

John the Baptist – Study Leader’s Questions – John 1:15-30

John: his calling and authority: Matthew 3:1-3, Mark 1:3-8, Luke 3:1-12, John 1:6-8, 15

1. *How did John know when to leave the desert (Luke 1:80, 3:2-3)?*
2. *Who was John referring to in John 1:33 (see John 1:6)? In what sense does God ‘send’ us today (see John 20:21)?*
3. *Why was [it] important for all 4 gospel writers to tell us that John fulfilled Old Testament prophecies (Isaiah 40:3-8, Malachi 4:5, Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:2-3, Luke 3:4-6, John 1:23)?*
4. *Why is John’s clothing and food referred to (Matthew 3:4, Mark 1:6)?*

John: his popularity: Matthew 3:5-12, Mark 1:7-8, Luke 3:15-18, John 1:7-8

5. *Luke (3:10-14) tells us that 3 groups of people came to him asking ‘what shall we do’ and one group came but did not ask. Who are they and why do some ask and some do not?*
6. *John and Jesus are compared and Jesus is seen as the ‘greater’ one. In what ways (John 1:15, 18)?*
7. *Moses and Jesus are compared again in John 1:16, 17. Jesus is seen as the ‘greater one.’ What did both give? Why is what Jesus gives better?*

John: who are you (John 1:19-28)?

8. *Why does John deny being the Christ, Elijah and the Prophet (John 1:20-22)?*
9. *Why does John say he is only ‘a voice’ (John 1:23)?*
10. *What does John tell them about the coming great one that would have upset them (Matthew 3:11-12, John 1:26-29)?*

John the Baptist – Study Leader’s Questions – John 1:15-30, Answers

John his calling and authority: Matthew 3:1-3, Mark 1:3-8, Luke 3:1-12, John 1:6-8, 15

1. *How did John know when to leave the desert (Luke 1:80, 3:2-3)?*

Although John was not Elias (Elijah), John 1:21, he could have been Elias, Matthew 11:12-14 and as Gabriel states in Luke 1:17 ***“And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”***

“In the spirit and power of Elias,” therefore, John ***“was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel”*** Luke 1:80 until he received God’s calling as Elijah did in 1 Kings 18:1-2, to which John would then have responded in obedience to God ***“even as Elias did”*** Luke 9:54.

“And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria.”

The NIV/TNIV/NKJV break the cross references by changing “*shew*” to “*present*” in 1 Kings 18:1-2 and “*shewing*” to “*appeared publicly*” and “*manifestation*” respectively in Luke 1:80.

2. *Who was John referring to in John 1:33 (see John 1:6)? In what sense does God ‘send’ us today (see John 20:21)?*

John 1:6, 33, 20:21 state respectively:

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”

“And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.”

“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”

John is first referring to “*him*” as the Lord Jesus Christ and then to God the Father as “*he that sent me.*”

God sends Christians today as genuine ambassadors of “*peace*” and “*reconciliation*” in “*the Holy Ghost*” John 1:33, 20:22, Acts 1:8 according to 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

3. Why was [it] important for all 4 gospel writers to tell us that John fulfilled Old Testament prophecies (Isaiah 40:3-8, Malachi 4:5, Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:2-3, Luke 3:4-6, John 1:23)?

God is pre-eminently concerned that ***“the scriptures be fulfilled”*** specifically that ***“the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled”*** Matthew 26:54, 56 according to Isaiah 55:11.

“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

The Gospel writers therefore provide a four-fold witness to God’s concern that ***“the scriptures be fulfilled,”*** twice the minimum number, 2 Corinthians 13:1.

Moreover, the Lord Jesus Christ is the main subject of all four Gospels, Matthew 1:1, Mark 1:1, Luke 1:31, John 1:1 and therefore it follows that John, who ***“came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light”*** John 1:7, the Light being the Lord Jesus Christ John 8:12, should be mentioned by each Gospel writer with respect to the prophecies that John fulfilled.

4. Why is John’s clothing and food referred to (Matthew 3:4, Mark 1:6)?

John goes forth before the Lord Jesus Christ ***“in the spirit and power of Elias”*** Luke 1:17. It follows that attention should be drawn to his clothing and food to liken John as closely as possible to Elijah because the Old Testament draws attention to Elijah’s clothing and food.

“And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite” 2 Kings 1:8.

“And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey” Matthew 3:4.

Elijah’s and John food differed but both were unusual. See 1 Kings 17:4, 9, 19:5, 6, 7, 8 and note that it is not said of anyone else in the New Testament that ***“his meat was locusts and wild honey.”***

Locusts, it should be noted, are connected with Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, Exodus 10:4, 12, 13, 14, 19, Psalm 78:46, 105:34, compare Luke 1:74, are clean food, Leviticus 11:22, are associated with God’s judgement on Israel, Deuteronomy 28:38, 42, 1 Kings 8:37, 2 Chronicles 6:28, 7:13, Joel 1:4, compare Luke 1:77, God’s restoration of Israel at the Second Advent and the Great Tribulation, Joel 3:25, Revelation 9:3, 7, compare Luke 1:78, 79.

Honey, it should be noted, is connected with ***“a land flowing with milk and honey”*** that God gave to Israel, Exodus 3:8, 17, 13:5, 33:3, Leviticus 20:24, Numbers 13:27, 14:8, Deuteronomy 6:3, 11:9, 26:9, 15, 27:3, 31:20, 32:13, Joshua 5:6, Jeremiah 11:5, 32:22, Ezekiel 20:6, 15, God’s provision for Israel in the wilderness, Exodus 16:31, enlightening of the eyes and ***“The law of the LORD”*** Psalm 19:7, 1 Samuel 14:25, 26, 27, 43, Psalm 19:10, 119:103, Proverbs 16:24, Isaiah 7:15, Revelation 10:9, 10.

John could have been reminded of all of the above every time that he ate and so could the nation of Israel ***“after the day of his shewing unto Israel”*** Luke 1:80.

Those reminders in themselves could have been part of John’s ministry to Israel to ***“Prepare ye the way of the Lord”*** Isaiah 40:3, Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4.

John: his popularity: Matthew 3:5-12, Mark 1:7-8, Luke 3:15-18, John 1:7-8

5. Luke (3:10-14) tells us that 3 groups of people came to him asking ‘what shall we do’ and one group came but did not ask. Who are they and why do some ask and some do not?

See also Matthew 3:5-11, John 1:24-28. Note especially Matthew 3:7 and Luke 3:7.

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

“Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

Note Luke 7:9-10.

“And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.”

Note the parallel in Exodus 9:20-21.

“He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field.”

“The Pharisees and lawyers” did not ask ‘what shall we do’ because they “regarded not the word of the LORD” or “the counsel of God against themselves.”

Those who ask are those “that feared the word of the LORD” and follow David in Psalm 21:4.

“He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.”

The Lord Jesus Christ said to the Jews in John 8:24 **“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”**

Those that don’t ask are those that “regarded not the word of the LORD” and therefore, as the Lord said, **“ye shall die in your sins.”**

6. John and Jesus are compared and Jesus is seen as the ‘greater’ one. In what ways (John 1:15, 18)?

The Lord Jesus Christ is greater than John He is preferred before John. John is **“the prophet of the Highest”** Luke 1:76, whereas the Lord Jesus Christ is **“the Son of the Highest”** Luke 1:32.

The Lord Jesus Christ is greater than John because born six months after John, Luke 1:26, He was before John. He is **“the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”** John 1:1, **“And the WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us”** John 1:14, as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself declared in John 8:58. The Jews’ reaction in John 8:59 shows that they understood exactly what the Lord meant in John 8:58.

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”

Note again Micah 5:2 with respect to the Lord’s pre-incarnate existence.

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is greater than John because **“No man hath seen God at any time”** John 1:18, including John (though see Dr Ruckman’s commentary *The Book of John* pp 29-34). However, the Lord Jesus Christ **“hath seen God”** according to John 6:46, 10:30 (before the Lord revealed in John 14:9 that **“he that hath seen me hath seen the Father”**).

“Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.”

“I and my Father are one.”

The NIV/TNIV/2011NIV corrupt John 10:30 by changing “my” to “the.”

7. *Moses and Jesus are compared again in John 1:16, 17. Jesus is seen as the ‘greater one.’ What did both give? Why is what Jesus gives better?*

Moses gave “*the law*” John 1:17. The Lord Jesus Christ gave “*grace and truth*” John 1:17 in opening the way to the Father via reconciliation, see remarks under *Question 2* with respect to 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, according to John 14:6.

“Jesus saith unto him, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*”

Paul explains “*grace and truth*” versus “*the law*” with respect to salvation through “*justification*” Romans 4:25, 5:16, 18 in Galatians 2:16, summarising why that which the Lord Jesus Christ gives is better than what Moses gives.

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

John: who are you (John 1:19-28)?

8. *Why does John deny being the Christ, Elijah and the Prophet (John 1:20-22)?*

He denies it because he wasn’t any of them, not even Elijah, literally. See answer to *Question 1*. John is a good example “*to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think*” and to “*Provide things honest in the sight of all men*” Romans 12:3, 17.

Haman is an example of going against Romans 12:3 and Balaam is an example of going against Romans 12:17. Both incurred God’s judgement. See Numbers 22:12-13, 18-22, 32, 25, 31:18, Esther 6:6, 12, 7:9-10, Jude 11.

The pope violates Romans 12:3, 17 by allowing himself to be called “*Holy Father.*” See www.vatican.va/holy_father/index.htm. The term “*Holy Father*” John 17:11 is reserved for God the Father alone. So, therefore, do all Catholics, Ecumenicals and modern (Catholic) version supporters. Note how the NIV/TNIV/NKJV each eliminates the word “*honest*” from Romans 12:17.

Mohammed violated Romans 12:3, 17 in that he put himself forward as the Holy Ghost, Sure 17:80-81, Yusuf Ali’s translation “*O my Lord! Let my entry be by the Gate of Truth and Honour, and likewise my exit by the Gate of Truth and Honour; and grant me from Thy Presence an authority to aid (me). And say: “Truth has (now) arrived, and Falsehood perished: for Falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish.”* Compare John 16:13.

“Howbeit when he, *the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*”

See *The Source of International Terrorism* by Dr Peter S. Ruckman, p 5.

All Mohammedans and their supporters have therefore also violated Romans 12:3, 17.

Note that, as with Balaam and Haman, Catholics, Mohammedans and all their supporters will incur God’s judgement. See Ezekiel 38:5, 19-23, Matthew 13:41-42, Revelation 18.

9. *Why does John say he is only 'a voice' (John 1:23)?*

John said this in fulfilment of prophecy, see *Question 3* and because John was a *true* prophet, he said and did what Balaam said and did not until the Lord forced him.

See *Question 8* and note Numbers 22:18, 38 **"I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more...Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak."**

John was indeed "A *prophet...and more than a prophet*" Matthew 11:9, in fact "A *prophet...and much more than a prophet*" Luke 7:26, according to the Lord Jesus Christ. John, therefore, was prepared to abide by Proverbs 27:2.

"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."

10. *What does John tell them about the coming great one that would have upset them (Matthew 3:11-12, John 1:26-29)?*

They could have been upset over the implication that they were chaff because John states in Matthew 3:12 that **"he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."**

They could have been upset because John said they did not know their Messiah, according to John 1:26, whereas this man from the desert, see *Question 1*, who had harsh words for the Jewish leaders, see *Question 5*, said that he did.

"John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;"

"And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" John 1:32-33.

They could have been upset because they did not recognise the Lord Jesus Christ as **"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"** John 1:29, Whom John called Him. They may have thought in terms only of the usual Passover that had been instituted in Exodus 12 and which was observed three times, in John 2:13, 6:4, 11:55, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself being the *fourth* Passover, Exodus 12:8, 9, John 19:28, 1 Corinthians 5:7.

If so, they had forgotten Isaiah 49:6, 53:7, which brings the study back to *Question 2* and **"the ministry of reconciliation"** 2 Corinthians 5:18, which should be the focus for the Christian in studying John's ministry.

"And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

Appendix: Notes on John 1:18

John 1:18 in the AV1611 states *“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”*

The Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, Great, Bishops’, Geneva Bibles support the AV1611 reading.

The Douay-Rheims 1749-1752 Challoner Revision and the RV also have the AV1611 reading.

The JB, NJB each has *“the only Son.”* The NWT has *“the only begotten god.”*

The 1973 NIV has *“God the only [Son]”* i.e. *“Son”* is uncertain.

The 1984 NIV has *“God the One and Only.”*

The 2007 Gideons NIV has *“the Only Begotten [Son]”* i.e. *“Son”* is uncertain.

The 2005 TNIV/2011 NIV each has *“the one and only Son, who is himself God.”*

See biblewebapp.com/niv2011-changes/ for the changes between the 1984 NIV, 2005 TNIV and the 2011 NIV.

The following material consists of extracts from this writer’s work *“O Biblios” – The Book* pp 72-73, 331-339, hard copy. See www.timefortruth.co.uk/why-av-only/, *‘O Biblios’ – The Book*, Volumes 1, 5 but note that the page numbers will differ from those of the hard copy, because the online copy is in A4 format. Use the search string *John 1:14* for Volume 1 and *John 1:18* for Volume 5.

See www.timefortruth.co.uk/why-av-only/james-white-dr-divietro-and-dawaite.php, *KJO Review Full* p 216, 234ff, 414ff for discussion on John 1:18.

The extracts are as follows.

“Monogenes” [“only begotten”] is found in the vast majority of mss. and is correctly translated “only begotten”. The omission of “begotten” is obtained from Papyri 66, 75, Aleph and B. “Only begotten God” is attributable to Valentinus, a 2nd century heretic, whose corrupting influence is preserved in P 66, Aleph, B, C, L. Note that the modern reading cannot be correct, according to Job 1:6, Luke 3:38 and John 1:12, which show that Jesus Christ is NOT God’s “one and only son”...

Dr. Hills [The King James Version Defended] pp 133-134 [states]: “The Only Begotten Son Versus Only Begotten God”

“John 1:18...This verse exhibits the following four-fold variation:

- (1) *“the only begotten Son,” Traditional Text, Latin versions, Curetonian Syriac.*
- (2) *“only begotten God,” Pap 66, Aleph, B, C, L, W-H*
- (3) *“the only begotten God” Pap 75*
- (4) *“(the) only begotten,” read by one Latin manuscript.”*

See also wilderness-cry.net/bible_study/books/kjv-defended/chapter5.html.

The heretical and corrupt nature of the non-Traditional readings and their sources is explained as follows.

Gail Riplinger states [in New Age Versions] pp 338-339:

“Arius (260-336), a student of Origen’s, crusaded for Jesus as “the begotten God,” only to be met by campaigning Christians like Athanasius (296-373), Hilary (315-367), and Ambrose (339-397) armed with “the only begotten Son” in their canon’s mouth”...

“The further swell of Arianism by A.D. 330 prompted Constantine to replace semi-Arian Eusebius of Caesarea with Arian Eusebius of Nicodemia...It is in this climate that Constantine requested the production of manuscripts B and Aleph. Their use of “only begotten God” in John 1:18 was no doubt a political expedient.

“The term “the only begotten Son” is seen in the vast majority of MSS and is witnessed to by the earliest extant record of John 1:18, Tertullian in A.D. 150. Even Allen Wikgren of the UBS Greek New Testament committee admits:

““It is doubtful that the author would have written ‘begotten God’ which may be a primitive, transcriptional error in the Alexandrian tradition.””

“The critical apparatus of the UBS Greek New Testament cites P66, P75, Aleph, B, C, and L, as well as Valentinus (who changed “begotten Son” to “begotten God”), Theodotus, Clement, Origen and Arius, as support for their use of “begotten God,” in spite of the doctrinal bias of these witnesses.”

In sum, the heresies of Valentinus and Origen clearly continue to this day, in the NIV stable, with respect to John 1:18 and the heretical distortion of the true reading **“the only begotten Son”** as found in *all* editions of the AV1611.