

Meeting Jesus

John the Baptist

Foundation

Bible passage : Matthew 3.13-15, John 1.29-36 & Luke 7.18-23

John was a relative of Jesus, and in the gospel of Luke we read about what happened when their mothers met when both were pregnant. They did not live nearby and from something John later wrote (Jn 1.33) it seems that they may not have met again for many years.

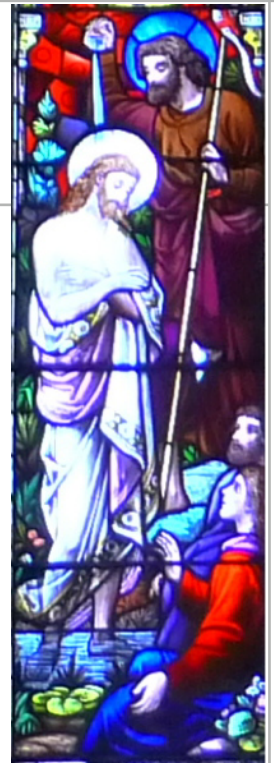
In the meantime John had become very well known. In part this was because he was a bit of a curiosity, but also because of his preaching. People therefore flocked to hear John and many, being convicted by his message about repentance, were baptised by him in the river Jordan.

Then one day, amongst those coming to be baptised, was Jesus (Mtt 3.13). This was not what John expected, but Jesus insisted, and John baptised Him. Despite being sent to prepare the way for Jesus this was not the only time John was puzzled by Jesus and what He did. Indeed, the disciples would also have to learn not to rely on what they previously thought about the Messiah and instead learn who Jesus is and why He had come.

“Go and tell John what you have seen and heard...”

When Jesus was baptised the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and John referred to this sometime later when he met Jesus again (Jn 1.33). John described Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (v29). This is a clear reference to the fact that Jesus had come to

The baptism of Jesus is a favourite scene in stained glass windows. The somewhat unrealistic one to the right is from the East window at St James' Church, Chorley.



die as a sacrifice for sin. John also spoke about the superiority of Jesus (v30).

Later we read about two occasions when the disciples of John questioned Jesus, but the second is interesting because they were sent by John himself who had been imprisoned by Herod. John had been hearing reports about what Jesus was doing, but it didn't fit with what John expected. Therefore he sent people to ask “are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”. Jesus responded by simply describing what He had been doing, but using phrases which John would have known from the prophecies of Isaiah. The implication was clear, Jesus was the one God had promised, even if He wasn't what people, even John the Baptist, had expected.

In the same way today many think they know about Jesus but don't look at what He said and did to show who He is. When learning about Jesus it is important not to rely on our own ideas, or the ideas of others, but on what Jesus did and said, including what the Bible says about various meetings people had with Jesus.



John was sent to prepare the way for Jesus but still had to learn more about who Jesus is and why He had come.