

2. John 1:19-34

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Getting started

What do you know about John the Baptist?

What was his role in the story of Jesus?

Observation

1. What do we know already about the role of John from John 1:1-18?
2. What three people does John say that he is not first of all?
3. Who does John say he is (verse 23)?
4. What is John's explanation of his purpose in coming to Israel?
5. How did John know that Jesus was the one he was to announce?
6. Read 3:27-30. What is John's attitude to his role in announcing Jesus?
7. According to 3:31-36 why can Jesus be trusted as telling the truth when he speaks about God?
8. Also according to these verse what are the consequences of accepting and believing Jesus? What happens if you do not accept Jesus?

For your information

The Christ (v 20) was the long expected saviour of Israel who would bring in the final, triumphant rule of God and his people. Elijah (v 21) was an Old Testament prophet who was expected to appear on Earth in advance of the coming of the Christ, while the Prophet (v 21) refers to a figure promised by Moses in Deut 18:17)

It is not clear what John the Baptist meant when he called Jesus the Lamb of God. It could mean that he thought Jesus was the Lamb of God of certain Jewish writings who was a fierce warrior who would 'take away the sins of the world' in judgement (cf Revelation 5:8, 7:9-10).

Of course as the gospel goes on we see more clearly what it means for Jesus to be the lamb of God - see Exodus 12 and Isa 53 for some background.

Interpretation

1. What is the role of John the Baptist in the plans of God?
2. How will the Lamb of God take away the sin of the world?
3. What does it mean when it says that Jesus will baptise with the Holy Spirit?

(Hint – read Ezekiel 36:24-27, Joel 2:28-32 & Acts 2:1-21)

4. What sort of a person do you think John the Baptist was based on these passages of Scripture?

Implications

1. One of the key words of John's gospel is witness or testimony (see 1:32). From what you have seen of John the Baptist what constitutes a good witness to Jesus? What sort of testimony to Jesus do you bear? What are the situations you have opportunity to bear witness to Jesus?
2. What sort of attitude does John the Baptist display in 3:31 onwards? What does a person need to know in order to be this humble? In what situations do you find difficult to be humble?

Prayer suggestions

- Thank God for the faithful testimony of John the Baptist in his plan to save the world.
- Ask that God might give us opportunity to bear witness to Jesus and that we might be faithful as we do so.
- Ask God to humble us so that we can see ourselves rightly in relationship to God and to other people.

