

**LEGISLATOR BIBLE STUDIES**  
ROOM #3142  
EVERY MONDAY  
12-12:30



Monday, April 7, 2025

**Ron McMillin**  
Minister

**Please join us every morning at 8:15 for a short devotion and prayer in room #3161.**

**John 1:19-28**

***<sup>19</sup> Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” <sup>20</sup> He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”***

The Jewish leaders are sent to question John’s identity. They ran down a checklist of possibilities for whom he could be: **Christ?** (Mashiach, Hebrew for Messiah). **Elijah? The Prophet?** They were anticipating the arrival of a significant figure from prophecy. Prophecy promises that the Prophet Elijah will return before the Messiah establishes His earthly kingdom. (Malachi 4:5) The angel who announced the birth of John said that he would “come in the spirit and power of Elijah.” (Luke 1:17) “The Prophet,” that the Jewish leaders asked of references Deut. 18:15-18 which predicted God would “raise up a great prophet” like Moses, who would function as His voice. Peter connected the role of Messiah with that prophet and affirmed that Jesus was the Expected One. (Acts 3:20-26) John’s denial of being any of those critical figures is an essential reminder of his role as a humble servant, not the source of truth, but the one who bears witness to the truth.

***<sup>22</sup> Then they said to him, “Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” <sup>23</sup> He said: “I am ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Make straight the way of the LORD,” as the prophet Isaiah said.”***

John clarifies his mission, aligning it with Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 40:3). His statement underscores his purpose to prepare hearts for Christ’s coming. His humility is striking—he identifies himself as “the **voice** of one calling in the wilderness.” John’s focus isn’t on himself but on preparing the way for Jesus. *When a monarch traveled to a particular region, it was rarely unplanned. A forerunner would first go and announce the imminent arrival of the king. The forerunner was simply a voice, having no authority of his own.*<sup>1</sup>

***<sup>24</sup> Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup> And they asked him, saying, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”***

The Pharisees questioned John about his authority to baptize since he was no one of importance and had not been sanctioned by the governing body of the Jewish nation. Their challenge reveals confusion about baptism’s significance and their struggle to comprehend John’s role. *Washing with water was a common practice in Jewish ritual purification, but baptism was associated with the conversion of Gentiles.*<sup>1</sup> John used traditional proselyte

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<sup>1</sup>Swindoll, Charles (2014) *Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary – John*, pp. 37, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Carol Stream, IL.

baptism as a symbol for Jews to repent of their sins and receive spiritual cleansing in preparation for the coming Messiah. (Mt. 3:11; Mk 1:4; Lk 3:7,8)

*<sup>26</sup> John answered them, saying, “I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. <sup>27</sup> It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.” <sup>28</sup> These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

John redirects the focus to Jesus, declaring the superiority of the One who is already among them. His humility serves as a powerful model for believers. John highlights the supremacy of Christ by saying, “He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie” (v. 27). The tying of sandals was typically the duty of a slave. John claims to be of lower stature than a slave in comparison to the Glory of Christ. This reflects Christ’s divine nature and supreme authority. John’s mission is clear: to point others to Christ. He baptizes with water as a symbolic act of repentance, but he emphasizes that his work is preparatory for the One who “will baptize with the Holy Spirit and Fire” – a Spiritual baptism, not a physical one. (Mt. 3:11, Lk. 3:16)

*The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs when a person is born again and made a part of the body of Christ. All believers in Jesus are partakers of the baptism of the Spirit: “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (I Cor. 12:13)<sup>3</sup>*

*For those who confess their sins and repent, the baptism of fire alludes to the purifying and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. The same symbol is seen in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit descends on the disciples with a visible token: “They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them” (Acts 2:3)<sup>4</sup>*

### **Application**

- **Living with Humility:** John’s example challenges us to center our lives on Christ rather than ourselves. In a world focused on self-promotion, his humility stands as a countercultural model.
- **Understanding Our Role:** Like John, every believer is called to point others to Christ. This passage reminds us to embrace our unique purpose and to use it to glorify God.
- **Acknowledging Christ’s Supremacy:** John’s reverence for Christ invites us to reflect on Jesus’ greatness and cultivate a deeper awe for Him in our lives.

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<sup>2</sup>John D. Barry et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Jn 1:25.

<sup>3,4</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/baptized-with-the-Holy-Spirit-and-fire.html>