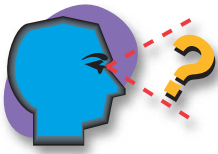


# John



## Responses to the Questions

NOTE: BE SURE TO ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS YOURSELF BEFORE READING THE ANSWERS IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS STUDY.

### Read John 1:19-51

1. Because part of the purpose of this gospel is probably to catechize followers of the Baptist who had not heard the full story of Jesus and John's relationship to him.
2. Because Malachi 4:5-6 said that God would send Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord. Some were under the impression that Elijah himself would return from heaven. John denies being Elijah returned from heaven. However, Jesus says John was the Elijah who was to come (Matthew 11:13-14). That is, he comes (as Elisha did) in the spirit and power of Elijah, bringing to a close the preparatory prophetic line of which Elijah is the archetype. The authorities ask if John is "the prophet" because they believed that Moses had prophesied the coming an Ultimate Prophet (of whom the Old Testament prophets were foreshadows) who would appear at the end of the age. Jesus, not John, is "the Prophet."
3. This passage originally refers to the comfort God extended to the returning exiles from the Babylonian Captivity. This suggests that John sees his mission as being the herald of the ultimate fulfillment of the comfort and liberation God intends to give his people in the Messiah.
4. The evangelist probably notes the questioners were Pharisees because the John baptism was an affront to them. Baptism implied the recipient needed washing and the Pharisees (whose name means "separate" were frequently given to the opinion that they were already clean by virtue of their punctilious observance of the Law.
5. Baptism is one of the signs of the New Covenant according to the prophet. It signifies washing from sign and is therefore both an offer of hope and an indictment for sin.
6. John's baptism is not sacramental. It is a "baptism of repentance". John sees himself as an entirely inferior herald to the one who is to come after him.
7. The Lamb has multiple-layered significance. The Lamb of sacrifice in the Passover sheds its blood to seal the covenant between Israel and God and remove ritual impurity from the nation. Further, the Passover Lamb's blood caused the angel of death to "pass over" Israel and not strike the first born. Jesus, as the Lamb of God is the ultimately sacrifice for sin whose blood seals the New Covenant, takes away sin and delivers from death.



## Responses to the Questions (cont.)

8. Jesus is both superior to John (since he is God) and infinitely older than John (since he has existed from all eternity). John did not recognize Jesus' Messiahship till the Father revealed it to him. He may well have known Jesus as a relative. But he did not grasp who Jesus truly was till his baptism. John's purpose is that the Messiah should be revealed to Israel.
9. John's baptism was only preparatory: a baptism of repentance. It is sacramental baptism, instituted by Jesus (Matthew 28:19) that confers on us the divine life of the Holy Spirit and actually washes away our sins.
10. The two disciples are Andrew and John. The evangelist reiterates John's acclamation of Jesus as Lamb of God in order to emphasize that John's role is preparatory to Jesus and that Jesus is superior to John.
11. John repeatedly translates terms such as rabbi", "Messiah", and "Cephas" because they are his native language and he is writing for an audience that is primarily Greek-speaking and probably mostly Gentile. A name change signals a change in identity, as when Jacob's name was changed to Israel. "Cephas" and "Peter" both mean "Rock".
12. John does not mean us to think that Jesus called Philip out of the blue, but to suggest to us that Philip has already heard of Jesus through the testimony of others. This is why he mentions that Philip was from the town of Andrew and Simon and probably had heard of Jesus through their testimony.
13. The phrase implies the disciples had been search for "him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote". It matters that Moses and the prophets wrote of him because the New Covenant of the Messiah is rooted in the covenant God made with Israel and is a continuity with what God has already revealed, not a sudden mutation or interruption from some other god.
14. Nathaniel initially dismisses Jesus as being from an insignificant town. "Nazareth" sounds like "branch" in Hebrew, which is one of the titles of Messiah. The exchange between Jesus and Nathanael assumes the reader will be familiar with Jacob (whose name is associated with guile and guilt, the Messianic "branch" of Isaiah 11 as well as Zechariah 3-6 and the description of "Yeshua" the High Priest's crowning and the description of the Branch who removes the guilt of Israel in a single day.