

Open Bible Stories - John Baptizes Jesus

Introduction

Key Idea

The story of John baptizing Jesus us about what it means to follow Jesus in repentance, confession, and bearing fruit in lives of obedience. It also shows us that Jesus is indeed God's Son, the promised Messiah sent to deliver his people from their sin.

Core Belief Verse

“Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.”

Acts 13:24

God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

God gave Isaac a wife and she bore twins, Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves.

But, God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from their slavery.

God sent judged the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land.

God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people.

God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan.

God raised up deliverers to lead Israel and rescue them from their enemies.

God formed Israel into a kingdom. He made a covenant with King David and promised to send a king that would rule his people forever.

Many of Israel's kings were evil and the kingdom of Israel divided into two kingdoms.

God sent prophets to warn his people of God's judgment and call them to repent.

When Israel did not repent, God sent his people into exile. After many years, he brought them back to the land.

Throughout the Old Testament, God promised to send his Messiah to deliver his people from their sin.

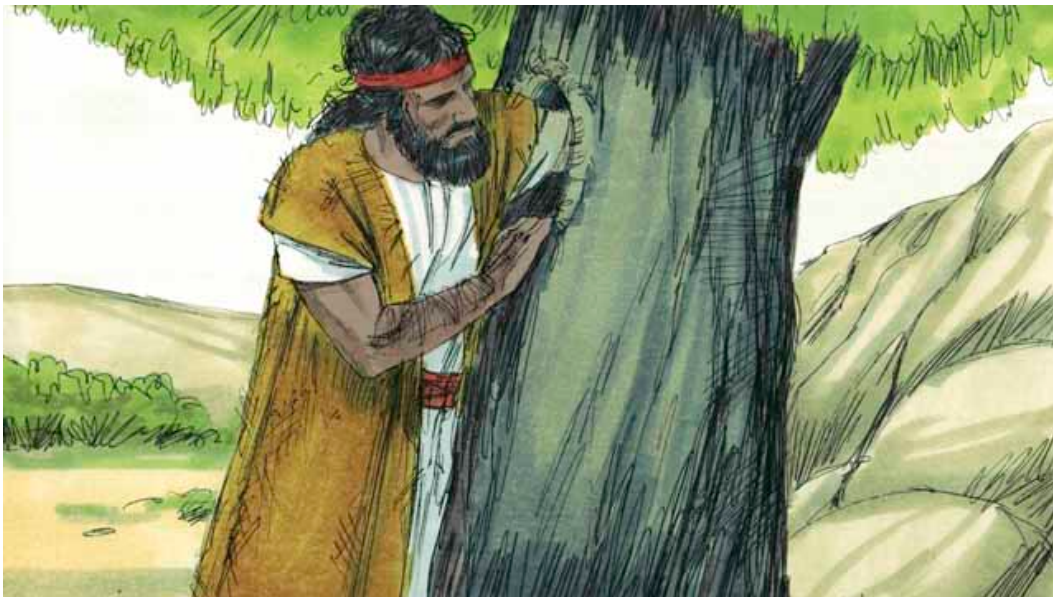
After many years, the prophet John was born. He would prepare people for the coming Messiah.

At the perfect time, God sent his Son, Jesus, to be born of a virgin Mary.

When John and Jesus grew up, John baptized Jesus as a sign that Jesus was God's beloved Son.

The Story: John Baptizes Jesus

24-01



John, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, grew up and became a prophet. He lived in the wilderness, ate wild honey and locusts, and wore clothes made from camel hair.

24-02



Many people came out to the wilderness to listen to John. He preached to them, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near!"

24-03



When people heard John's message, many of them repented from their sins, and John baptized them. Many religious leaders also came to see John, but they did not repent or confess their sins.

24-04



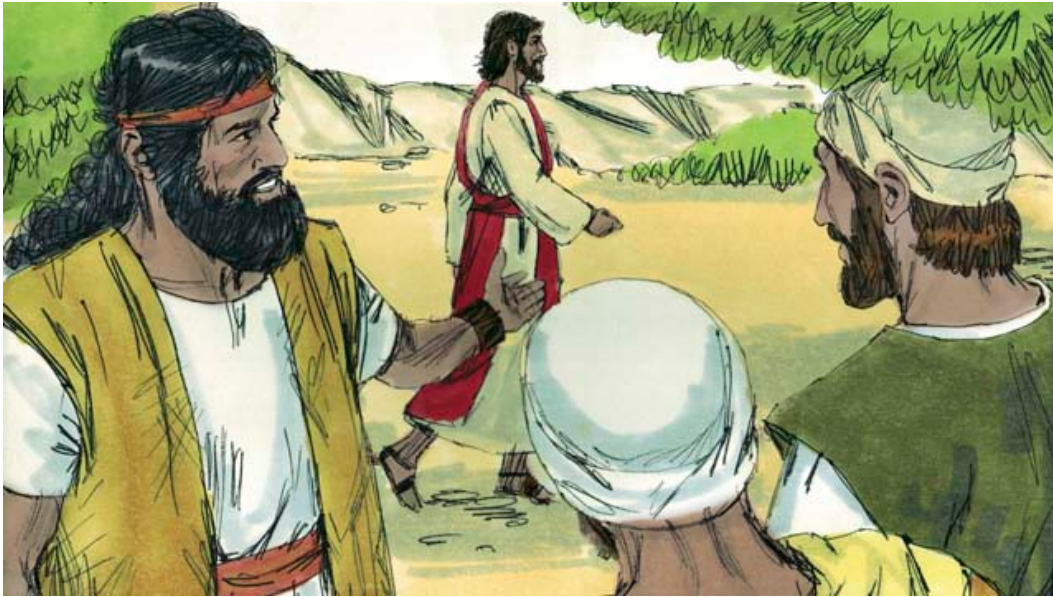
John said to the religious leaders, "You poisonous snakes! Repent and change your behavior. God will cut down every tree that does not bear good fruit, and he will throw them into the fire." John fulfilled what the prophets had said, "See, I will soon send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way."

24-05



Some religious leaders asked John if he was the Messiah. John replied, "I am not the Messiah, but he is coming after me. He is so great that I am not even worthy to untie his sandals."

24-06



The next day, Jesus came for John to baptize him. When John saw him, he said, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world."

24-07



John said to Jesus, "I am not worthy to baptize you. You should baptize me instead." But Jesus said, "You should baptize me, because it is the right thing to do." So John baptized him even though Jesus had never sinned.

24-08



When Jesus came up out of the water after being baptized, the Spirit of God appeared in the form of a dove and came down and rested on him. At the same time, God spoke from heaven. He said, "This is my Son. I love him, and I am very pleased with him."

24-09



God had told John, "The Holy Spirit will come down and stay on someone you baptize. That person is the Son of God." There is only one God. But when John baptized Jesus, he heard God the Father speak, saw God the Son, who is Jesus, and he saw the Holy Spirit.

A Bible story from: Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3; John 1:15-37

Community Study: Entrusted by God - Doing Ministry in a Trustworthy Way

- **Key Idea:** developing a right self-understanding as a minister
- **Key Passage:** 1 Corinthians 4:1-7
- **Main Session:** OBS 24 (John Baptizes Jesus)

Sing a Song (3-5 minutes)

Choose a song to sing to praise God and encourage one another.

Recite the Core Belief Verse (3-5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

John baptized with the baptism of repentance. He told the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus. Acts 19:4

OR

I have both seen and testified that this is the Son of God. John 1:34

Think Together (5 minutes)

As a community, discuss how leaders in various spheres of life think about themselves. Try to explore the way leaders understand their position, power, and influence, in good and bad ways.

Many leaders in my culture think like this about themselves...

Read the Passage (3-5 minutes)

Leaders should view themselves as servants of Jesus and stewards of God's truth. As a community, read the following Bible passage together to understand a godly approach to leadership, power, and authority.

4:1 This is how a person should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the hidden truths of God. 2 Now what is required of stewards is that they are found to be trustworthy. 3 But for me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. For I do not even judge myself. 4 I am not aware of any charge being made against me, but that does not mean I am innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment about anything before the time, before the Lord comes. He will bring to light

the hidden things of darkness and reveal the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his praise from God. 6 Now, brothers, I applied these principles to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that from us you might learn the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." This is so that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against the other. 1 Corinthians 4:1-7

Explore the Idea (10-15 minutes)

The way Christian leaders understand themselves and their work impacts the way they go about their leadership/ministry. As a community, use the following questions to discuss the teaching of the biblical passage.

1. In this passage, how are Christian leaders supposed to understand themselves and their role in God's work?
2. Why is this understanding helpful and important to go about leadership/ministry in a godly way?
3. What other ways do leaders view themselves and their work that are not godly and against this passage? How are these ways of thinking similar to and different from the way this passage teaches us to think about ourselves?
4. How can the leaders in your community/network develop this mindset/way of approaching Christian leadership/ministry?

Describe Godly Leaders (5 minutes)

Divide members of your community into groups of 2-3 people. Based on the discussion above, have each group describe how the church/community would be stronger and healthier if leaders viewed themselves the way this passage instructs them to view themselves.

If we viewed ourselves like servants and stewards, the church would become stronger in these ways...

Pray to God (5 minutes)

Pray as a whole community that God would help you to approach your leadership/ministry in this way.

Movement 1: Understand the Story

Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.

Observation Questions

24-01

What did John grow up to become?

John, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, grew up and became a prophet.

Where did John live when he grew up?

John lived in the wilderness.

What food did John eat and what clothes did John wear?

John ate wild honey and locusts, and wore clothes made from camel hair

24-02

How many people came to listen to John preach?

Many people came out to the wilderness to listen to John preach.

What message did John preach to the people?

John said, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near!"

24-03

How did many people respond positively to John's message?

Many people heard John's message and repented from their sins.

What did John do to the people who repented from their sins?

John baptized them.

How did many of the religious leaders respond to John's message?

Many religious leaders also came to see John, but they did not repent or confess their sins.

24-04

What did John call the religious leaders?

John called the religious leaders poisonous snakes.

What did John tell the religious leaders to do?

John told the religious leaders to repent and change their behavior.

What did John warn the religious leaders that God would do?

John warned the religious leaders that God would cut down every tree that does not bear good fruit, and he will throw them into the fire.

How did John fulfill what the prophets said?

John was the messenger the prophets spoke about whom God would send ahead of the Messiah to prepare his way.

24-05

What was John's answer when the Jews asked him if he was the Messiah?

John said he was not the Messiah, but the Messiah was coming after him.

How did John describe himself in his relationship with the Messiah?

John said that the Messiah is so great and John was not even worthy to untie his sandals.

24-06

Why did Jesus come to John?

Jesus came to John so that John would baptize him.

What title did John use for Jesus when he saw him coming to be baptized?

John called him the Lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world.

24-07

How did John initially respond to Jesus wanting to be baptized by John?

Initially, John told Jesus that he was not worthy to baptize Jesus and that Jesus should baptize him instead.

Why did Jesus say that John should baptize him?

Jesus said John should baptize him because it was the right thing to do, even though Jesus never sinned.

Why did Jesus not need to repent of his sins before John baptized him?

Jesus did not need to repent because he had never sinned.

24-08

Who came to rest on Jesus after he was baptized?

The Spirit of God appeared in the form of a dove and rested on Jesus.

What did God say after Jesus was baptized?

God said, "This is my Son. I love him, and I am very pleased with him."

24-09

Whom did God say the person would be upon whom the Holy Spirit would come down and rest?

The person the Holy Spirit would come down upon and stay when John baptized him would be the Son of God.

How many gods are there?

There is only one God.

How many persons is God?

God is one God and at the same time three persons. When John baptized Jesus, God the Father spoke to his Son and the Holy Spirit came on Jesus.

Movement 2: Theological Questions

What Does This Story Teach Us?

1. What does it mean to faithfully serve and follow God? How is John's life and ministry an example of what it means to be faithful to God?
2. How can people come to follow God and be in right relationship with God? How do the various responses to John's ministry teach us about how people can come to be right before God and follow him?
3. What is baptism important? What role does baptism have in disciples following God/Christ?
4. What should we believe about Jesus? What do John's ministry and Jesus' baptism teach us about who Jesus is?

Movement 3: Live It Out

Personal Implications & Applications From The Story

Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.

1. Have you repented of your sins and come to follow Jesus? Have you been baptized to publicly show your repentance from sin?
2. If you have come to follow Jesus, how has your life changed? If you have not come to follow Jesus, what is keeping you from doing so?
3. What new convictions have you gained about who Jesus is?
4. Think about this week. Where does "John Baptizes Jesus" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of John baptizing Jesus us about what it means to follow Jesus in repentance, confession, and bearing fruit in lives of obedience. It also shows us that Jesus is indeed God's Son, the promised Messiah sent to deliver his people from their sin.

Movement 4: Retell the Story

Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.

1. Can someone retell "John Baptizes Jesus" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.
3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

Church Ministry

Reflect on how this story can edify and mature the Christian community. Design a way to minister this story to your church community.

Ministry Preparation: Take time to consider how you could minister this story to others. What setting, audience, or approach would you use? Record your ideas below.

Ministry Implementation: Minister this story to a group of believers as you had planned. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching or lead a discussion. Record your ministry plan below.

Ministry Reflection: Think about what you learned from ministering this story to other believers. What went well? What would you do differently? Reflect on your experience below.

Movement 5: Share It

Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.

1. Who is one specific person you will share "John Baptizes Jesus" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?

Mission Engagement

Consider how you will witness this story to unbelievers. Design a way to share this story and engage them in what it teaches about Christianity and the gospel.

Witness Preparation: Take time to consider how you will witness this narrative to unbelievers. What context, relationship, or opportunity will you use? Record your ideas below.

Witness Implementation: Share this story with an unbeliever. Use the information in this study to help develop a natural conversation or teaching. Record your plan below.

Witness Reflection: Think about what you learned from sharing this story with unbelievers. What did they respond to? What questions did they ask? Reflect on your experience below.