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# LOOKING AT THE WORD ONE TO ONE

SPECIAL EDITION

The Word One to One

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# INTRODUCTION

## **WHY THE WORD?**

*The Word* is a title used to speak about Jesus – we'll see that in our first study. As we read through John's Gospel, we'll discover that hearing the words of Jesus written down by John is how we come to see who Jesus is. This is *the Word!*

## **WHY ONE TO ONE?**

We have found that reading John's Gospel informally with one or more friends, using these notes has been a great way to find out what the Bible actually says about who Jesus is. The notes are designed specially for use in an informal setting one to one. People have used them with friends, family, colleagues, and students, in all sorts of locations such as coffee shops, churches, outside in a park or just at home. We hope you find them as helpful as we have!

# ONE

## JOHN'S OVERVIEW

John 1 vs 1-18 God comes to earth

John's Gospel starts with an overview **vs 1-18**

There is a lot in this section, so don't be surprised that it's going to need some unpacking!

You might find this a surprising start!

No angels, no Bethlehem, no stable, no baby Jesus, no wise men...



JOHN: CHAPTER ONE

**1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

2 He was with God in the beginning.

3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

**The Word** existed before time, before creation, before 'the beginning'!

In short... **He** is eternal!

AMAZING BEGINNINGS!

Look how often the phrase *the Word* is used

John stresses twice – *the Word* was there in the beginning.

What or who is *the Word*?

v 1 *The Word* was with God and was God.

v 2 *The Word* is a person!

v 3 *The Word*, who is God and a person, made everything.

But John's claims for *the Word* go even further!

What difference does *the Word* make for life?

- v 4 - The source of life!
- The answer for life!
- Eternal life!

This makes sense if, as John has just claimed, *the Word* is our creator!

v 5 2,000 years later, the light of the Word still outshines the darkness.

## JOHN THE BAPTIST IS INTRODUCED AND EXPLAINED...

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

<sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.

<sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

Through John the Baptist, God goes out of His way to make sure that the coming of *the Word* is publicly known.

What had John the Baptist come to do?

He was sent by God to point to the coming of "*the light*". **vs 6,7**

Later in the chapter we'll see:

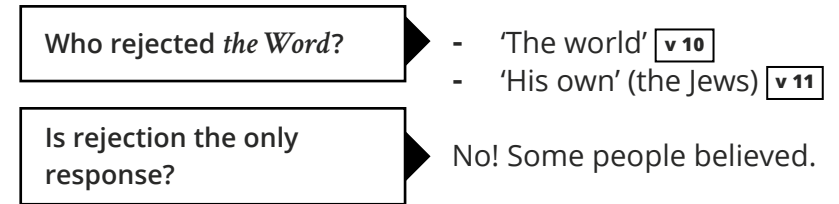
- He was the sensation of his day – the preacher in the wilderness.
- John the Baptist would have been all over your TV news, and trending on Twitter.
- The government and religious leaders sent people to check him out!
- But John the Baptist is not the much anticipated *Word*.

## THE WORD SNUBBED...

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, **the world did not recognize him.**

<sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but **his own did not receive him.**

<sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become **children of God**—<sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but **born of God.**



Look at the unique and awesome gift for those who accept Him (v 12)

They are adopted into *His* family

Imagine being adopted into the **Royal family**. God offers something way bigger!

The phrase in v 12 – '**he gave the right**' – His offer comes with absolute authority.

This is a '**right**' to a family's wealth beyond your wildest dreams! This '**Father**' is richer than a multi-trillionaire!

The right for what? → **v 12**

To become children of God!

Who got this?

- **not people** born into a religious family
- **not people** who somehow became religious
- but people **born of God.** **v 13**

## GOD'S GLORY ON EARTH...

<sup>14</sup> The Word became **flesh** and **made his dwelling among us**. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of **grace** and **truth**.

**Grace** is all God's undeserved kindness and love freely given.  
**Truth** is the truth - absolute truth, the answer to all our searching.

What more does John tell us about *the Word*?

- God comes down to earth as a man.
- John wants us to know that he was a first-hand witness to this.
- *The Word* is glorious - *the Word* is **God's Son!**

It is surprising that *the Word* doesn't arrive in a whirlwind of **power and might**, instead John says *the Word* comes **full of grace and truth**.

So, it's God's Son, but what is His name?!



## THE TRUTH IS OUT

<sup>15</sup> (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”)

<sup>16</sup> Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.

<sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Is John the Baptist *the Word*?

- No! He points to *the Word*, and says: ‘He ... has surpassed me, because he was before me.’

**vs 15, 16** Of course He is greater than John the Baptist – *the Word* is the creator God.

- God has already given grace in the Old Testament. Now we see His grace in all its fullness - in Jesus!
- God’s good law with all its rules and regulations is to be fulfilled in Jesus – see **v 17**

So who is *the Word*?

God’s Son... Jesus Christ. And He’s not about rules – He brings **grace** and **truth**.

<sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God, but the one and only **Son**, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

The **'himself'** is **Jesus!** A helpful translation would be: *He (Jesus) has made Him (God) known to us.*

How does this picture fit with how **you** imagined Jesus?

He's a lot more than the Sunday school picture of 'Gentle Jesus - meek and mild' isn't He?  
 John says Jesus *the Word* is the all powerful, creator God, **full of grace and truth!**

**SUMMARY...**

So what have we learnt about Jesus - *the Word*?

No wonder John concludes as he does with v 18

- v 1** He was there from the start (*in the beginning*)
- vs 1, 2** He was with God
- v 1** He is God
- v 3** He made everything
- v 4** He gives life, now and forever
- vs 4, 9** He gives us understanding for life (John calls this 'light')
- vs 10, 11** He was rejected by the world and His own people (the Jews)
- v 12** To those who receive Him, He gives them the right to be part of His family
- v 14** He came to earth as a man
- v 14** John, who wrote this book, was an eyewitness to Jesus
- v 17** Jesus comes full of grace rather than earthly power
- v 17** He brings all truth

**TAKE A MOMENT TO RE-READ  
JOHN'S OVERVIEW BELOW**

JOHN: CHAPTER ONE, VERSES 1-18

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

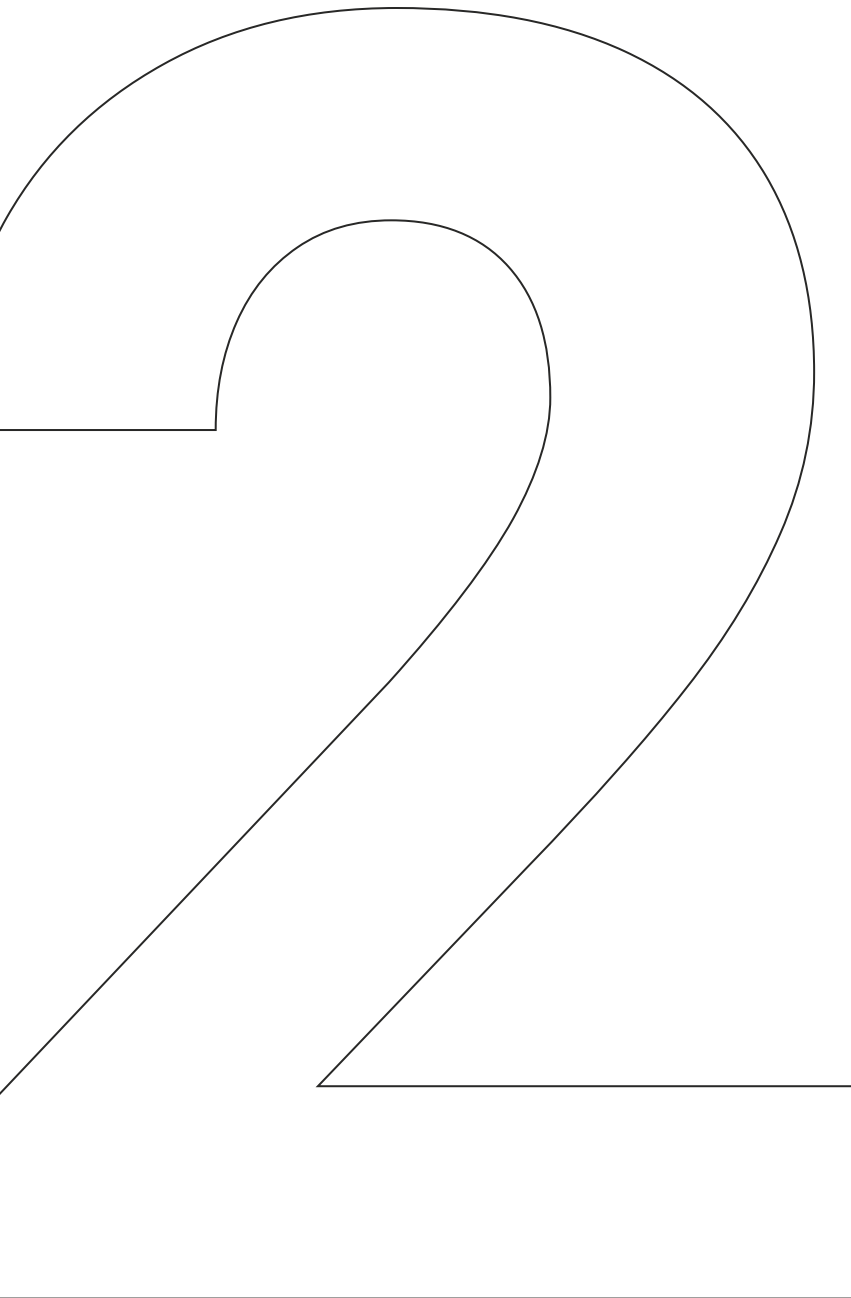
<sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

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**WHAT COMES NEXT?**

Next time we'll get a glimpse of the life and times of John the Baptist before Jesus comes onto the scene.



# TWO

## WARM UP ACT FOR A HERO

John 1 vs 19-34

### *Key characters we'll meet in this section:*

- **A Levite (v 19)** – he is a priest (most priests came from the family of Levi)
- **Elijah (v 21)** – it is promised in the Old Testament book of Malachi that God would send someone like Elijah (a famous Israelite prophet, around 860 BC), before the Saviour arrived.
- **The Prophet (v 21)** – the greatest Old Testament Prophet, Moses, was promised that at the end of his life God would send another like him, to lead God's people.
- **The Pharisees (v 24)** – mostly local officials, who were also very religious.

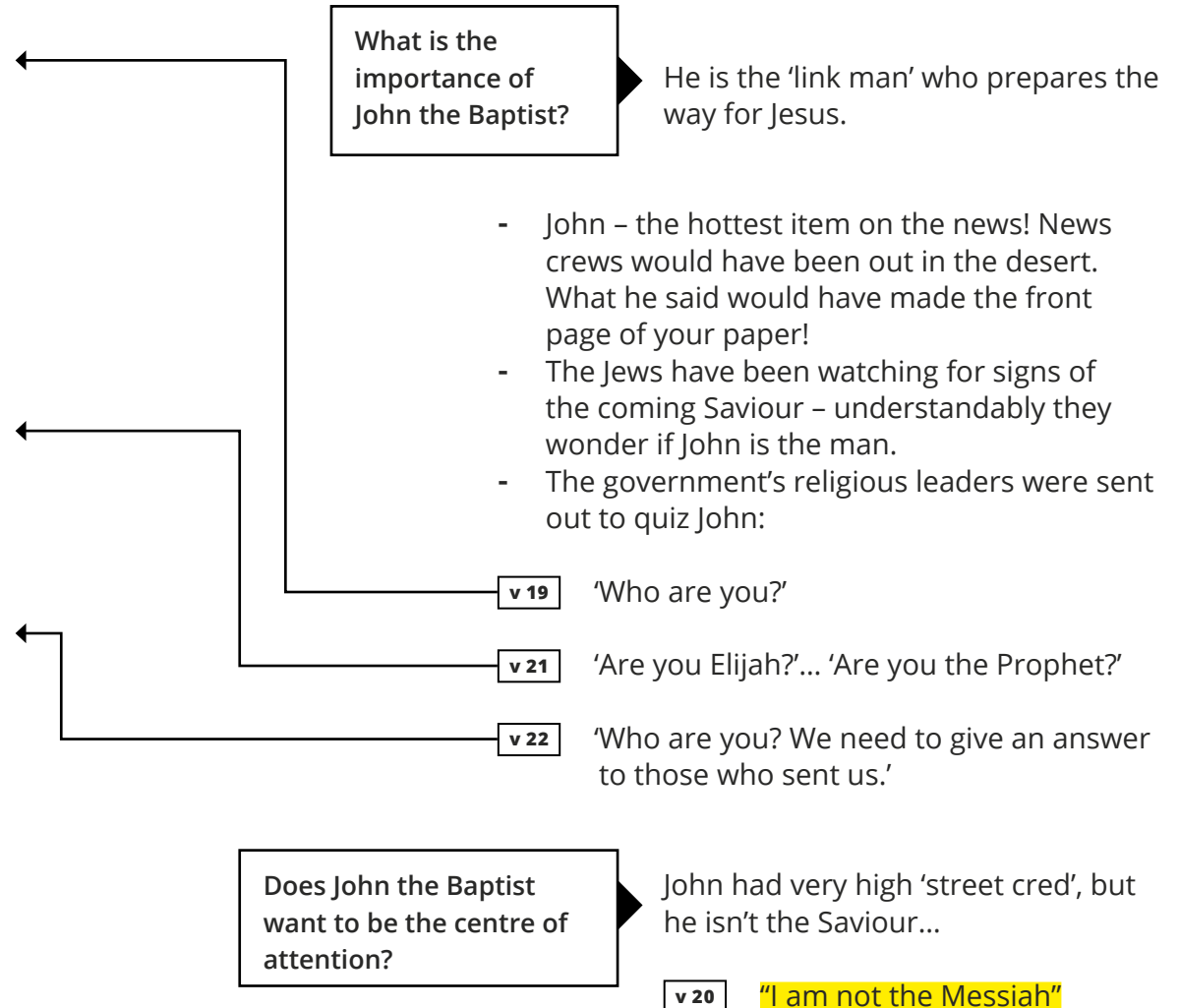
## JOHN GETS GRILLED

<sup>19</sup> Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was.

<sup>20</sup> He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

<sup>21</sup> They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No."

<sup>22</sup> Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"



So **who** is John and **what** is he all about?

## GET READY...

<sup>23</sup> John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, **‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’**”

Isaiah was a prophet sent by God 700+ years before Jesus. He told people what would happen with the coming Saviour.  
John the Baptist uses words from Isaiah’s book. He has come to prepare us for Jesus.

Such powerful imagery was not new or surprising to the people of these times...

In the days of great empires, it was normal practice to create wide highways as entrances to major cities, so that a victorious leader could parade in front of his people.

What is John the Baptist telling them?

John the Baptist is urging the people to get ready – God is coming!

Isaiah 40 v 3 tells exactly of this moment: ***‘prepare the way for the Lord ... a highway for our God.’***

## IT'S NOT ME YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...

<sup>24</sup> Now the Pharisees who had been sent  
<sup>25</sup> questioned him, “Why then do you baptise if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

<sup>26</sup> “I baptise with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know.

<sup>27</sup> He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

<sup>28</sup> This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

What question do they ask John?

‘Why are you baptising...?’ **v 25**

John the Baptist confirms all he can do is put you under the water. **v 26**

Back in a time of open sandals, with hot dusty streets full of roaming animals, feet washing was bad news. A job for your most lowly servant!

What shocking thing does John the Baptist say?

Jesus is so mega that John the Baptist isn't even worthy enough to untie His sandals, let alone wash His feet!

Have a look at what John adds in verse 28. All the way through the book, John gives historically accurate details as if to say, ‘Go check and see if what I am saying is correct!’

<sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

<sup>30</sup> This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'

This is a specific reference to Jesus' death on the cross, pointing to the fact that Jesus would die for the sin of the world.

John gives Jesus a unique title - what is it?

'The Lamb of God' v 29

The key annual festival for the Jews is Passover – it's like Christmas, or Easter. On Passover night, the angel of death passed through the land of Egypt and killed the firstborn of every household, because Pharaoh would not let the Israelites leave.

The Jews were told of only one escape from this judgement. The blood of an innocent, spotless lamb was to be sprinkled around the door post. A lamb that had lived with the family, in the house for at least four days, so that particularly the eldest son bonded with it... and therefore knew that the lamb died in his place.

The special title for Jesus is therefore a reminder of the Passover sacrifice, when the lamb took away the sin of the people and made them right with God. v 29

What does John the Baptist proclaim?

v 29

Whose sin will Jesus take away?

The whole world's! This offer is to all people everywhere, not just the Jews.

John tells us again that Jesus existed before John. Of course He did! He is the creator God from verses 1–4.



## HEAVEN-SENT KING...

<sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptising with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

<sup>32</sup> Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.

<sup>33</sup> And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.’

What else are we told about Jesus by John the Baptist?

The Spirit of God comes down... and stays!

v 32

- In the Old Testament the Spirit frequently ‘fell on’ God’s chosen rulers and kings, but just temporarily.

The Bible makes clear that God is 3 in 1: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit.

What will Jesus, God’s Spirit-filled Lamb, do?

Jesus is the Lamb who takes away our sin, so He can make us pure and spotless in God’s sight – ready to be filled with God’s Spirit.

No human being could do this. Only God can give of Himself.

All John can do is symbolically wash people. Jesus brings the real deal! v 33

Jesus fills people with God’s presence permanently (with His Spirit).

<sup>34</sup> I have seen and I testify that this is **God's Chosen One.**"

← After the Jews have been waiting over 1000 years, John puts his neck on the line and says, Jesus is 'the Son of God!' **v 34**

## SUMMARY...

Back in chapter 1 we were told that John the Baptist would help us 'believe'.

So what has he taught us?

- v 27** John is *only* a humble servant (remember the feet!)
- v 29** Jesus is the Lamb of God whose death will take away our sin
- v 32** Jesus is God's Spirit-filled Son
- v 33** Jesus will flood us with God's presence (the Holy Spirit)
- v 34** This is so important, get ready – Jesus is coming!

JOHN: CHAPTER ONE, VERSES 19-34

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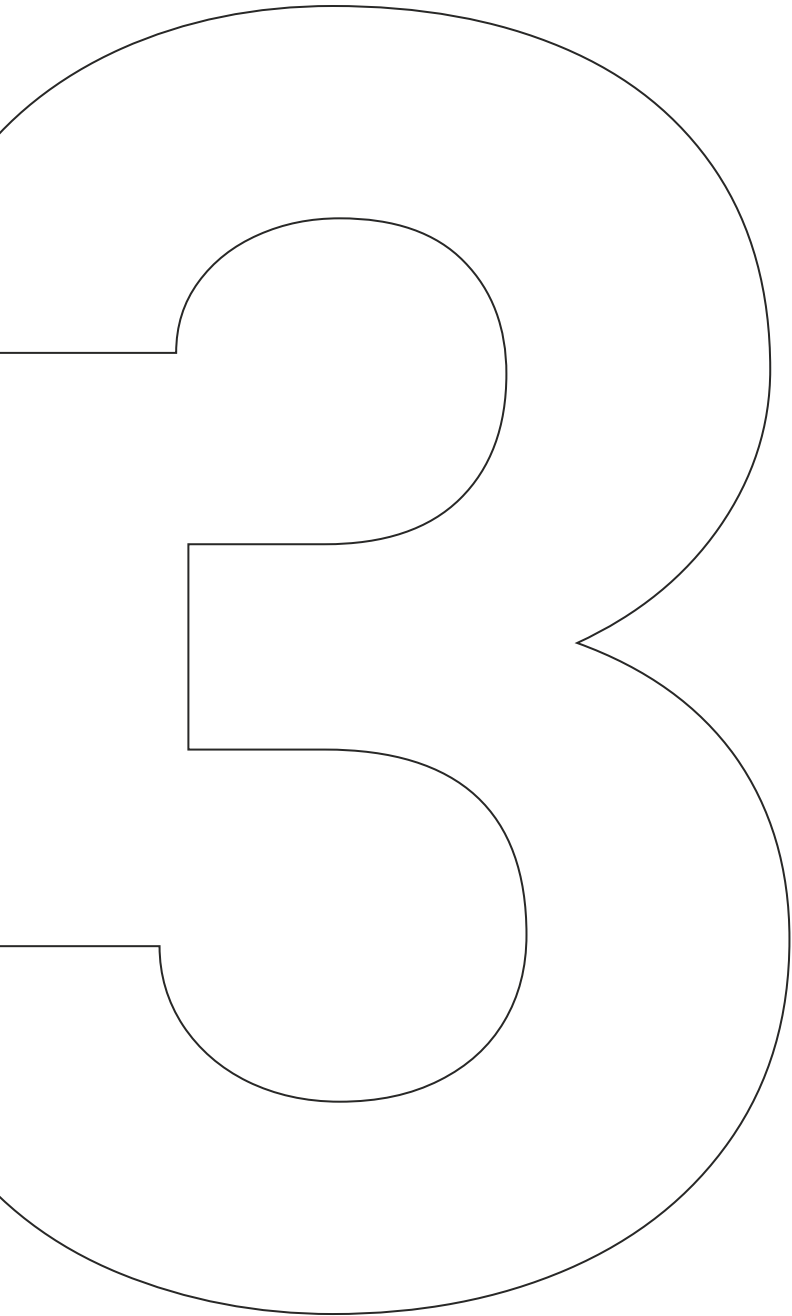
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**NEXT TIME:**  
The hero arrives...!



# THREE

## THE HERO WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

John 1 vs 35-51

In this next section John the Baptist passes on the job of telling people about Jesus to the disciples.

### *What have we learnt so far?*

#### John 1 v 1-18

- 'The Word' is Jesus
- Jesus was with God in the beginning - He is eternal
- He made everything
- He came to earth to 'give us the right' to be adopted into His family
- Through Jesus we can know God

#### John 1 vs 19-34

- Jesus - the Lamb of God - has arrived
- Jesus takes away the sin of the world
- He is filled with God's Spirit
- As God, Jesus can give us God's Spirit

## JOHN THE BAPTIST HANDS OVER...

<sup>35</sup> The next day John was there again with two of his disciples.

<sup>36</sup> When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

<sup>37</sup> When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.

This is a vital point:  
John (the writer) wants us to know without a doubt that Jesus' disciples were eyewitnesses - there from the beginning...

When John the Baptist sees Jesus, what unique title does he give Him again?

He can't help himself: "Look, the Lamb of God!" v 36

With this John the Baptist makes the point Jesus is *the* One!

So John the Baptist steps off centre stage, and two of his followers become Jesus' first disciples. v 37

## LIFE-CHANGING ENCOUNTER...

<sup>38</sup> Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

<sup>39</sup> “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

**v 38** Notice how the disciples immediately call Jesus ‘Rabbi’ (which means Teacher). Even the officials of the synagogue would always call Him Rabbi!

What a life-changing day for these two disciples – meeting and staying with Jesus!

- From that day on they were with Him until He returned to heaven
- v 39**
- Two of the chosen 12 apostles\*

\*An apostle was a chosen disciple, who was an eyewitness of Jesus.

<sup>40</sup> Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.

<sup>41</sup> The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).

<sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

Note that in v 40 only one of the two is named: the other is thought to be John (The Gospel writer)... and he is clearly a firsthand witness – remember: **John 1 v 14**

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. **We have seen** his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.'*

After spending the day together - what impression does Andrew have of Jesus?

Andrew puts his neck on the line with a huge claim – he's found the long-awaited Messiah and there is no doubt in his mind. **v 41**

Like John the Baptist, he can't keep it to himself!

**v 42** Simon - is to be renamed Cephas/Peter. Cephas is Aramaic for **rock**.\*

\*This is fitting because Jesus will use Peter to become the foundation of the early church.

## AND THERE ARE MORE...

<sup>43</sup> The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”

<sup>44</sup> Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida.

<sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

<sup>46</sup> “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.

Another encounter, and there is no doubt in Philip’s mind either... he too has met the Messiah!

Nathanael needs convincing, with good reason.

What is behind his sarcastic question?

Nazareth is a northern town, and was a hotchpotch of different racial and religious groups. **v 45**

Because of the Jews’ concern for religious purity, it was the last place they expected the King of the Jews to come from. **v 46**

With confidence, Philip says, “Come and see!”



# JESUS KNOWS EVERYTHING!

47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is **no deceit.**” ←

48 “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig-tree before Philip called you.” ←

49 Then Nathanael declared, “**Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.**” ←

How can we know Jesus *is* the Messiah?

Jesus proves Himself:

- Jesus knows Nathanael's heart – there's no deceit. **v 47**
- Incredibly Jesus knows where he's been and what he's been doing, even though Jesus wasn't there to see. **v 48**

It's enough for Nathanael!

He risks his reputation by shouting out who Jesus is!

**(continued) ▶**

<sup>50</sup> Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig-tree. You will see greater things than that.”

<sup>51</sup> He then added, “**Very truly I tell you**, you will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’ the Son of Man.”

- Whenever Jesus starts a sentence with ‘*Very truly I tell you...*’ it’s always to grab our attention to a major point!
- ‘The Son of Man’ is a favourite name Jesus calls Himself.

What is the promise of Jesus?

“You haven’t seen anything yet”!

vs 50, 51

What is Jesus on about in v 51?

Jesus is telling everyone who He is!

His audience was Jewish and they would have known the verse in the first book of the Bible, Genesis:

**Genesis 28 v 12:** *‘He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.’*

So what is Jesus saying?

- Jesus is the way to heaven!
- He bridges the gap between God and humanity.
- God’s Messiah – **the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!** v 29

JOHN: CHAPTER ONE, VERSES 35-51

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# SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE

## SO - WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

- God used John the Baptist to prepare people for Jesus
- He talks about Jesus (not the church... not traditions... not sacraments!)
- John the Baptist is the link between the Old Testament and the New Testament eyewitnesses
- Jesus is:
  - **The Passover Lamb** – come to die as a sacrifice for sin
  - **The Messiah** – come as God's chosen ruler
  - **The gateway to heaven!**
  - **The Word** of verses 1-18... has become a man
- The promise in John chapter 1 vs 1-18 is now possible through Jesus – remember John 1 v 12:

**John 1 v 12** 'Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the **right** to become **children of God.**'

**WHAT COMES NEXT?**  
**JESUS SHOWS HIS GLORY IN A SURPRISING WAY... OR WAS IT?**

For chapter two onwards  
visit [theword121.com](http://theword121.com)

