

FRONTLINE

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A Closer Look at Jesus

John ch. 1- The Word

¹ In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He existed in the beginning with God. ³ God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. ⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created,^[a] and his life brought light to everyone. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.^[b]

- Did God make Jesus?
- What does vs.4 mean?

⁶ God sent a man, John the Baptist,^[c] ⁷ to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. ⁸ John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹ The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. ¹¹ He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. ¹² But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

- Why is it that some people didn't recognize Him, or rejected Him?

¹⁴ So the Word became human^[d] and made his home among us. He was full of unending love and faithfulness.^[e] And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

- Why does it matter that Jesus became human?

¹⁵ John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'" ¹⁶ From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another.^[f] ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but God's unending love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God,^[g] is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

- How can we know what God looks like?

The Testimony of John the Baptist

¹⁹ This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Temple assistants^[h] from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?" ²⁰ He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹ "Well then, who are you?" they asked. "Are you Elijah?"

"No," he replied.

"Are you the Prophet we are expecting?"^[i]

"No."

²² “Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?”

²³ John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah:

“I am a voice shouting in the wilderness,
‘Clear the way for the LORD’s coming!’”^[i]

²⁴ Then the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ asked him, “If you aren’t the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, what right do you have to baptize?” ²⁶ John told them, “I baptize with^[k] water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize. ²⁷ Though his ministry follows mine, I’m not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal.” ²⁸ This encounter took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.

- Do you think it would have been easier back then to recognize Jesus since He was physically there as opposed to now, when we go strictly by faith? Why?

Jesus, the Lamb of God

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ He is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.’ ³¹ I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel.” ³² Then John testified, “I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. ³³ I didn’t know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.”^[l]

- At first John didn’t recognize Jesus as the Messiah. What happened to make him see that He was.

The First Disciples

³⁵ The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. ³⁶ As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, “Look! There is the Lamb of God!” ³⁷ When John’s two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus.

- Why did John have to tell them that Jesus was “the guy”? He’s the Son of God, wasn’t He glowing, or floating, or something?

³⁸ Jesus looked around and saw them following. “What do you want?” he asked them.

They replied, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

³⁹ “Come and see,” he said. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day.

- What do you think they did all day?

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. ⁴¹ Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means “Christ”^[m]).

⁴² Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, “Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas” (which means “Peter”^[n]).

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me." ⁴⁴ Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown.

⁴⁵ Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses^[o] and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth."

⁴⁶ "Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

"Come and see for yourself," Philip replied.

⁴⁷ As they approached, Jesus said, "Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity."

⁴⁸ "How do you know about me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus replied, "I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you."

⁴⁹ Then Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!"

⁵⁰ Jesus asked him, "Do you believe this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." ⁵¹ Then he said, "I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth.^[p]"

- Why does it not seem like a big deal at all to Jesus that He just told Nathanael where He was?
- Why does Jesus act like Nathanael shouldn't really be impressed by this either?
- It seems to me like Jesus is telling them to be expecting amazing things all the time. Do you think we should still believe this?

Challenge: Who is Jesus to you? Not who have you heard Jesus is, not what does your parents or friends say about Him. Who do you really see Jesus as, and are you open to take another look at Him and change if He is more than what you may see Him as?