



## The DAILY JESUS NEWS #031

### Jesus' Early Judean Ministry

**Day One of the First Glorious Week of Disciple-Making:  
John the Immerser Confesses That He is Not the Messiah  
JN 1.19-28**

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19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He confessed and did not deny the truth, but he confessed freely, "I myself am NOT the Messiah."

21 They asked him, "Then, who are you? Are you Elijah? He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." 22 Finally they said, "Then who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

23 John replied, "I myself am a voice crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord,' just as Isaiah the prophet said."

24 Now, some who had been sent were of the party of the Pharisees. 25 They questioned him, "Why then are you immersing if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

26 "I myself immerse in water," John replied, "but one has taken his stand in your midst, whom you do not know. 27 HE is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus.*

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Bethany, on the east side of the Jordan River
Time	Early March, 30 AD (Month Three)
Stage of Jesus' Life	Stage III: His Early Judean Ministry
SAGA Chapter 6	The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry
Section #031	Day One: John Confesses that he is not the Messiah

This is the now the fifth reading in the “Early Judean Ministry” phase (Stage III) of Jesus’ work as Messiah. A brief introduction to the characteristics of this phase is in order.

From mid-January through July, 30 AD, Jesus began his ministry by concentrating on the Judean region. During these six months he focused on personal evangelism and discipleship with individuals. John the Immerser kept on immersing and sending seekers to Jesus, who led many of these to faith and discipleship. Jesus also reached out on his own initiative in personal witnessing during these months. Although he prioritized the Judean region, Jesus took a trip up to Galilee in these months. He also preached and healed publicly in the Temple during the first Passover of his ministry years (April). These were exceptions to his emphasis on personal evangelism and discipleship in Judea.

Some New Testament scholars call this period the “the Year of Obscurity” in Jesus’ life, because we know so little about it. There is less gospel material covering this Stage than any other portion of our Lord’s ministry. The synoptics describe Jesus’ immersion and 40 days of fasting and prayer, as we have seen. Other than that, everything we know about this roughly six month period was written by John in 1.19-4.45. Though the content is limited, it is of prime importance. John carefully arranged his narrative to communicate a great deal about Jesus and his work in this period. What would the Bible lose without John 3.16?

We have noted (DJN #002) that John had Genesis Ch. 1-2 in mind as the background to his prologue in JN 1.1-5. Moses began his narrative with the beginning--the first week of creation, divided into days. John apparently paralleled this approach by beginning his gospel with the first week of Jesus’ disciple-making ministry, also divided into days. It was the beginning of Jesus’ creation of the new people of God--the fellowship conformed to his likeness as our Creator and Redeeming Lamb.

We will identify each day of this first creative week of disciple-making as we move through it in the DAILY JESUS NEWS. John used terms like *"on the next day, the second day, the third day"* to show us this progression. During this week the first five disciples will believe in Jesus, and begin to *"see His glory,"* as the prototypes of all future believers in Jesus.

On Day One--our reading for today, John made it patently clear that he was NOT the Messiah, because JESUS is. Note the increasing brevity of his answers. *"I am not the Messiah... I am not... NO!"* His patience was being tried, because the Baptizer saw his role to be *"a voice crying out..."* a witness to who Jesus was as the Son of God and Messiah. He desired all people to believe in Jesus through his witness. He NEVER wanted anybody to misunderstand his ministry, and mistakenly believe in him as the Messiah. Therefore, he was greatly perturbed when the Jewish leaders would not accept the plain truth that he was not the Messiah when he stated it so clearly.

This is important because all of the first believers in Jesus were first disciples of John. In fact, the majority of believers who began to follow Jesus during these six months of ministry came to faith in Jesus through John’s ministry. Jesus stayed in close physical proximity to where John was preaching and immersing in order to make this possible. Understanding the relationship between the Immerser and Jesus is essential to understanding Jesus’ ministry in this period.

John, the author of the fourth gospel, further emphasized the truth that the Immerser was NOT the Messiah by twice using the verb *"confess"* to describe his adamant denial of being the Messiah.

To *"confess"* means to repeat the same thing that someone else says back to them in agreement. For example, the gospel declares that Jesus is the Messiah, our Savior from sin. When we *"confess"* our faith in Jesus as the Messiah, we declare the same thing with our mouths that Scripture and Jesus himself said about his identity. *"Confession"* means that we are not making up anything new; rather we declare our full agreement with what others have already said: we agree.

John the Immerser was not only denying that he was the Messiah with his mouth; he was also agreeing with the prophet Isaiah, Malachi, his father Zechariah's prophecy, the voice of the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus when he *"confessed, and did not deny the truth..."* John's statement as a "confession" was that much more powerful than his own words, standing alone. His confession was a very powerful affirmation of who Jesus was, and who the Immerser was not.

#### APPLICATION

Confession is an crucial principle of faith. We do not ever need to invent anything new in our relationship with Jesus. Everything we need to believe has already been revealed in the Scriptures, and ultimately, in the life and teachings of Jesus Himself, the God-man.

Following Jesus is all about "confessing" the truth that HE has already made plain. We "agree with him by saying the same thing he said" regarding our sin, our salvation, our daily needs, our purpose in this world, and our eternal future with him, to name just a few vital areas of our agreement with God.

The reason why we look at Jesus every day in the gospels is so that we can "confess" every aspect of who he is and what he has done for ourselves. We thereby *"agree with him"* about everything in our own life.

*Turn every truth you see in Scripture, and in Jesus himself into your own "confession" of faith in him. Learn to confess everything with your mouth--declare it boldly to be true in Jesus, and therefore true in you as well.*

*What truths are you confessing today?*