

Lesson 1: Preparedness



Old Testament

New Testament

Where in the Bible?

The Gospel of John is the fourth book of the New Testament.

The New Testament: Beginnings

In Scripture, we hear little of Jesus' childhood. His public ministry began around the age of 30, when he was baptized by John in the River Jordan. After this, he was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Biblical Background

Scripture tells us that John's mother Elizabeth and Jesus' mother Mary were relatives (Luke 1:36), which makes Jesus and John cousins. How much time they spent with each other prior to this is unknown. From this Gospel lesson, it appears that John didn't know the Messiah would be his own cousin!

What is clear is that John was anticipating the arrival of one greater than himself. When Jesus arrived, John only recognized him by the presence of the Holy Spirit, which he had been told to watch for. This was how John learned that Jesus was the One.

Introduction

God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus. John was in the wilderness baptizing people in the River Jordan when Jesus himself came and was baptized. He proclaimed Jesus to be "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!"

Read: John 1:19-34

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

When in Time?

The Old Testament is three times the size of the New Testament. More than 1,500 years of history are covered by the Old Testament; the New Testament covers less than 100 years. On the timeline below, use the letter "J" to mark when Jesus lived on earth. Then put your own initials on the line at the time you live. About how many years are between these two spots on the timeline? _____



Discuss: John 1:19-34

1. Why do you think the priests and Levites were curious about John the Baptist? Why did they feel the need to go out to the wilderness to check him out?
2. In verses 19-23, what was John's answer to all the questions he was asked? How did John's response show his faith? In what way is it important for us to know that we are *not* the Lord and Savior of our own lives?
3. How did John describe his mission and function?
4. Who was John talking about when he said, "Among you stands one you do not know" (v. 26)? What did John have to say about this unknown person?
5. How did John contrast his own baptism with the baptism of the One who would come after him? Why is it that only God can give the Holy Spirit? What does that say about Jesus?
6. When we are baptized, who is the One who is really at work? How does that explain why we are able to baptize people of all ages? Who is in charge?
7. Read Isaiah 40:1-5, written 500 years before John was born. What did the prophet say about John?
8. There is a saying, "The ground is level at the foot of the cross." What do you think that means? How are we all the same before God? What do we all need?

Where in the World?

The map at right is a close-up view of the land where Jesus lived, what we often call the Holy Land. One way to find this area on a larger map is to look for the two small seas connected by a river that runs from north to south. It kind of looks like an upside-down exclamation point!

In the New Testament, the smaller sea in the north is called the Sea of Galilee. The larger sea in the south is called the Dead Sea. The river that connects the two seas is the Jordan River, which flows south.

- a. Label the city marked with the star ★ as "Jerusalem."
- b. Label the spot on the River marked with a water drop 💧 as "Baptism." This is the place where Jesus was baptized by John.

