

Upfront Bible 8a

Jesus is a friend who keeps God's promises to us

John 1:19-28

Agent A speaks with a NY Bronx/gangster accent

A: Boys & girls, agents and assistants; I guess you're wondering why I've called you down here today. I know that you're hoping that I'm going to announce a pay rise – which I know I promised, but that can wait. We've got a case, and we need our best brains on it. A person of unusual appearance has been sighted in various desert and wilderness locations. There have been complaints of disturbing the peace – 'crying out' in the wilderness and such like and so forth and et-cet-era. According to various sources, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, said person is of rough appearance, habitually dresses in camel skin, and has been known to eat wild locusts and honey. We do have some concerns about his emotional stability.

So, what have you got for me, agents? Anyone got anything to report?

B: He's been operating under the name 'John the Baptist'.

A: Good, good, any ideas why? It sounds highly suspicious.

B: Sir... according to my sources, he's called John because it's his real name, given to him by his parents. And he's called "the baptizer" because he does actually baptize people.

A: You mean he takes them down to the river and pushes them under? I see...

B: Yes, he pushes them under and lifts them out again. It's a way of people promising to turn back to God. That's what baptizing is...

A: That's ... not bad at all. People promising to turn back to God. Hmmm. What else have we got?

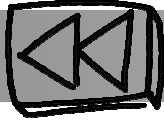
C: Sir, John the Baptist is reported to be a close relative of Jesus of Nazareth – a cousin.

A: Interesting, we've got a file going on Jesus as well. Some trouble brewing there too. There's some talk of John being the Messiah – the promised one from God. Apparently many people were expecting such a person. Anyone know anything about that?

C: Sir, there were ancient promises from God, that he would send someone.

A: Promises from God. Do people take them seriously?

C: Sir, with respect, the promises of God are probably the most reliable promises in the universe. Best to take them seriously. It's a tip off you know is always going to come through.



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D: Sir, I have a few things, if I may?

A: Go ahead agent D

D:

¹⁹⁻²⁰The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and temple helpers to ask John who he was. He told them plainly, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹Then when they asked him if he were Elijah, he said, "No, I am not!" And when they asked if he were the Prophet, he also said "No!" ²²Finally, they said, "Who are you then? We have to give an answer to the ones who sent us. Tell us who you are!" ²³John answered in the words of the prophet Isaiah, "I am only someone shouting in the desert, 'Get the road ready for the Lord!' " ²⁴Some Pharisees had also been sent to John. ²⁵They asked him, "Why are you baptizing people, if you are not the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet?" ²⁶John told them, "I use water to baptize people. But here with you is someone you don't know. ²⁷Even though I came first, I am not good enough to untie his sandals." ²⁸John said this as he was baptizing east of the Jordan River in Bethany.

A: So, after all that, it turns out he's not the promised one?

D: Apparently not, Sir. John got people ready for the promised one.

A: What's your source there, Agent D? Is it watertight?

D: The book of John in the Bible – a very reliable source.

A: Well that leaves us with one question: did the promised one ever actually come as promised?

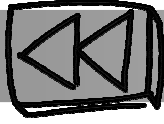
B: I think you'll find Sir in the file on Jesus' secret identity: "promised one"

A: (*looking through a file*) But does he check out – does Jesus really do what was promised?

Sight to the blind,

B: John chapter 9

A: The crippled dancing



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- C: John chapter 5
- A: Food for the hungry,
- D: John Chapter 6
- A: Prisoners freed,
- B: John chapter 8
- A: Bringing people back to God?
- C: John chapter 21
- A: Boys & girls, agents and assistants, this is most impressive work ...

