



## Who Are John and Jesus? John 1:15-23

*John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. (John 1:15—KJV)*

*John testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’” (John 1:15—NASB)*

*John testified to him and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’” (John 1:15—NRSV)*

John the Baptist openly testified about the Messiah, but not always in ways that everyone could understand. Those with a teachable spirit who came to John repenting of their sins and seeking baptism to prepare for the coming of the Messiah would more easily have had all their questions answered by John in understandable ways. Though John answered everyone truthfully, the Holy Spirit sometimes moved him to answer more carefully. When some priests and Levites came to John, sent from official Jerusalem, they asked him questions that may or may not have been meant to entrap John, as they later tried to entrap Jesus. But the Holy Spirit who indwelt John knew their intentions and guided John's responses to them. They asked John if he was the Messiah, No. Was he Elijah, No. Was he the prophet, No. Then who was he? John said he was a voice “crying out in the wilderness,

‘Make straight the way of the Lord’” (John 1:23). That being so, who was the Messiah? John tells us that the Messiah ranked ahead of him because he was before him. The average religious leader sent to spy on John probably assumed John meant that the Messiah was older than he was, but in Luke 1:16, we learn that John was six months older than Jesus. The Holy Spirit said through John that Jesus ranked higher than John because Jesus had existed before John was born. He existed before John because He was and is the “Word of God” and “God the only Son” (John 1:1 & John 1:18).

### **Thinking Further**

1. What did John the Baptist mean by “he was before me?”
2. Why is the law of God important?
3. What came through Jesus Christ? What does that mean to you?
4. What does “confess and did not deny it mean”?
5. What does the description “God the only Son” mean? Who is this?

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Contact: P.O. Box 1052, Edmond, Oklahoma, 73083 and [lgp@theiblf.com](mailto:lgp@theiblf.com).