

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Living in the Spirit

Lesson 3: More than Just a Good Man

Bible Text

John 1:29-34

Memory Verse

"The next day John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him. He said, 'See! The Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29)

Word List

eternal: having no beginning and no end in time; lasting forever; living at all times

exist: to be real; to continue to be or to live

permanent: lasting forever; not temporary

symbol: something that represents or expresses a particular idea

In times past, most people in America believed in God. They did not all worship or honor God. But they did believe that He **exists**. Now times have changed. Many people today say that they have no religion at all. Some people do not believe that God exists. And many others just do not care whether He does or does not exist. They live their lives with no relationship with God.

So, God does not get a lot of respect in our country today. But Jesus still does. Many people celebrate Christmas and Easter. People may not read the Bible or know the stories of Jesus' life, but they know His name. They know that He did good things. Even people who do not know much about Jesus say that He was a good man.

People are right to respect Jesus for what He did. He did do good things. In fact, He changed the world. But there are much better reasons for respecting Jesus. He is the Son of God. He came to show us the Father and how to live. And He came to sacrifice His life to make us right with God. Jesus was far more than just a good man.

The Lamb of God (John 1:29-31)

29 The next day John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him. He said, "See! The Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!"

30 I have been talking about Him. I said, 'One is coming after me Who is more important than I, because He lived before I was born.'

31 I did not know who He was, but I have come to baptize with water so the Jews might know about Him."

The Book of John gives the story of Jesus' life. It was written by John, one of Jesus' followers. He began his story with another John: Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist.

John led a strange life. He lived far from people. He dressed simply and ate strange food. He lived for God and not himself. Then he began preaching about the One who was coming. He told people to prepare their hearts for God. And he baptized people who wanted to give up their sins.

Then Jesus came to John to be baptized. The Book of Matthew tells that John was surprised that Jesus asked to be baptized. John knew that Jesus had no sin in His life. But John did as Jesus asked. The Book of Mark tells us what happened next: “As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, He saw heaven open up. The Holy Spirit came down on Him like a dove. A voice came from heaven and said, ‘You are My much-loved Son. I am very happy with You’” (Mark 1:9-11).

John saw these things happen to Jesus. And he did what he was born to do – he pointed people to Jesus. He became a witness to the truth about Jesus. He said, “See! The Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!” (v.29).

Why did John call Jesus the Lamb of God? Maybe John was thinking about what the old preachers said about the Chosen One. He would go to His death gently, like a lamb. Maybe John was thinking about God’s Temple in Jerusalem. The priests in the Temple sacrificed two lambs every day to

pay for the sins of the people. Or maybe John was thinking about the Passover celebration. The people would sacrifice a lamb for this holiday every year. This holiday helped them to remember when God rescued His people from slavery. God’s people had marked their doors with the blood of a lamb so that death would not come to their homes. Both the lambs in the Temple and the Passover lamb were **symbols** of the cost of sin. The payment for sin is death. Now Jesus had come to take the place of the lambs. Now He would die to pay for sin once and for all.

Notice that John said that Jesus takes away the sin of the world. Jesus came for all people and all time. Past, present, and future sins are covered by Jesus’ sacrifice. Notice also that John said that Jesus takes away the sin of the world. He did not say “sins.” He did not say “a sin.” Jesus’ sacrifice counts for all sin as a whole.

John knew that God had a plan to save us from the slavery and death that sin brings. John knew that he was sent to prepare people for the Savior. Then John saw what God did when Jesus was baptized. Now he knew that Jesus was the One sent by God. Now he knew that Jesus was not just his cousin, a good guy. John pointed to Jesus and said, “I have been talking about Him.”

What did John mean when he said that Jesus came after him but lived before him?

John understood that Jesus was not just a man with a normal life. Jesus was far more than a man. Jesus existed before anything was made, and He is **eternal**. Jesus is both God and man.

John understood why Jesus came. He did not come just to do some good things and leave us with some good thoughts. He came to give up His life for us. He was the sacrifice that would end all other sacrifices. He would take care of our sin problem once and for all. Jesus was the One that God had promised to send back in the garden when Adam and Eve first sinned. Jesus was *not* just a good man.

The Spirit of God (John 1:32-34)

32 Then John said, “I saw the Holy Spirit come down on Jesus as a dove from heaven. The Holy Spirit stayed on Him.

33 I did not know Him then. But God sent me to baptize with water. God said to me, ‘The Holy Spirit will come down and stay on Him. He is the One Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’

Things to Think About

1. What have you been taught about the Holy Spirit?
2. When have you felt the Holy Spirit giving you strength or direction in your life?
3. Have you ever felt like God was far away?
4. In what areas of your life do you need the Spirit to guide you? Are there areas where you need to listen more closely for the Holy Spirit?
5. What would you say to someone who said that Jesus was a good man but not God?

34 I saw this happen. I am now saying that Jesus is the Son of God.”

Jesus obeyed God by asking John to baptize Him. Then God sent Jesus a sign to show that He was happy with Jesus. Jesus was getting ready to start His mission. He had been living and working and taking care of His family. He had been reading God’s Word and asking questions. Now it was time to do what He came to do. But He knew that He could not do it in just His strength as a man. He needed God’s help to stay true to His mission. So God sent the Holy Spirit to Jesus.

In other times, God had sent the Holy Spirit to help His servants do special work. But the Holy Spirit did not always stay with each person. He would only come for a while. Now, John saw and understood that the dove was a symbol of the Spirit coming to stay with Jesus.

John also understood that God was changing how the Holy Spirit would work. The Holy Spirit would no longer come and go in a person’s life. Now the Spirit would come and live in a person’s life. John called this a new kind of baptism.

John put people down into water as a symbol of a life change. John’s baptism was about giving up sin and changing how you live. It was a picture of sin being washed away. But Jesus’ baptism would be different.

It would be a change from the inside. A person's life would change on the outside because his heart was changed on the inside. And the change would be **permanent** because the Holy Spirit would come to live inside the person.

John was the one who baptized Jesus. He saw all that happened with his own eyes. He became a witness of Who Jesus was because he was there to see it for himself. And he told the truth openly for all to hear and understand.

Things to Remember

Jesus changed our world. Some things changed for all people. We count our years by His life. He taught us how to treat one another. So now we have hospitals and orphanages and organizations that do good work. We have great music and art because of Him. But Jesus was more than a good man who made our world better.

Jesus lived His life in obedience to God. He lived with the Holy Spirit. And He made it possible for us to do the same. He showed us how to live. But more importantly, Jesus gave His life to take away our sin. And He gave us the Holy Spirit to help us live as He lived. No, Jesus was much more than just a good man. Jesus is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!

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