



Jesus Begins His Ministry

John 1:1-34



Jesus is God. He always existed and He spoke everything into being (John 1:1-3). At just the right time, He came to Earth in the form of a human being so He could make the way for us to enter God's kingdom (John 1:14). John the Baptist came to prepare the way for the Lord. He boldly pointed people to Jesus.

Day #1 continued:

understand," he whispered. "Now I see why You came." (Story edited for length.)



(Jesus) replied, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God...because that is why I was sent." - Luke 4:43 NLT



Jesus came in human form to take away the raging storm of our sin and to lead us into the safety of God's eternal kingdom!

Day #1: Led to Safety

Author Louis Cassels tells a story about a man who didn't believe in Jesus:

One Christmas Eve, a woman went to church, but her husband refused to go. "I simply cannot understand this claim that God became a man. It doesn't make any sense to me," he told his wife.

Soon, the snow began to fall. The man was startled to hear a thudding sound at his window. It was a flock of birds that had been caught in the storm, and in a desperate search for shelter had tried to fly through his window. "I can't let these poor creatures lie there and freeze," he thought. "But how can I help them?"

Then he thought of his barn. It would provide a warm shelter. He quickly put on his coat and boots and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light. But the birds didn't come in.

"Food will bring them in," he thought. So he hurried back to the house for breadcrumbs, which he sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn. To his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around and waving his arms. They scattered in every direction - except into the warm, lighted barn.

"They are afraid of me," he said to himself, "and I can't think of any way to let them know they can trust me. If only I could become a bird myself, perhaps I could lead them to safety."

Just at that moment, the church bells began to ring. He stood silently for a while, listening to the bells singing out the good news of Christmas. Then he sank to his knees in the snow. "Now I do

Day #2: Focus on Jesus

Because John the Baptist was following God, he stood out from the crowd. As he proclaimed the truth of God's kingdom, many people gathered around to hear him. People believed that John was something special. The truth was, John was special because he was listening to and obeying God.

Some of the religious leaders sent Pharisees out to ask John if he was the Savior. John replied with a clear, "No."



John told them, "I baptize with water, but right here in the crowd is Someone you do not recognize. Though His ministry follows mine, I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of His sandal." - John 1:26-27

John did not want people to trust in *John*. He did not want people to focus their attention on him. John wanted everyone to trust in Jesus. Jesus is the only one who is sinless; He is the only one who could ever take our sin away. He is the Lord who is worthy to be praised (Revelation 5:12).

John compared himself to the best man at a wedding. The best man is the good friend of the groom (the man getting married). The best man doesn't get all the attention - the groom does. The best man doesn't marry the bride - the groom does. The best man stands behind the groom and is full of joy for his friend. In the same way, John came to stand behind Jesus. John pointed people to Jesus, the most important One.

John said: *He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.* - John 3:30




It is a great thing to love and trust those who teach you about God. But be sure that your ultimate trust is in Jesus, not in any person. People make mistakes, but Jesus never does! Jesus will never let you down!

Day #3: A Beautiful Picture


Go grab a photograph. What does that picture represent? What is better, the picture or the real thing? Is the picture *part* of the real thing? No. But pictures are great when we want to show the real thing to other people. Today we'll see that Baptism is a **picture** of something wonderful.

The Bible tells us to get baptized after we turn away from our sin and put our trust in Jesus (Acts 2:38). Baptism does **not** wash away your sin or make you right with God! That happens when we repent and trust in Jesus. Baptism is a picture.

 *When we are lowered into the water, it is like the burial of Jesus; when we are raised up out of the water, it is like the resurrection of Jesus.* - (from Romans 6:4, The Message)

Baptism is a picture of what Jesus came to do - to die on the cross and be raised to new life. When we are baptized, we are showing a picture of what Jesus did. We are simply telling everyone that we believe that Jesus died to take away our sin and that God raised Him three days later.


With this in mind, we may wonder why **Jesus** wanted to be baptized by John (Matthew 3:13-15). Jesus was NOT baptized to show that He repented of His sin, **because He had NO sin!** Jesus was baptized to tell everyone that He identified with the message of baptism. When He was baptized, He showed that picture to everyone.

 In your own words, describe what Baptism is a picture of. The next time you see someone being baptized, remember that it is a picture of what Jesus did for us.

Day #4: Filled with Power

Philippians 2:6-7 tells us that Jesus set aside His rights as God when He came to Earth. Somehow, He restrained His mighty power. He lowered Himself to take on a human body.

When Jesus grew up, He looked like every other kid on the block (Isaiah 53:2). He laughed, He played, He did His chores. But at just the right time, when He was about 30 years old, God filled Him, once again, with power.

 *As soon as Jesus was baptized, He came up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened. Jesus saw the Spirit of God coming down on Him like a dove.*


A voice from heaven said, "This is My Son, and I love Him. I am very pleased with Him." - Matthew 3:16-17

Day #4 continued:

In front of John and other witnesses, Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. Because He was filled with the Holy Spirit's power, Jesus went out and did amazing signs and wonders. He healed sick people, He made blind people see, He made lame people walk. He cast demons out.


Here is an amazing verse to think about:

I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in Me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in My name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it! - John 14:12-14 NLT

 Jesus promised that He would send the same Holy Spirit to live inside of every person who believes in Him (John 14:16-17). If you trust in Jesus, you are filled with God's power, just like Jesus was!


Day #5: John Listened to God

Cover your ears and hum a tune. Now, mom or dad, whisper a sweet message to your child. Can you hear when you are not listening? Can you hear when your mind is full of other noises? Now, don't cover your ears, and listen as your parent whispers the same message. Could you hear it this time?

 *Then John testified (about Jesus), "I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon Him. 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.' I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that He is the Chosen One of God.* - John 1:32-34

What are the two actions that God did in the verses above? He **sent** John to baptize people out in the wilderness, and He **told** John who the Savior was. God is not silent! He tells His people what He wants them to do (John 10:27).

Isn't it great that John was listening to God? Isn't it wonderful that John obeyed God when He spoke? If John had not listened, surely God would have found someone else to fulfill His plan (Job 42:2). But then John would have missed out on being part of the greatest events in history.

 Do you take the time to listen to God? If you are constantly busy, always listening to music or TV, you will not hear God speaking to you. Read His word, the Bible, and sit quietly in prayer. You may not hear a voice in your ear, but you will hear His truth in your heart.