

## John 1:19 – 51

<sup>1:19</sup> This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ <sup>20</sup> And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’ <sup>21</sup> They asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ And he said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No’.  
<sup>22</sup> Then they said to him, ‘Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?’ <sup>23</sup> He said, ‘I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.’ <sup>24</sup> Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup> They asked him, and said to him, ‘Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?’ <sup>26</sup> John answered them saying, ‘I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. <sup>27</sup> It is he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.’ <sup>28</sup> These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

<sup>29</sup> The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’ <sup>30</sup> This is he on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for he existed before me.’ <sup>31</sup> I did not recognize him, but so that he might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.’ <sup>32</sup> John testified saying, ‘I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and he remained upon him. <sup>33</sup> I did not recognize him, but he who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>34</sup> I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.’

<sup>35</sup> Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup> and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God!’ <sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to him, ‘Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are you staying?’ <sup>39</sup> He said to them, ‘Come, and you will see.’ So they came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.  
<sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. <sup>41</sup> He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which translated means Christ). <sup>42</sup> He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas’ (which is translated Peter).

<sup>43</sup> The next day he purposed to go into Galilee, and he found Philip. And Jesus said to him, ‘Follow me.’ <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ <sup>46</sup> Nathanael said to him, ‘Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ <sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!’ <sup>48</sup> Nathanael said to him, ‘How do you know me?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’ <sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered him, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.’ <sup>50</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Because I

said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.’<sup>51</sup> And he said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.’

### **Notes for historical and cultural background**

#### People

- Priests and Levites from Jerusalem: the most influential and powerful Jewish leaders under Roman occupation; they ran the Temple
- Pharisees: a pressure group who thought that the priests and Levites were generally sell-outs to Rome

#### Expectation for Messianic figures:

- the Christ: the final king from King David’s line who would liberate Israel from its enemies, interpreted by the Jews to mean the Romans
- Elijah: an older prophet who was taken up by God directly to heaven; he was thought to have some final role to play, although it was unclear if it would be him or someone like him
- the Prophet: Moses said that God would raise up a Prophet like him in Dt.18:15
- Lamb of God: a connection John makes to the messianic prophecy found in Isaiah 53:4 – 7

<sup>4</sup> Surely our griefs he himself bore,  
And our sorrows he carried;  
Yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken,  
Smitten of God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced through for our transgressions,  
He was crushed for our iniquities;  
The chastening for our well-being fell upon him,  
And by his scourging we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All of us like sheep have gone astray,  
Each of us has turned to his own way;  
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and he was afflicted,  
Yet he did not open his mouth;  
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,  
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,  
So he did not open his mouth.

#### Actions:

- Baptism: a practice of being dunked in water; it was based on the symbolism of the Genesis creation, where God brought forth new life out of water; so it symbolized a dying and rising to a new life that Jews did to welcome Gentile converts into Judaism; the surprising thing was that John did this to Jews – a challenging gesture!

## Questions

1. I've already divided the passage up into 'days.' Day 1 is 1:19 – 28. Etc. Note which days are which.
2. What are the repeated words and concepts in the passage?
3. What does it mean to 'see' something? Who 'sees' what?
  - a. What did John the Baptist see?
  - b. When Jesus says, 'Come and you will see' to the disciples (v.39), what is he inviting them into? And also, 'You will see greater things than these...Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.' (v.50 – 51)
    - i. How does 'the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man' in v.50 – 51 relate to the baptism of Jesus in 1:32 – 33?
  - c. What did Jesus see in Simon that made him give Simon the name Cephas?
  - d. How did Jesus know Nathanael's personality and what he was just doing? How does this impact Nathanael?
  - e. Application: How does Jesus begin to change your identity? Jesus sees the 'you' that you were meant to be. He saw the disciples very well! He saw Simon's true name, or what he would become because of a relationship with Jesus. He saw Nathanael's true nature.
4. Which comes first: hearing or seeing?
5. Think about this pattern in the text, below. How do you it unfold?

Someone speaks → hearing → come and see → testify

6. What is the chain of communication?
  - a. From God to John the Baptist?
  - b. From John to who?
  - c. What did they do?
  - d. Who else did they tell?
  - e. Application: From whom did you hear about Jesus? Who are you telling?