

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

Lesson Plan: John the Baptist / Baptism / Calling Disciples

Learning Goals: Students should be able to identify unique features in John's gospel connected to Jesus' Baptism and Calling of the disciples.

Question: Have you ever had a time where you did not meet someone else's expectations? What was that like?

Prayer.

Discuss question on board. (5 minutes)

Read John 1:19-51 (Maybe show video clip from "The Gospel of John")

The Testimony of John the Baptist

- The religious leaders tried to pigeonhole John (put him in a box).
- He didn't fit into their box (priest or prophet)
 - Elijah - from prophecy that he would return before the Messiah (Malachi 3:1; 4:5)
 - "the prophet" from Deuteronomy 18:18-19
 - "Who am I?" John could have answered, "I'll tell you who I am. I am a priest. I am a prophet. I am the miraculously born son of Elizabeth and Zechariah. I am called of God and chosen by God. I am the one prophesied in Isaiah and Malachi. I am the forerunner of the Messiah - that's who I am." But he didn't . . . (Jon Courson, *Application Commentary: New Testament*, 439)
- Instead, John quotes from Isaiah 40:3 - saying essentially, "I am just a voice, not the Word."
- John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. John said that everyone needed to be baptized - Jews and Gentiles, not only the Gentile converts. (This is not the same as our baptism, being baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus.)
- John's relationship to Jesus: "I am not even worthy to untie his sandals."
 - Rabbinic saying: "Every service which a servant performs for his master shall a disciple render to his teacher except the loosing and taking off of his sandal." (Only the lowest servant would do this. That is what John is comparing himself to.)
 - Today, we might say, "If that guy were in the hospital, I wouldn't be worthy to empty his bedpan."

Jesus' Baptism

- Does John actually describe Jesus' baptism? No. He does talk about the Spirit descending on Jesus, but it doesn't say when this happened. We know from the Synoptics that this happened at Jesus' baptism, but John doesn't say that.
- Jesus is referred to as "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." This is unique to John's writings (28 times in the book of Revelation - "Worthy is the lamb that was slain" 5:12).
 - What is the role of the lamb in Jewish thought?
 - To what aspect of worship is this connected?
 - Connection to sacrificial system (John was the son of a priest)
 - John saw the lamb taking away the "sin" of the world (not "sins"). Jesus is removing the whole disease.
 - To what specific event is it connected?
 - Passover - the lamb that was slaughtered to save the Israelites children.

- The message of the lamb grows wider and becomes more encompassing as you travel throughout scripture. In Genesis, Abel offers a lamb for an individual. In Exodus, at the Passover, a lamb is slaughtered for a family. In Leviticus, it is slaughtered for a nation. In John, the lamb is slaughtered for the entire world.
- The only description of baptism in this passage refers to Jesus as the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. What does this mean?

Calling the Disciples

- Some of Jesus' early disciples were disciples of John
- The pattern of "witness" - Andrew finds Jesus and immediately goes and finds his brother Simon Peter. After Phillip meets Jesus, he found Nathanael and told him about Jesus.
- In the Synoptics, we have to wait until Caesarea Philippi for Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah. In John, Andrew tells us in chapter 1. John is wasting no time letting us know who this Jesus is (there is no secrecy motif here).
- The disciples "followed" Jesus - the picture is of someone who walks in the footsteps of another. (*Have you ever tried to walk in someone else's footprints in the snow? It is like that.*)
- "Son of Man" - this is one of Jesus' favorite titles for himself (80 times in the Bible, 13 times in the Gospel of John)
 - In one sense, this is a way of saying "human being" (see Psalm 8)
 - It also refers to an agent of God who comes down from heaven to establish God's kingdom on earth (see Daniel 7:13)

Lesson Summary/Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Son of Man
- What is the significance of John the Baptist calling Jesus "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?"
- Where do you see the theme of witness that is a prominent feature in John's Gospel?