

## Glory Revealed Week 2 - John 1:19-2:12

In this section, John reflects on the waning days of John the Baptist's ministry and the early days of Jesus' ministry.

### I. The Forerunner of Jesus-John 1:19-34

John the Baptist had the special privilege of proclaiming the coming of the Lord. He was the only child to an aging priest Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth, a woman well past her childbearing years. John was set apart as a Nazirite from conception. That is, he was not to cut his hair, touch anything dead, or partake of anything of the vine (see Numbers 6:2-6). God chose him to be the prophesied forerunner of the Lord, tasked to prepare the nation of Israel to receive their long-awaited Messiah.

John the Baptist called people to repent of their sins and to prove that repentance by being baptized and exhibiting changed lives. John's baptism was a ritual act of cleansing demonstrating repentance in anticipation of the arrival of Jesus. Thousands responded. Therefore, the Jews sent priests and Levites to investigate. John clearly stated he was not the Christ, or Elijah, or the Prophet. Some thought he must be the Christ, but John emphatically dismissed that talk. Some thought he was Elijah. Based on Malachi 3:1 and 4:5 the Jews expected Elijah himself to return in bodily form just before Messiah came. The Baptist did indeed fulfil Malachi's prophecy, but he was not the OT character Elijah. In Deuteronomy 18:15-18, Moses prophesied of a prophet like himself who would come and speak the Word of the Lord. The investigators asked if John was the Prophet of whom Moses foretold. The Baptist clarified his role, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said" (John 1:23).

The day following the Baptist's confrontation with the delegation from the Sanhedrin, Jesus arrived on the scene. With a commanding voice, John the Baptist declared, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). The title **Lamb of God** foreshadowed Jesus' ultimate sacrifice on the cross, making it clear that Messiah has come to deal with humanity's sin issue. The timing of this proclamation was especially poignant. The Passover feast was approaching.

John Phillips observes,

As John spoke, it is likely that the bleating of sheep could be heard, and that people could see flocks being driven toward Jerusalem in preparation for the Passover feast. John drew attention away from them to Jesus, the true Passover lamb whose sacrifice would procure eternal redemption for all humankind and make obsolete the annual Passover of the Jews (*Exploring the Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary*).

John the Baptist stated twice in this section that he himself did not initially recognize the Messiah. John's self-exile to the wilderness in preparation of his ministry might account for this. Through his natural sight, he did not recognize Jesus; special revelation from God was necessary. When Jesus came to John the Baptist to be baptized (see Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). God gave him the irrefutable sign: the Spirit of God descending on Him (John 1:32-33). Therefore, John the Baptist boldly declared, "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God" (John 1:34). Glory Revealed!

## **II. The Disciples of Jesus-John 1:35-51**

The following day, the Baptist was with two of his disciples, thought to be Andrew and John (the writer of this gospel), when he again spotted the Lord. They left John the Baptist and followed Jesus both literally and figuratively. In the ancient world, disciples literally walked alongside a rabbi/teacher in order to observe his life as well as listen to his teaching. (Moms-does this sound familiar?) “These words, which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). In John the Baptist we see the perfect example of a true disciple-maker. He pointed his disciples to Jesus and encouraged them to follow Him. We should follow the same pattern. Resist the temptation of attempting to replicate yourself! Free your disciples to follow Jesus.

Andrew found his brother, Simon, and “brought him to Jesus” (John 1:42). Jesus looked intently at Simon and changed his name to Peter. On the next day, Philip and Nathanael (probably called Bartholomew) were called and responded. These were the first five disciples.

## **III. The First Sign by Jesus-2:1-12**

John, the writer of this gospel, recounts the first miracle performed by the Lord at a wedding in Cana, probably the wedding of a close family member. This would explain Mary’s role at the feast and her reaction when the wine ran out.

Chuck Swindoll gives insight into the dynamics of a first century wedding in Palestine:

Weddings in those days differed from those of today in the West. Marriages in the ancient Near East were arranged by the parents, a contract was prepared, vows were spoken in the synagogue, tokens were exchanged, and then the couple returned to their respective homes. Although legally considered married, they lived apart during a betrothal period, which lasted no less than two months and as long as a year. At the end of the waiting period, the groom would take to the streets with his friends, usually at night, in a torch-lit procession from his home to the bride’s in a grand parade, accompanied by pomp and color and singing. After speeches of goodwill and blessings pronounced over the couple, the groom took his bride home, where family and friends feasted for as long as a week. The groom’s family was expected to provide enough food and drink for everyone (*Insights on John*, p. 57).

In that culture, running out of refreshments was a terrible breach of hospitality, which was considered a sacred duty. Mary turned to her son for help. It is possible she saw this current predicament as a perfect opportunity for Jesus to burst onto the political scene and launch His campaign to overthrow Roman and claim the throne of David. His response reminded her that His hour had not yet come. She may not have fully understood the impact of His correction, but she yielded to His discretion.

Mary said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” Sage advice that still rings true to all followers of Jesus! Jesus instructed the servants to fill 6 stone water jars which would provide more than 150 gallons. Jesus instructed the servants to take some to the headwaiter. Water had been turned to wine. John writes, “This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him” (John 2:11). Glory Revealed!