

Sermon-Based Small Group Bible Study

Encounters with Jesus: Jesus and John the Baptist (Luke 3:15–22)

Open

Select one of these “ice breakers” to get the conversation going toward the study.

- Who was your favorite celebrity when you were young? How did that person make an impression on you?
- Name a compliment that you received that meant a lot to you.
- Have you ever mistaken someone for someone else? Or been mistaken for someone else? What was it like?

Dig

After reading Luke 3:15–22 together, discuss these questions.

1. The term “Christ” in Jesus’ time meant “God’s promised king.” Why do you think people wondered whether John the Baptist was God’s true king (verse 15)?
2. In Jesus’ time the Jewish people were very careful not to exalt one human being over others. That exaltation was reserved for God. Looking at John’s words about the one coming after him (verse 16), what do you think would have been surprising for his audience to hear?
3. In verses 16–17, what do you hear that is exciting? comforting? puzzling? intimidating?
4. Why do you think God let Herod the tetrarch imprison John? What effect do you think that had on John’s followers?
5. Look at what the voice from heaven says about Jesus (verse 22). Compare this statement to John’s earlier words (verses 16–17). Compare it to what Jesus said years before in the temple (Luke 2:49). Who is this Jesus fellow, anyway?

Reflect

Use any of these prompts to encourage group members to apply the text to their own experiences.

- Pastor Bryan explained that Jesus is both God’s promised king and the promised servant of God: he is the suffering servant-king. How does that teaching reassure you? Challenge you? Puzzle you?
- John’s faithfulness to God’s message landed him in prison. Has there been a price you’ve paid for your faith? How did you deal with that?
- John’s audience was searching for God’s true king and needed some direction. What has your search been like? Where have you found direction? What is your life “orbiting” these days?

Pray

Invite the group to pray together using any of these suggestions.

- What needs have you heard from others in the group that we can pray about?
- What questions or uncertainties can we offer to God on behalf of one another?
- What in your relationship with God do you want to thank God for?
- What are some ways we can pray that acknowledge that Jesus is our king?