



JOHN 1:19-28 | JOHN, THE WITNESS (PART 3)

- Verses 19-24 included in session 6
- Verse 25 –
  - From this verse, we learn that **that prophet** is possibly Moses since it is listed with **that Christ**.
    - The prophet seems to be different than the Christ, since both are used in the same phrase.
    - As translated, this would affect our previous interpretation of verse 21, or require that the Pharisees ask redundantly.
  - As translated, this verse also conveys that baptism was seen as a Messianic or end-times event, at least by the Pharisees, because they were surprised that John was doing so.
    - However, Jewish Baptism was being performed by the Essenes as well as Jews throughout the nation and was not exclusive to John.
    - Since the Essenes did not consider themselves to be **Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet**, it seems strange that the Pharisees would ask John **Why baptizest thou then**.
    - All of this leads to the conclusion that perhaps our translation is leading us astray.
  - The Greek pronoun τίς [tis], here translated **why** is a broad-usage (indefinite) pronoun which is translated as *what, who, why, whom, and which* as well as other miscellaneous translations.
    - Since there is no definite meaning to this pronoun, I propose that the question is actually “*Which baptism then...?*”
    - This translation proposal makes the question align with the answer of verse 26, **I baptize with water...**
    - If the proposal is correct (*which* rather than *why*) then the theological question of the Pharisees is, “Are you giving the expected spiritual baptism of Ezekiel 36:26-29? If so, do you really have authority to do so?”
    - It is my contention that regular water baptism was common among the Jews, and not reserved for eschatological events, thus not reserved for Christ, Elijah, or **that prophet**. Therefore the **Why** question is both illogical and never answered, but a *Which* question is both relevant and answered.
    - Grammar allows either, but logic only allows one.
- Verses 26-27 –
  - If the current translation stands, then John never answers the question. If the proposed translation is given, then John says, in effect, “my water baptism is just like the water baptism of all the synagogues and holy places around us, BUT, there is Someone who will bring a *different* baptism, and that is the one which you are inquiring about.
  - John points to one who stood among them (likely speaking in general terms, meaning, “He has already come”). John expresses his unworthiness to even do the most menial task for this One.
- Verse 28 –

- Note that modern versions (based on the Critical Text) say that this took place in Bethany. There is no known Bethany **beyond Jordan**. This word is translated to *house of the ford* (a shallow area to cross a river).
- Of interest is that Bethabara is not Bethany. While this may seem of little significance, the issue of the inerrancy of Scripture is really at hand.
  - Scholarship on the issue is clouded by their assumption that “older is more accurate,” and has almost never put this assumption aside in making their conclusions.
  - It should be noted that even Origen (second century) was arguing that references to Bethany were incorrect because there was no Bethany beyond the Jordan. (Note: Origen is not to be followed as an expert in theological matters, but surely had some understanding of geographical matters of the day).

#### JOHN 1:29-34 | THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF JESUS’ MINISTRY

- Verse 29 –
  - John was a relative of Jesus by Mary. Mary and Elizabeth seemed to have a very close relationship (she spent three-months of her pregnancy with Elizabeth, up to the birth of John - Luke 1:56). It would *seem* that Jesus and John had known each other all of their lives.
  - This is the first public introduction we have of Jesus, and He is introduced in very Jewish terms: **the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**.
    - The title **Lamb of God** makes allusion to either the Passover lamb.
    - The lamb allusion is also used in Isaiah 53:7.
  - The word translated **taketh away** is αἴρω [airo] which is a word that carries with it not only at *take* meaning, but a “take upon himself” meaning. See John 5:10, where it is translated *carry*. Just like the Passover lamb carried the death of the firstborn, so Jesus as the Lamb of God carried **the sin of the world**.
  - It is worthy of note that Jesus is first introduced as the *Savior of the world*. It was never the Jewish expectation that the Messiah would save Israel alone.
  - Note also that it was necessary for the Messiah to take bear all the sin of all the world.
    - This doesn’t imply (and certainly doesn’t state) any kind of universal salvation (universalism is always a non-sequitur conclusion).
    - The Messiah, to restore the honor of God and the wholeness of creation, has to remove sin from the world.
  - It should also be noticed that the verb **taketh away** is a present, active participle. Thus it could be translated *is taking away*.
- Verse 30 –
  - See note on verse 15. It is interesting that these words are given three times in this chapter, verse 15, 27, and 30.
  - Such repetition can only mean that the author wanted to emphasize the fact that Jesus is preeminent.
- Verse 31 –
  - John uses the word οἶδα [oida] for **knew**, and this is not the “friendship” kind of “knew him” but is rather the word for perception.
  - Not perceiving who the Messiah was, John did *know* that his own role was to baptize **with water** in order that the Messiah **should be made manifest to Israel**.
  - This hints that the manifestation of the Messiah would be in connection with water baptism.
- Verses 32-34 – *stay tuned!*

