



Part 19: Behold the Lamb

Word ALIVE



John the Baptist



Background Notes -

PURPOSE: To present Jesus as the Savior of all. While Matthew’s genealogy links Jesus to Abraham, Luke’s goes all the way back to Adam. John’s Gospel gives us the famous 3:16 verse which teaches us that Jesus Christ is the greatest proof of God’s love, and that the choice to accept or reject God is made in his presence.

AUTHOR: Matthew (a tax collector also called Levi), Mark (who would assisted Peter), Luke (a physician who assisted Paul), and John (the beloved disciple Jesus loved). This part of the story consists mostly of John’s Gospel.

DATE: Mark was written around the 60’s, Luke and Matthew around the 70’s, and John around the 90’s.

STYLE: The first three gospels, called “synoptic,” draw on common sources. John draws on additional sayings and miracles of Jesus, and also uses a deeper symbolism informed by faith.



Opening Quotes -

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things came into being through him.” Jn 1:1

“His own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.” Jn 1:11

“The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.” Jn 1:16

“Here is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” Jn 1:29

“Woman, what concern is that to you and me? My hour has not yet come.” Jn 2:4

“Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” Jn 2:16

“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” Jn 3:16

“The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God’s wrath.” Jn 3:36

“Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.” Jn 4:13

“The hour is coming when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.” Jn 4:22

“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.” Jn 4:35

the BIG PICTURE		→ : LAW, History, Writings, Prophets		→ : key covenants in our Father’s plan	
12 Periods ▼	Plot ▼	Other books related to period ▼		stories in each period ▼	
BC	☉ THE BEGINNINGS	GN 1-11	Ps 8, 104		Creation, Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, Noah’s ark, Tower of Babel
1850	🕯 THE PATRIARCHS	GN 12-50			Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Melchizedek
1250	⚠ EXODUS FROM EGYPT	EX			Moses, the burning bush, the plagues, passover, exodus
1200	♣ JOURNEY TO CANAAN	NM, Jos	LV, DT		Sinai desert, 10 commandments, Levites, Law, Joshua
1100	☠ THE JUDGE CYCLE	Jg	Ruth		12 tribes, Gideon, Samson, Ruth, Samuel
1030	☆ KINGS & PROPHETS	1 & 2 S	1 Ch, Ps, Prov		Saul, David, Solomon, Jerusalem, the Temple
1000	■ THE DIVIDED KINGDOM	1 Kg	2 Ch, Prov,		Israel (N), Judah (S), Elijah & Elisha, Isaiah, Assyrian exile
721 587	☹ BABYLONIAN EXILE	2 Kg	2 Ch, Tob, Hos, Am, Hab, Is, Jer, Lam, Jl, Mic, Zp, Jon, Nah, Ob, Ez, Dan, Bar		Babylonians, “major” prophets, Isaiah (to Israel), Jeremiah (to Jerusalem), Ezekiel (to the Exiles)
538	⚙ THE RESTORATION	Ezr, Neh	Est, Judith, Hag, Zech, Mal, Job, Ecc, Songs		Cyrus, 2nd temple, 2nd Law, “minor” prophets, new writings
163 63	🕯 THE REPURIFICATION	1 Mac	Dn, 2Mac, Sirach, Wisdom		Greeks, Maccabean revolt, Hasmonean Dynasty, Romans, Jewish sects (Pharisees, Saducees, Zealots, Essenes)
AD	♣+ JESUS CHRIST	LK	MT, MK, JN		Incarnation, Good News, New Law, Cross & Resurrection
33 70	🕯 APOSTOLIC CHURCH	Acts	Rm, 1&2Co, Ga, Ep, Phil, Col, 1&2Th, 1&2 Tm, Ti, Phm, Hb, Ja, 1P, 2P, 1,2&3J, Jd, Rv		Pentecost, council, journeys, epistles, Body/Bride of Christ



The Story of Part 19: Behold the Lamb



The Gospel of John opens up with Christ as the eternal Logos, the Word, that came from God and dwelt on the earth. But not only was the Word from God – the Word *was* God. All things were made through him. His own people rejected him, and those who believed in him were given the power to become children of God! The Law had been revealed through Moses, but grace was now revealed through Christ.

When Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, John the Baptist was the prophesied “voice in the wilderness,” exhorting the Jews to “set the path straight,” preaching repentance and baptizing them, for the salvation of God was about to become visible to all. But when some insincere hypocrites showed up, thinking themselves saved by mere virtue of their Jewish ancestry, he blasted them, informing them that God could raise descendants of Abraham from the stones. Abraham was the father of God’s people by *faith*, not by blood. “Bear good fruit,” he warned them, “or be cut down and thrown into the unquenchable fire.” Ever since the original sin, heaven had been closed, and everyone’s destiny was Sheol, the shadowy underworld separated from God. This would all change when the Savior would come to reopen the doors to heaven and lead the souls of the just there, while the souls of the wicked, seeing what they rejected, would suffer forever the separation from God. Sheol would become hell.

John was taken seriously enough for them to ask if he was Elijah (he was the *new* Elijah prophesied in Malachi 3, not the old Elijah). When he said no, they asked if perhaps he was the Christ, the anointed Messiah. No again. He clarified that he was only a precursor who was baptizing with water, while the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit. John knew it was his cousin whom the world sought, so he was confused when Jesus himself showed up to get baptized. Jesus explained that this was necessary to “fulfill all righteousness.” So Jesus was baptized, and at that moment John saw the Spirit of God in the form of a dove descend upon Jesus and heard the voice of God saying He was pleased with His Son. “Behold the lamb of God,” proclaimed John, who had just witnessed God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit when he baptized his cousin that day in the Jordan.

We mentioned last time that Jesus, God the Son, assumed a fallen, human nature. Though he did not know sin, he could now feel its effects. One of these effects was temptation, as the devil himself tempted him in the wilderness, quoting Scripture to him while Jesus was fasting. “You can turn these stones into bread,” he told Jesus. “Man must not live by bread alone, but on the word of God,” was Jesus’ response. Satan then took him to the top of the Temple and showed Jesus the kingdoms of the world. “Worship me, Jesus, and all of this will be yours.” “Worship no one but God,” was Jesus’ response. “Throw yourself down and your angels will catch you,”

tried Satan. “Do not put the Lord your God to the test,” was Jesus’ response. With that, the devil left him, but would be back before Jesus’ final hour on earth. It was time for Jesus to go public.

After picking his first apostles, Andrew, his brother Simon (later named Cephas, or Peter), Philip, and Nathaniel, it was time for his first public miracle. Mary, Jesus’ mother, informed Jesus at a wedding feast in Cana that the wine had run out. After Jesus told her that his hour had not yet come, she simply told the servants “Do whatever he tells you.” Jesus then honored the request and changed water into wine. But often overlooked is the abundance of the miracle, for he changed huge vats filled to the brim, and the wine was so good they thought it was the wine that should have been served first! Who was this rabbi?

Later he visited Jerusalem and was filled with indignation at the money changers scamming the worshippers for money in the Temple courtyard. With whipcord in hand, Jesus drove them out. “My Father’s house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves! Destroy this temple,” he said, “and in three days I will rebuild it.” Only after his resurrection did they realize that the Temple he spoke of was his own body, the new Temple where man would meet and worship God.

The Jews were divided over Christ. Was this a false messiah or the real deal? One Pharisee named Nicodemus met Jesus one night and asked him about a strange teaching of his, that you had to be “born again” to enter God’s kingdom. Jesus explained what it meant to be born again, born of “water and spirit.” Jesus compared himself to the bronze serpent that Moses was instructed to raise when people were bitten by poisonous snakes. All people had to do if they were bitten was look upon the bronze statue and they would be healed. In like fashion, to enter the kingdom of heaven, born of water and spirit, all one had to do was gaze upon Jesus elevated like the bronze serpent. Whoever would look upon him with faith would find eternal life, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son (the famous Jn 3:16). He then made it clear that he came not to condemn, but to save.

This piece of the story ends back in Cana, with Jesus asking a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well for some water, for he was thirsty after a long walk. The woman wondered why he would bother talking to her, since Jews considered Samaritans unclean. After prophesying that she was living in sin with a sixth man now, he acknowledged that Samaritans worshipped in one place and Jews in another, but that it was from the Jews that the Savior would come. He then revealed that he was that Messiah! She took the message into town and, ironically, it was the Samaritans who first accepted Jesus as the Christ. 📖



Defending the Faith: Baptism and Children

“Why do Catholics baptize infants? Doesn't the Bible say ‘Repent and be baptized?’ How can an infant repent? Is there a biblical basis for the Catholic notion of Confirmation? And why do Catholics insist Mary was ‘ever-virgin’ when the Bible says Jesus had brothers and sisters?”

Jesus said “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit” (Jn 3:5). It follows, then, that children, too, must be born of water and Spirit if they are to enter the kingdom of God. In the old covenant what marked the people of God was the circumcision of all the males. This was the mark of God’s people, and it was mandatory for men called to join God’s people to be circumcised. But if they were *born* Jewish, the boys were circumcised as soon as they were eight days old (Gn 17:12, Lk 2:21). In Paul’s letter to the Colossians (2:11-12), we find baptism, the “spiritual circumcision of Christ,” *replacing* physical circumcision as the new sign of the covenant. Based on this, it would be quite appropriate to baptize children. In fact, we find entire households being baptized by the apostles (Acts 16:15, 16:33, 18:8, 1 Cor 1:16). It is unlikely that all of these households were childless.

But what of Peter’s call to *repent* and be baptized (Acts 2:38)? Obviously, children cannot repent. But if we are faithful to the text, Peter does *not* say “All of you repent and be baptized.” He says, “Repent, and all of you be baptized” changing the meaning. “Repent” was addressed to the crowd, but being baptized was a gift of the Holy Spirit promised to them *and their children* (verse 39). And so, even without explicit passages of infant baptism, we have every reason to

believe that this was common practice. It is certainly implied by the Bible and attested to by the immemorial tradition of the Church.

Confirmation completes the grace received in baptism. We see this alluded to in Acts 8:14-17, where the apostles lay their hands on baptized believers who had not yet received the Holy Spirit.

As for Mary’s virginity, the “brothers and sisters” of Jesus are never called sons and daughters of Mary because they are not her children. A different Mary, the wife of Cleophas and the *sister* of Mary (Jn 19:25) is the mother of James and Joset (Mk 15:47, Mt 27:56), and these are the men called the brothers of Jesus. The word “brother” is often used in the Bible to describe close relatives and friends. For example, Laban calls his nephew Jacob “brother” (Gn 29:15), and when Jesus tells Mary Magdalene to go to his “brothers,” she goes to the disciples (Jn 20:17).

The Bible, Church tradition, and many Protestant scholars have always portrayed the Holy Family as three, and only three, persons: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. If Jesus did have biological brothers, the Bible and the Church would simply have said so, and Mary’s detractors may have been the ones insisting that Jesus was an only child.



Expressing the Faith: Baptize Me

Written by Mark Heimerman and Erik Sundin, Jaci Velasquez opens her soul in song to the waters of everlasting life.

*In the desert of my shame
I have found myself to blame.
Now I thirst for innocence,
And Your blood is there to quench.
Pour Your life into my soul,
Let the cleansing waters flow,
Make me white as snow.*

***Hear me as I pray, wash my sins away,
Drown me in Your grace, baptize me.
As my lips confess, fill this emptiness
With Your holiness; baptize me.***

*Touch my eyes and give me sight.
Father, bathe me in Your light.*

*At Your feet I'll always be
Until the day Your face I see.
Let Your words consume my heart,
Lead me to the deepest part
And the healing starts.*
(Chorus)

*There is a river of life flowing from the throne of God
There is One who came by water and blood.
There is the Spirit who testifies to this.
Anyone who believes in the Son has this testimony in his heart.
Behold the Lamb of God, who washes away the sins of the world*

Baptize me.
(Chorus)

↗ **Next time: “The Master’s Words”** ↖