

# **BIB203 NT1 Life of Christ**

## **Unit 5b Johannine Synoptic Example 2**

Presented by the



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So we're continuing our exercise here. In the last segment, we went from verse 19 in John 1 to verse 28 and correlated it with these passages. So we're going to go the rest of the way. And as it turns out, in this exercise, we're going to actually go beyond verse 42 because there is a point that is being made in John's Gospel that is not made in the Synoptics but actually, as we've said, sheds light on the Synoptics. And we get to see something about the Gospel of John here. Let me couch my last comment. John is seen as being more theological, even though all the Gospels are theological. In other words, all the evangelists had a certain intention in what they compiled of the story of the life of Jesus, of the life of Christ. But John is considered to have done that more so than the Synoptics. But with this particular section here in the Gospel of John, what we're going to see is something that seems to violate that particular stricture or that particular, dare I say it, canon. It doesn't quite fit. This section that we're going to be looking at doesn't quite fit a merely theological perspective. You have to account for chronology.

So let's do this exercise. We're still in John 1:19-42. We did 19 through 28, so I'm going to pick up in verse 29 and then we're going to correlate the other Gospels into it. So in verse 29, it says, "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel. And John bore witness: 'I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God!'"

Now, I want to stop there. So I read from verses 29 through 36. But what I want to point out about this passage is this. It says, "The next day." That's a chronological marker in the text. And just to do sort of a preview for this, just to show you the scope and the direction of our discussion in this segment, it says "the next day" in verse 29. It says "the next day" in verse 35. It also says "the next day" in verse 43. So in all likelihood, we should probably look at those markers as sequential. So what that means, in brief, is that John (the Gospel of John, that is) highlights three days in the life of Jesus of Nazareth sometime, it seems, after the temptation in the Judean wilderness. So we want to look at that in some more detail.

So back to verse 29, the next day, John the Baptist sees Jesus coming towards him, and says, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" He is basically pointing Jesus out. "This is the Lamb of God. He takes away the sins of the world. This is the one that I was talking about that I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' I did not know him myself, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel. This is why I've been doing what I've been doing," he basically says. And so John bears witness further. He says, "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him." Notice that he said that twice. "But he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

And this is remarkable because it needs to be said that John and Jesus are related because their mothers are related. If you will recall from the Lucan narrative in chapters 1 and 2, 1 in particular, they are related. But apparently, they haven't seen each other for years, so they don't readily recognize one

another. And that's sort of a backdrop to what happens here. And so you can sort of see when the word of the Lord comes to John and tells him, "The one on whom you see the Spirit descending and remain, this is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit," which is remarkable because Jesus comes to John in the Synoptics and John recognizes him and says to him emphatically in the Matthean tradition, "I have need to come to you." "And you're coming to me. Why?" And Jesus says, "Let it be so for now, this is how we fulfill all righteousness." So John allows him to come into the water so he can baptize him.

This, what we read here in John, probably precedes Jesus' arrival to John. So John has his marching orders, as it were, and John the Baptist, I should say, John's Gospel records that for us. See how this narrative interpolates with itself? In other words, something you may be gleaning implicationally or you may have stated it explicitly to yourself is this: that these narratives are not simple. They are rather complex. One could say in a mainstream context that it's almost as though they were alive. As a believer and as one committed to the veracity of the Scriptures, I would say yes, indeed, they are alive. And this is just one example of that. When you correlate these texts, then you see that there is more to the story. The multiperspectival viewpoint of all of these four Gospels allows us to see more, but it by no means implies that we have to completely or exhaustively harmonize the whole thing, which is impossible for us based on 2000 years of study and argument.

So John hears, "The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." John goes about his ministry. And then Jesus arrives and he says to him, "I have need to be baptized by you, and you're coming to me?" Jesus says, "Yes. Let's do it because it's right." And so he baptizes him. And as soon as Jesus comes out of the water, John sees the heavens opened. He sees the Holy Spirit descending as a dove and resting on Jesus. So it's basically a confirmatory event for John the Baptist. And all of that is implied by verses 29 to 34 in John 1. That's what I mean by texture. "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. This is the guy. This is the one." And so let's not correlate it with the Synoptic Gospels.

So let's go to the Gospel of Mark 1 and I will orient you as soon as possible. So this issue of baptism is rather briefly treated in Mark, as we well know. So you take a look at verse 9 of chapter 1. It reads, "In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'" And then verse 12. "The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him." Verses 9 through 13 in Mark 1 precede John 1:29-1:34 because of the chronological marker, the chronological designation, "the next day." That's rather specific in the Gospel of John, and so you can't really see that as theological. Sure, certainly there are theological elements, but the chronological marker, it is just as forceful as the dating that you see in Luke 3, I might argue. I would be willing to argue that on a personal note, but you don't have to. That's a chronological marker and it needs to be taken note of. So what we see here in Mark precedes 1:29 to 1:34.

Let's look at Matthew. So come with me to Matthew and I will orient you as soon as possible. So in Matthew 3:13, I'll summarize it. "Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you. Do you come to me?'" I've said this twice already, right? And he's baptized. The heavens are opened. The Spirit of God descends like a dove and rests on Jesus. The voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am

well pleased.” And then you see from 4:1-11 a full description of the temptation in the wilderness, the temptation by Satan. And of course, when you correlate that with 1:29 to 1:34, what do we find? That the temptation in the wilderness, the detail, it basically precedes what you see in John 1:29-34.

Come with me for a minute to 1:29 to 1:34. So what that means then is when we see “the next day,” it means the next day, for all intents and purposes, which implies that we’d have to look back at the prior context in John’s Gospel. So what’s happening in John’s Gospel? “This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’” And so on and so forth. These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing. “The next day he sees Jesus coming toward him, and says, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” Now, chronological marker, right?

So when you look at it that way, when you begin to correlate the Gospels as a whole, and we just looked at Mark and Matthew, and what do we see? We see Jesus getting baptized. He goes into the wilderness. He’s tempted by the devil. He comes out. Well, what that means now, when you look at the next passages, then we have to revise our opinion, right? What do we see? So what we see here is 1:19 to 1:28 is, in fact, not what we said before. And this is why one has to be really careful with chronological activity where it pertains to the Gospels because apparently this occurs before Jesus comes out of the wilderness. He sees Jesus walking and he says, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” In verse 29, Jesus is coming towards John, right? But the day before, they sent representatives. So it reverses the entire order of events, right?

So basically, what we’re looking at now is basically almost a mirror image, almost a reversal of what we looked at in the last segment where you have this testimony of John where representatives are sent to him from Jerusalem and they ask him questions and he replies to them. What that means then is him calling them a brood of vipers precedes 1:19 to 1:28. See the exercise? So in the last segment, it looks as though, and we stated it in that fashion, it looks as though all of this occurred before they came out to him and he called them a brood of vipers, but with the addition of further information in the Gospels for Mark and Matthew, and we haven’t Luke yet, what we have is a conversation that takes place right before Jesus comes out of the Judean wilderness. So the picture then chronologically is he calls them a brood of vipers, they come out to see what he’s about, and he basically denigrates them. He rebukes them and the crowd. They go back and they send representatives to him. And they ask him questions and he replies. And the very next day, Jesus comes out of the wilderness and he announces that “This is the one who takes away the sin of the world. This is the lamb of God.” So in the next segment, we’re going to continue further and we will finish up John 1:19-42 and further beyond that.