor. 12:9-10)
- That God will give us the wisdom and faith that we desperately need to continue in faithful mission – (James 1:5-8)
- That God will make us fruitful in ministry – (John 15:1-2) – and bold in witness – (Eph. 6:18-20)

### **PRAY FOR OUR CITY:**

- That God will give wisdom to our government (local, state, and national) that we may lead peaceful, godly lives – (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
- That the Lord will continue to provide open doors of gospel ministry in IU and the Bloomington community – (1 Corinthians 16:9)
- That the work of God will be displayed in the lives of the members of our sister churches – (John 9:3)

### **PRAY FOR OUR WORLD:**

- That the persecuted church will find fellowship with Jesus as they share in his sufferings – (Philippians 3:10-11)
- That the Lord of the harvest will send out more workers to unreached people groups because they have been gripped by Paul's missionary logic in Romans 10:13-17 – (Matthew 9:37-38)
- That Christ will return bringing the fullness of salvation with him – (Revelation 22:20)

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- October 5: Redeemer Men
- October 8: “How to Study the Bible” Workshop
- October 21: 15th Annual Chili Supper @ the Joneses
- October 30: Child + Family Dedication
- November 4: Deacons Dinner

**Reminder:** All events are listed in the Events tab in our Redeemer app. You can RSVP for specific events by going to the Events tab, clicking on an event, and following the link to register.