

THE JESUS YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW

Seeing Jesus in John's Gospel

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Lesson 3: Meeting Jesus and Deciding What to Do with Him

INTRODUCTION

John 1:19–4:54 shows us a series of personal encounters with Jesus — religious leaders, curious disciples, a morally broken Samaritan woman, and a desperate government official. Each person meets the same Jesus, yet each must decide how to respond. John intentionally records these stories to move us from information about Jesus to faith in Jesus, and then to transformed living because of Jesus.

This section answers a critical question for every generation: *When Jesus reveals who He truly is, will we resist Him, investigate Him, or trust Him?*

READ JOHN 1:19–4:54

A. John the Baptist's Witness (1:19–34)

John clarifies that he is not the Messiah, Elijah, or “the Prophet.” Instead, he identifies himself as the voice preparing the way for the Lord and publicly declares Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

Key emphasis: Jesus is not self-appointed; He is divinely revealed and divinely affirmed.

B. The First Disciples Follow Jesus (1:35–51)

Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael move from curiosity to commitment. They each discover that Jesus is more than a teacher — He is the Messiah, Son of God, and King of Israel.

Key emphasis: True discipleship begins with seeking, but it doesn’t stop until one chooses to make Jesus the most important person in their life.

C. Jesus Reveals His Authority (2:1–25)

At Cana, Jesus reveals His glory by turning water into wine. In Jerusalem, He cleanses the temple, declaring His authority over worship and foreshadowing His death and resurrection.

Key emphasis: Jesus is Lord over joy, worship, and the entire religious system.

D. Jesus and Nicodemus — New Birth (3:1–21)

Nicodemus represents moral, religious humanity. Jesus confronts him with the need for spiritual rebirth, not just moral reform.

Key emphasis: Religion cannot save; only new birth (“born-again”) from God can.

E. John the Baptist's Final Testimony (3:22–36)

John joyfully steps aside, saying, “He must increase, I must decrease,” affirming Jesus’ divine origin and supreme authority.

Key emphasis: A true Christian rejoices when Christ becomes greater.

F. Jesus and the Samaritan Woman — Living Water (4:1–42)

Jesus crosses ethnic, moral, and social boundaries to offer eternal life to a broken woman. She becomes the first missionary to her town.

Key emphasis: Grace reaches people, religion is often rejected.

G. Healing the Official's Son — Faith Without Sight (4:43–54)

A royal official believes Jesus’ word before seeing the miracle. His faith leads to his entire household believing.

Key emphasis: Genuine faith trusts Jesus’ word instead of seeking signs and miracles (See John 4:48).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When Jesus overturned the money changer tables in the temple, he did it because the temple was to be a place of prayer (John 2:13–17). How could Jesus’ words possibly relate to churches today?

2. How did Jesus respond when the religious leaders asked for a sign to prove his authority? (see John 2:18-22).

3. Why did Jesus' answer confuse these religious leaders? How did it later enlighten the disciples? (See John 2:19-22).

4. What is the difference between belief based primarily on signs and wonders, and belief based on Jesus' word?

5. Why were the Pharisees and ‘teachers of the law’ so unaware of who Jesus is (see Matthew 22:29, Mark 7:8-9)?

SUMMARY

John 1:19–4:54 shows Jesus revealing His identity step by step: Lamb of God, Messiah, Son of God, Lord of worship, Giver of new birth, Source of living water, and Healer of the desperate. Every encounter forces a decision. Neutrality is not an option. Jesus does not simply invite admiration — He demands trust.

1. We must move beyond intellectual curiosity about Jesus to full commitment to Him.

Don’t settle for knowing about Jesus; choose to follow Him daily (1:38–39).

2. Let Jesus reshape your understanding of true worship and life.

True worship is not about location or tradition but about spirit and truth (4:23–24).

3. Share your story, not your superiority.

Like the Samaritan woman, tell others what Jesus has done — not how good you are or how much you know (4:28–29, 39).