

Great Expectations

Questions of Expectation

John 1:19-28

1. **A Question of Anticipation** (John 1:19)

Even from before his birth, God had announced that John the Baptist was to have a special ministry from the Lord (Luke 1:11-17, 76-79). As an adult, John came out of obscurity and led a zealous revival of faithfulness and repentance unto God. The Jews had long anticipated a coming Messiah (Gen. 3:15; 12:1-3, 7; Dan. 2:44-45; 9:25), and wanted to know if he was the long expected one.

2. **A Question of Investigation** (John 1:21)

John was very clear in repeatedly denying to be the Messiah (Luke 3:15ff; John 3:28). His Jewish contemporaries did not understand the prophecies of the Old Testament as clearly as we do today (cf. Isa. 52:13-53:12), and they still needed to give an answer to the Pharisees (cf. v.24a). They were curious if John was another prophesied figure for whom Israel was waiting (Deut. 18:15; Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6).

3. **A Question of Exasperation** (John 1:22)

Finding that John was not one of the significant people that they had hoped him to be, the priests and Levites now asked for him to explain who he was. John's answer was to affirm his connection to the Messiah, but not in a way in which they expected (Isa. 40:31; cf. Matt. 17:10-13; Mark 9:13; Luke 1:17).

4. **A Question of Authorization** (John 1:25)

The Pharisees, along with the Sadducees, were the established leaders of the religious life of Israel. Though there were legitimate theological concerns regarding John's authority for what he was doing, they were only concerned with maintaining their own systems regardless of whether John was truly sent from the Lord (Luke 20:1-8).

5. **A Statement of Fulfillment** (John 1:29-34)

John's ministry was to prepare the way of the Messiah by preaching repentance of sin and faith toward God (Luke 3:3ff). Had the emissaries of the Pharisees truly been interested in John's ministry or message, they would have been shown the one who they claimed to have been waiting for.