

EXPLANATION OF 43RD BIBLEBOOK

JOHN 1:19-51 (A.D. 70-95)

INTRODUCTION

John 1 to 12 relate the public ministry of Jesus Christ.

John 1:15 to 2:12 describe how Jesus Christ reveals himself to John the Baptist and to his early disciples.

OUTLINE

(I) 1:19-28. John the Baptist testifies that he is not the Messiah.

a. John is not the expected Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet (1:19-24).

b. John explains why he baptises with water (1:25-28).

(II) 1:29-34. John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Son of God.

a. Jesus is the Lamb of God (1:29).

b. Jesus existed before John, but came after John (1:30).

c. Jesus' real identity was made known at his baptism with water (1:31-34).

(III) 1:35-42. The first three disciples of Jesus.

a. John and Andrew (1:35-39).

b. Peter (1:40-42).

(IV) 1:43-51. The next two disciples of Jesus.

a. Philip and Nathanael (1:43-45).

b. A true Israelite in whom there is no deceit (1:46-49).

(V) 1:50-51. The disciples will see greater things.

EXPLANATION

(I) 1:19-28. John the Baptist testifies that he is not the Messiah.

a. John is not the expected Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet (1:19-24).

1:19. Now this is (vipa) the testimony of John. When the Jews sent (viaa) priests and Levites to him from Jerusalem in order to inquire (vsaa) of him. "Who are (vipa) you?"

1:20. He confessed (viaa) and did not deny (viad), but confessed (viaa) saying, "I am (vipa) not the Messiah (the Christ)."

1:21. And they asked (viaa) him, "Who then? Are (vipa) you Elijah?" He said (vipa), "I am (vipa) not." "Are (vipa) you the Prophet?" He answered (viao), "No."

1:22. Then they said (viaa) to him, "Who are (vipa) you, in order that we may give (vsaa) an answer to those who sent (vpaa) us. What do you have to say (vipa) concerning yourself?"

1:23. He said (viaa) or: he kept saying (viia), "I (am) the voice of one shouting (vppa) in the desert, 'Make straight (vmaa) the way of the Lord' " as Isaiah the prophet said (viaa).

1:24. Now the ones sent (vprp+) were (+viia) from the Pharisees.

The prophecy about Elijah. A prophecy about the coming Messiah is in Malachi 4:5-6 (432-420 B.C.). The Jews expected that the prophet Elijah himself would return to the earth before the Messiah would come¹. The Jews based it on their *literal* understanding of this prophecy.

However, in Luke 1:17, an angel of the Lord predicted that *John the Baptist would be the forerunner of the Lord and that he would do his work "in the spirit and power of Elijah"*. He would bring the people of God back to the Lord their God, turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, just as Elijah did. He would make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

In Matthew 17:12-13, Jesus himself calls John the Baptist 'Elijah'. Although John the Baptist was *not literally* Elijah, both the angel and Jesus himself declared that *John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecy about Elijah in Malachi 4:5-6!* Jesus clearly says that Elijah had already come and had finished his preparatory work, but the people of Israel did not recognise him and killed him instead. Jesus was clearly referring to John the Baptist.

The prophecy about the Prophet. One of the earliest prophecies about the coming Messiah is in Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (1407 B.C.). The Jews expected that the greatest Prophet of all history, one like Moses, would come in the future. This Prophet would speak the very words of God (6:14-15; 7:40). The New Testament revelation clearly says that this prophecy refers to Jesus Christ²! John the Baptist is called the last Old Testament prophet³ and Jesus Christ is THE PROPHET⁴, the One who speaks God's final Word! *After John the Baptist and Jesus Christ there can be no expectation of any future prophet coming to this world!* Thus, no other religion can claim that this prophecy refers to their prophet⁵!

¹ Note the empty chair during the Jewish Passover meal at the beginning of their Passover festival.

² Acts 3:22-23

³ Matthew 11:14

⁴ cf. Hebrews 1:1-2

⁵ Islam claim that Muhammed (A.D. 570-632) is that prophet. Mormonism claim that Joseph Smith (1805-1844) is that prophet.

The prophecy about the voice shouting in the desert. A third prophecy about the coming Messiah is in Isaiah 40:3 (740-680 B.C.). The prophet says, “A voice of one calling: ‘In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God’.” By explaining Scripture (1:23)⁶ with Scripture⁷, we can see that the prophecy about the voice shouting in the desert has been fulfilled in John the Baptist and that the prophecy about the coming LORD has been fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

b. John explains why he baptises with water (1:25-28).

1:25. And they asked (viaa) him and said (viaa) to him, “Then why are you baptising (vipa) if you are (vipa) not the Messiah (the Christ), nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

1:26. John answered (viao) them saying (vppa), “I baptise (vipa) with⁸ water. In the midst of you stands (vira) one whom you do not know (by intuition or reflection)⁹ (vira).

1:27. He is the one coming (vppn) after me, whom I am (vipa) not worthy that I untie (vsaa) the leather straps of his sandals.”

1:28. These things happened (viad) at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was (vii+) baptising (+vppa).

The prophecy about a great cleansing. The prophet Ezekiel (593 – 571 B.C.) says that the sovereign LORD said, “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols”¹⁰. And “I will save them from all their sinful backsliding and I will cleanse them. They will be my people and I will be their God”¹¹.

Based on these prophecies the Jews expected a great cleansing in the future. When John the Baptist was baptising people, the Pharisees asked him why he was performing the expected great cleansing that properly belonged to the Messiah or to his special ambassador, ‘the Prophet like Moses’ or the prophet Elijah?

Those who may perform Old Testament cleansing rites. The Pharisees certainly knew that not just anybody was allowed to administer rites of purification, to which baptism with water belonged. In Leviticus 14:1-7, only the priests were allowed to *dip or baptise* the life bird in the water mixed with the blood of the sacrificed bird. Only the priests were allowed to *sprinkle* an infected person seven times with this water mixed with blood. Moreover, in the final analysis, the rite of cleansing people was distinctly a messianic act, as Ezekiel 36 and 37 teach¹².

Before the coming of the Messiah, John would baptise with water. After the coming of the Messiah, the Messiah would baptise people with the Spirit. If John the Baptist was not the Messiah or the kind of forerunner they expected, why then did he baptise with water? It is clear that the Pharisees did not understand who John the Baptist was. They did not understand him when he said that he was the one about whom the prophet Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 40:3, the one who would make straight the way for the LORD. Hereby John clearly stated that he was *the forerunner* of the Messiah and that the expected Messiah was no one less than the LORD! John made it very clear that there would be a great difference between himself and the Messiah. While John the Baptist would baptise people with water, the Messiah would baptise people *with the Spirit* (1:32-33)¹³! While John the Baptist would only administer the sign, the Messiah would administer *the thing signified*, consisting of the actual cleansing and regenerating power of the Holy Spirit¹⁴!

John said to the Jews that the expected Messiah was already standing right in their midst and that they did not know him! He warned the Jews that, in their eagerness to expose false messiahs, they were ignoring the true Messiah! The reason why John the Baptist baptised with water was to reveal the true Messiah to Israel. The Messiah was revealed to Israel at the baptism of Jesus (1:31-37)¹⁵.

The baptism of John was preparatory. Mark 1:4 says that John the Baptist came preaching “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”. He preached that the Jews should repent from their sins and he baptised them with water in order to prepare their hearts to receive the Messiah. The baptism with water symbolised their need of spiritual purification! Through his preaching and his baptising with water, John the Baptist focused all Israel’s attention on the coming Messiah, the Lamb of God, who would take away the sin of the world. *The baptism of John still belonged to the Old Testament purification rites*, which purified people ceremoniously (i.e. they had to perform these external ablutions before they approached God). However, the only Person who could purify people spiritually (that is, regenerate them) was the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

⁶ Mark 1:1-3

⁷ Isaiah 40:3

⁸ G: en, denotes the instrument

⁹ G: oida

¹⁰ Ezekiel 36:25

¹¹ Ezekiel 37:23

¹² cf. Mark 1:8

¹³ Mark 1:8

¹⁴ John 3:5; Titus 3:4-6

¹⁵ Mark 1:1-11

(II) 1:29-34. John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Son of God.

a. Jesus is the Lamb of God (1:29).

1:29. The next day he (John) saw Jesus coming (vppn) toward him and said (vipa), “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes (carries, bears) away (vppa) the sin of the world!”

Jesus Christ is called the Lamb of God, because he fulfilled the various illustrations (types) of lambs in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament there were several lambs that functioned as illustrations for the future Messiah.

The lamb for the Passover. The Passover lamb was slaughtered on the Passover and its blood was applied to the doorposts of believers in Egypt in order to turn away God’s judgement on the unrepentant people in Egypt¹⁶. The apostle Paul calls Jesus Christ ‘our Passover Lamb’¹⁷ and teaches that Jesus Christ was sacrificed on the cross in order to turn away God’s righteous and holy anger against our sin¹⁸. The apostle Peter says that believers are redeemed from their empty way of life by the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect¹⁹.

The lamb for the daily burnt offering. According to Numbers 28:4, the priests had to slaughter a lamb every morning and every evening. According to Leviticus 1, the lamb had to be without defect, symbolising that Jesus was sinless. The priest *had to lay his hand on the head of the lamb, symbolising that the sin of the person was laid on Jesus*. In the Old Testament, ‘the burnt offering’ was accepted on behalf of this person to make atonement for his sin. Likewise, in the New Testament, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is the only effective way of making atonement for our sins²⁰.

The lamb for the sin or guilt offering. If a member of God’s community in the Old Testament committed an unintentional sin, he was guilty. When he was made aware of the sin he had committed, he had to bring a female lamb or goat, without defect, as a sin offering. *He had to lay his hand on the head of the lamb, symbolising that his sin was laid on the lamb*, and then he himself had to slaughter it in the presence of the Lord. The priest had to put some of the lamb’s blood on the horns of the altar of incense and pour the rest out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. In this way the priest made atonement for the person’s sins and his sins were forgiven. The prophet Isaiah says, “We all, like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He ...was led like a lamb to the slaughter... It was the Lord’s will ... to cause him to suffer ... and to make his life a guilt offering. He was pierced for our transgressions ... to justify many”²¹. The Old Testament Law teaches that *the guilt offering was brought in order to make restitution for what a person had failed to do in regard to things that God required him to do*²². The guilt offering made atonement; that is, it took away God’s holy anger against his sin. In Isaiah 53 the sacrifice of the lamb makes us righteous in God’s eyes. The lamb refers to Jesus Christ!

Thus we conclude that all three lambs in the Old Testament are illustrations (types or shadows), which find their fulfilments (antitypes or realities) in Jesus Christ in the New Testament!

b. Jesus existed before John, but came after John (1:30).

1:30. He is (vipa) concerning whom I said (viaa), ‘After me is coming (vipn) a man, who has effectively become (vira) before me, because he always was (viia) before me (i.e. he existed before I was born).’

With regard to birth and public ministry, John the Baptist was before Jesus. But with regard to nature and the power and glory that belong to that nature, Jesus outranks John the Baptist. See John 1:15.

c. Jesus’ real identity was made known at his baptism with water (1:31-34).

1:31. I had not known (by intuition or reflection)(vila)²³ him, but in order that he might be made manifest (vsap) to Israel, for this reason I came (viaa) baptising (vppa) with water.”

1:32. And John testified (viaa) saying (vppa), “I beheld (virn) the Spirit coming down (vppa) like a dove from heaven and he remained (viaa) on him.

1:33. And I myself would not have known (know by intuition and reflection)²⁴ (vila) him, but he who sent (vpaa) me to baptise (vnpa) with²⁵ (instrument) water said (viaa) to me, ‘He upon whom you see²⁶ (vsaa) the Spirit descending (vppa)

¹⁶ Exodus 12:13

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 5:7

¹⁸ Romans 5:8-10

¹⁹ 1 Peter 1:18-19

²⁰ Romans 3:25

²¹ Isaiah 53:5-7,10

²² Leviticus 5:14-16

²³ 1 = pluperfect

²⁴ G: oida

²⁵ G: en hudati. The dative case expresses the indirect object (instrument or recipient).

²⁶ G: horaó, opsomai, eidon, heoraka, óphthén

and remaining (vppa) on him, he is (vipa) the one who again and again baptises (vppa) with²⁷ (instrument) the Holy Spirit’.

1:34. And I have effectively seen (the Holy Spirit descending and remaining on him and this image is continually before my eyes) (vira) and I effectively testify (vira) that he (Jesus) is (vipa) the Son of God (i.e. I stick to my testimony).”

How John did not know who Jesus was (1:31). John the Baptist and Jesus were relatives of each other²⁸ and yet John said that he did not know Jesus (by intuition and reflection)²⁹. It is possible that they did not know one another, because John grew up in Jerusalem in Judea while Jesus grew up in Nazareth in Galilee. John knew Jesus as a human being and as a relative, but he did not know that Jesus was the promised Messiah! This knowledge he received by revelation from God when the Holy Spirit descended visibly on Jesus Christ at his baptism (1:33-34).

How John came to know who Jesus really was (1:32-34).

- **The visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit at the baptism of Jesus.** The writer of the Gospel of John takes for granted that his readers are acquainted with the other three Gospels, which relate the baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan. At that time, the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and remained on Jesus. Although the Holy Spirit has no body and therefore cannot be seen with the physical eyes, God allowed Jesus and John the Baptist to see the Holy Spirit under the symbolism of a dove. God chose the form of a dove, probably because a dove is the symbol of purity, gentleness and peace and these are the characteristics of the Holy Spirit in an infinite degree. The Holy Spirit is pure: all kinds of sin grieve the Holy Spirit³⁰. The Holy Spirit is gentle: he does not force people into the truth, but gently convinces people of sin, of righteousness and of judgement³¹. The Holy Spirit is peace: he does not do anything that would cause people to stumble, but only does whatever builds them up³².
- **The manifestation of the Triune God at the baptism of Jesus.** The Holy Spirit remained visibly on Jesus for some time. The voice of God the Father from heaven clearly said that this was the Son of God, whom the Father loved and with whom he was very pleased³³. Here we see how the Triune God (the Trinity) manifests himself to us as the Father in heaven, the Son on earth and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.

Why Jesus received the Holy Spirit? But why was it necessary for Jesus Christ to receive the Holy Spirit? The Son of God according to his divine nature is the Spirit³⁴, but according to his human nature he received the Spirit. When Jesus received the Holy Spirit visibly at his baptism with water, he received it *in his human nature*. By receiving the Holy Spirit in his human nature, Jesus was *anointed* with the Holy Spirit, that is, he was publicly *ordained* by God for his specific task as Mediator, and he was *equipped* with the Holy Spirit to carry out this task. In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus himself teaches that the prophecy in Isaiah 61:1-2 had been fulfilled in him. It says, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” The apostle John says that God has given the Spirit to Jesus without limit (3:34)! This means the same as what the apostle Paul says in Colossians 2:9, “In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.”

That is why John the Baptist says, “I have seen (the Holy Spirit) *and his image is continually before my eyes* and I testify that this (Jesus) is the Son of God *and my testimony remains standing*” (1:34). The perfect tense of the verbs express a reality that continues forever.

Jesus is the Son of God. The title ‘the Son of God’ does not refer to physical sonship, but to metaphysical, ontological and eternal Sonship. It refers to Jesus Christ as the eternal second person in the Triune God that has the same essence and being as God the Father. It expresses that Jesus Christ is perfectly God and existed before he took on the human nature in history (3:16-18; 5:37-40; 8:19,24).

(III) 1:35-42. The first three disciples of Jesus.

a. John and Andrew (1:35-39).

1:35. The next day John was again standing (vila) with two of his disciples.

1:36. When he saw (vpaa) Jesus passing by, he said (vipa), “Look, the Lamb of God!”

1:37. The two disciples heard (viaa) him speaking (vppa) and followed (viaa) Jesus.

1:38. Turning around (vpap), Jesus saw (vpad) them following (vppa) and said (vipa) to them, “What are you seeking (vipa) ?” And they said (viaa) to him, “Rabbi, (which means (vipp) translated (vppp), ‘Teacher’), where are you staying (vipa)?”

1:39. He said (vipa), “Come (vmppn)(imperative) and you will (vifd) see.” So they went (viaa) and saw (viaa) where he was staying (vipa). They remained (viaa) with him that day. It was (viia) about the tenth hour.

²⁷ G: en pneumatī. The dative case expresses the indirect object (instrument or recipient).

²⁸ Luke 1:36

²⁹ G: oida

³⁰ Ephesians 4:30

³¹ John 16:8,13

³² Romans 14:17-20

³³ Matthew 3:16-17

³⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:17

Jesus invites his disciples to come and see (1:39). When the disciples John and Andrew asked Jesus where he was staying, he did not tell them, but instead *invited them by saying “come and see”*. The words are actually commands! Unbelievers are not only won by *hearing* the gospel³⁵, but are also won by *seeing* the reality of the new and changed life (1:39)! Jesus *involved* other people into his life and into his home. He gave them an opportunity to get to know him from close by. He wanted them to know who he is and how he lives every day. He wanted them to *see* his life.

Soon his disciples did the same. When Nathanael questioned if Jesus could be the Messiah, because he came from an insignificant place like Nazareth, Philip said to him, “*Come and see*”! The disciples also wanted other people to know Jesus and to get involved into the life of Jesus³⁶. Therefore they invited them to come to Jesus and see for themselves if he was the Messiah or not.

If Christians want other people to know who Jesus is, what Christians are and how they live, then they must *involve* them into their lives and homes. Follow the example of the disciples. Involve other people into your life and home so that they may be able to see how a Christian lives and get to know Jesus.

b. Peter (1:40-42).

1:40. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was (viaa) one of the two who had heard (vpaa) from John (what John had said) and who had followed (vpaa) Jesus.

1:41. He first found (vipa) his own brother, Simon, and said (vipa) to him, “We have effectively found (vira) the Messiah, which is (vipa+) translated (+vppp) ‘the Christ’.

1:42. He led (viaa) him to be face to face³⁷ with Jesus. Jesus looked (steadily)(vpaa) at him and said (viaa), “You are (vipa) Simon, the son of John. You will be called (vifp) ‘Cephas’, which translated (vipp) (means) ‘Peter’ (rock).

Jesus predicts what his disciples would become (1:42). When Andrew brought his brother, called Simon, to Jesus, Jesus looked him over *and looked into his heart*. Jesus knew that Simon was a big man with a small heart. He knew that Simon could make big promises, but really was afraid to carry them out. He knew that Simon was an impulsive man. But Jesus is the Great Prophet, who knows not only the present condition of every person, but also the future. He knew that Simon would be transformed and would become a stable, uncompromising and persevering person. *Jesus looked at Simon, not just at what he was in the present, but also at what he would become in the future!* Jesus predicted what God’s grace would accomplish in the life of his disciple. Therefore, Jesus gave him a new name and called him ‘Peter’, which means the rock. Later, in Matthew 16:18, Jesus predicted that he would build his Church on Peter, the rock. And in Acts we read how Jesus used Peter to plant the first congregation among the Jews, the first congregation among the Samaritans and the first congregation among the Gentiles.

Look at people, not only at what they are in the present, but also at what they can become in the future through the grace of God. The grace of God can transform every person on earth! We must inspire hope in people that God’s grace can change them. Instead of criticising people and looking at all their faults, encourage people and look at the progress they are making in their Christian growth.

(IV) 1:43-51. The next two disciples of Jesus.

a. Philip and Nathanael (1:43-45).

1:43. The next day he resolved (wanted)(viaa) to leave for (vnaa) Galilee and he found (vipa) Philip and said (vipa) to him, . “Follow (vmpa)(imperative) me.”

1:44. Philip was (viaa) from Bethsaida from the town of Andrew and Peter.

1:45. Philip found (vipa) Nathanael and said (vipa) to him, “The one about whom Moses wrote (viaa) in the law and (about whom) also the prophets (wrote), we have found (vira) – Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.”

b. A true Israelite in whom there is no deceit (1:46-49).

1:46. Nathanael said (viaa) to him, “Can (vipn) there be (vnpa) any good from Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come (vmpn) and see (vmaa)(imperatives).”

1:47. Jesus saw (viaa) Nathanael coming (vppn) to him and said (vipa) concerning him, “Look, a true Israelite in whom there is (vipa) no deceit.”

1:48. Nathanael said (vipa) to him, “How do you know (by observation)³⁸ (vipa) me?” Jesus answered (viao) and said (viaa) to him, “Before Philip called (vnaa) you, when you were (vppa) under the fig tree, I saw (viaa) you.”

1:49. Nathanael answered (viao) him, “Rabbi, you *continually* are (vipa) the Son of God; you are (vipa) the King of Israel.”

Jesus looks at the heart of people (1:47). The reference in verse 51 to the stairway with angels descending and ascending shows that Jesus had the patriarch, Jacob, in mind when he addressed Nathanael. In Genesis 27:35-36, Isaac said to Esau that his brother Jacob had come *deceitful* and had taken Esau’s blessing as the firstborn from him. Esau said that his brother was rightly named Jacob, which means *he deceives*.

³⁵ Romans 10:17

³⁶ 1 John 1:1-3

³⁷ G: pros

³⁸ G: ginóskó

However, this use of trickery for selfish advantage not only characterised Jacob. It also characterised the sons of Jacob, the Jews. In Genesis 34, they *deceitfully tricked* the men of a city, killed them and robbed them of all their possessions. A real and honest Israelite, a Jew without deceitfulness, had become such an exception that when Jesus met Nathanael he immediately exclaimed, “Here is a true Israelite in whom there is nothing deceitful.”

Deceitful trickery is probably a characteristic of people in all nations. In John 2:24-25 we read that Jesus knew all men and he also knew what was in a man. Jesus knows me and knows everything that is in me.

He knows my thoughts, motives and attitudes. He also knows when I tend to be deceitful, dishonest and not transparent. Therefore it is important that I continually allow the Holy Spirit to transform my mind, my motives and my attitudes.

(V) 1:50-51. The disciples will see greater things.

1:50. Jesus answered (viao) and said (viaa) to him, “Because I said (viaa) to you that I saw (viaa) you under the fig tree, you believe (vipa). Greater things than these you will certainly see (vifd).”

1:51. And he said (vipa) to him, “I tell (vipa) you the truth, you will see (vifd) the heaven opened (vpra) and the angels of God ascending (vppa) and descending (vppa) on the Son of Man.”

Jesus promises that his disciples would see the greater things concerning Jesus (1:50). Jesus says to Nathanael that he would see greater things. What are these ‘greater things’? The disciples observed that Jesus had sovereign and penetrating knowledge and that he looked right into the heart of Nathanael. From now on they would see *more divine attributes of Jesus*. They would see his miraculous signs. They would particularly see his crucifixion and how, by the cross, heaven is thrown wide-open, God draws near to man and man is reconciled to God³⁹. They would see his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven and his work of conquering the hearts and lives of people all over the world.

And finally they would see Jesus at his second coming and at the final judgement day, invested by God with universal authority to save his people and judge his enemies and afterwards see him rule in the new heaven and on the new earth.

Jesus is the Mediator between God and man (1:51). Jesus is still thinking about the patriarch, Jacob. In Genesis 28, Jacob saw in his dream a stairway between earth and heaven and he saw the angels of God ascending and descending on it. The Lord himself stood at the top of the stairway, blessing Jacob. He promised Jacob saying, “I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go... I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you... All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring⁴⁰.”

Now here in the Gospel of John Jesus points out that *the illustration (type) of the stairway of Jacob finds its fulfilment (antitype) in Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ himself is the only real link between heaven and earth! He is the only Mediator between God and man*⁴¹. By his sacrifice on the cross, Jesus Christ reconciled God with sinners (God descended to man) and he reconciled sinners with God (man approaches God).

Jesus is the Son of Man (1:51). The title ‘the Son of Man’ is the name by which Jesus speaks about himself, because he wanted to avoid people calling him ‘King’, ‘Messiah’ or ‘Son of God’. The Jews had a wrong understanding about the biblical messianic King. They thought that the Messiah King would be an earthly king that would free the Jews from Roman oppression. The title means a human being⁴² that would receive royal power⁴³. In the New Testament the title means that Jesus Christ is perfectly Man and that he had accepted the mortal existence and suffering as the way to God’s glory and his royal throne. Before his death on the cross, his human nature was weak, mortal, subject to temptations and he had to pass through suffering on his way to God’s glory⁴⁴. After his resurrection from death, he possessed the glorified human nature⁴⁵. At the end of history the Son of Man in his glorified human nature would return for the final judgement⁴⁶.

APPLICATIONS

1:22-23. Give to people a clear understanding of your task or calling in life.

1:29. Point people away from yourself to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Introduce people to Jesus Christ.

1:33. The *once for all* baptism with the Holy Spirit is best explained in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, John 3:3-8 and Titus 3:4-8. The *again and again* filling with the Holy Spirit is taught in Ephesians 5:18-21.

1:39. Involve people in the lives and meetings of Christians. Tell them, “Come and see!” (cf. 1:46)

1:42. Bring your family members to Jesus Christ.

1:42. Look at people, not only at what they are, but also at what they can become through Jesus Christ.

1:43. Jesus calls us, not only to admire him, but also to follow him, that is, to become his disciple.

1:44. Tell your friends about Jesus Christ. The prophets in the Old Testament already wrote about him.

³⁹ John 8:28; 12:32

⁴⁰ Cf. Genesis 22:17-18; Galatians 3:16

⁴¹ John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5

⁴² Ezekiel 2:1

⁴³ Daniel 7:13-14

⁴⁴ Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 2:14-18

⁴⁵ Philippians 3:21; Romans 1:4

⁴⁶ Matthew 24:27,30,37,44

- 1:47. Appreciate people when appreciation is due.
1:49. Think, "What is your confession concerning Jesus Christ?"

QUESTIONS

- 1:19-28. Was John the Baptist the expected Prophet or Elijah?
1:25-28. Why did John the Baptist baptise people with water?
1:29-34. Why is Jesus called the Lamb of God?
1:31-34. How is it possible that John the Baptist did not know Jesus?
1:33-34. Why was it necessary for Jesus Christ to receive the Holy Spirit?
1:35-39. Why is it very important to go and see?
1:40-42. How should Christians look at people?
1:46-49. Why does Jesus call Nathanael an Israelite in whom there is nothing false?
1:50-51. What is the meaning of seeing the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man?