

Origin Stories

Scripture

John 1:1-42, Luke 4:16-19, Isaiah 61:1-2, Isaiah 53:1-5

Script

The Cast of Characters: John, Jesus, Narrator Peter, John the Baptist, Isaiah, Priest, Levite, Andrew, Peter (not narrator), James

The Scene: Everywhere, Bethany beyond the Jordan River, Peter's encampment nearby
(Lights come up on our Readers/Characters, all in a row (perhaps a slight curve will help with eye contact). The characters should be placed in such a way that the reading is most powerful, and grouped such that the characters can have the most eye contact possible. "Narrator Peter" is apart from the group, and he will remain the main narrator throughout this series. The other "Peter" will perform the character's dialogue.)

John: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Jesus: I was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Me, and without Me was not any thing made that was made. In Me was life, and the life was the light of men.

John: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Narrator Peter: There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

John the Baptist: I, John the Baptist, came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through me. I was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

John: The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

Narrator Peter: He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him.

Jesus: I came to My own, and My own people did not receive Me. But to all who did receive Me, who believed in My name, I gave the right to become children of God...

John: ...who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Jesus: And I, the Word, became flesh and dwelt among you...

John: ...and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

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John the Baptist: This was He of whom I, John The Baptist, said "He who comes after me ranks before me, because He was before me."

John: For from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

Jesus: For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Me.

John: No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side,

Jesus: I have made God known.

Narrator Peter: I am Peter, known in those days as Simon, son of John. And these are the events leading up to the day I met Jesus, the Messiah, The Christ, the one Isaiah spoke of when he said:

Isaiah: The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor...

Narrator Peter: To say we expected a Messiah, or "The Christ", as a conquering King, is an understatement. We hoped for it. We longed for it. The times were oppressive indeed, not only from the Roman occupation of our homeland, but by our own leaders as well. And, as John the Baptist was receiving so much attention, and multitudes were coming to him for baptism, the religious and political leaders, the Pharisees, sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him...

Priest: Who are you?

John the Baptist: I am not the Christ.

Levite: What then? Are you Elijah?

John the Baptist: I am not.

Priest: Are you the prophet?

John The Baptist: No.

Levite: Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?

John the Baptist: I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord," as the prophet Isaiah said.

Priest: Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?

John the Baptist: I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.

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Narrator Peter: This took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said—

John the Baptist: Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks before me, because He was before me." I myself did not know Him; but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that He might be revealed to Israel.

Narrator Peter: And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on Him."

John the Baptist: ...I myself did not know Him; but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.

Narrator Peter: The next day again John the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples; and he looked at Jesus as He walked by and said—

John the Baptist: Behold, the Lamb of God!

Narrator Peter: The two disciples heard Him say this, and they followed Jesus. One of them was Andrew, my brother. Jesus turned, and saw them following.

Jesus: What are you seeking?

Andrew: Teacher, where are you staying?

Jesus: Come and you will see.

Narrator Peter: So they came and saw where Jesus was staying, and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the 10th hour, which is 4pm. The next morning, Andrew came and found me. We were encamped not far away, curious also about this man named John, who baptized with water and lived a simple life in the wilderness. James and John, my partners in fishing, sat with me around the campfire, having some fish and bread.

*(**Sound Effect:** A campfire crackles, a canine howls in the distance. We join Peter, James, and John mid conversation.)*

Peter: ...So, on one hand you have Rome taking over 12 percent of our haul, plus the head tax. So that's an extra 2 days wages since I'm married, and by the time your little ones start being more of a help than a hindrance, you have to pay the head tax on them too!

John: And then you have the road tolls, port fees, and the forced labor of moving all their dung around, that we don't want here in the first place! A mile at a time.

Peter: Don't forget our fishing rights.

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James: Then you have our own people.

Peter: I don't claim them. So-called Godly men. Ha!

John: Tithes. That's ten percent!

James: First fruit offering.

Peter: Wave offering.

John: Sin offering.

James: The dreaded Temple tax! What are we forgetting?

Peter: They'll remind us. Don't worry about that. I'm thinking the Essenes got it right. If you don't make any money, there's nothing to take.

John: Yeah, when The Christ comes, He'll fix all this.

James: If he could just get rid of the Romans, I could deal with the rest!

Peter: Yeah, but it's almost worse, the Pharisees and especially those Sadducees getting fat off of our labor, selling us out!

John: Messiah will sort that.

Peter: Yeah, I'm beginning to think it's like Roman and Greek folklore. I shouldn't say that. I hope it is true.

James: Hey, is that Andrew?

Peter: (*Calling out*) Hey, Brother.

John: Looks like John's got him stirred up.

Peter: Yeah, I thought I heard you howling at the moon. What are you doing out so early?

Andrew: (*Out of breath*) We have found the Messiah.

Peter: (*Unbelieving*) Oh yeah? We were just talking about Him. I thought you were going to hear John the Baptist?

Andrew: Yeah, I was with John yesterday, when this man walked by and John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

Peter: John said that? And what do you think?

Andrew: I followed Him and stayed with Him, this man named Jesus. He's not what I expected, but there is something about Him. Something more than I can say.

James: This John who baptizes, unlike my brother John here, has no ulterior motives. He takes in no money or goods, or even food. They say he eats locusts and wild honey.

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Andrew: John says when he baptized Jesus some time back, that the heavens opened and God's spirit came down like a dove, and rested on Him.

James: What if he really were The Christ, and we were just talking about Him?

John: Yeah, well we talk about Him like every other day, so not much of a coincidence there.

James: Yeah, my latest Messiah has wings! I mean, they're mostly there for decoration because he rides a gigantic horse and shoots a bow and arrow. But He can fly if He needs to.

John: Sounds like a eunuch to me. Mine is kind of like a cross between David and Goliath! He's definitely a sword guy. One in each hand! Long black hair like Samson in his prime! Maybe a slingshot in His back pocket just in case.

Andrew: (*Visibly upset, loudly*) Look, I think you should at least meet Him. Decide for yourself.

(Sound Effect: *The canine howls, the fire crackles.*)

Peter: (*Slowly, thinking, hoping...*) Okay, Brother. Take me to this Jesus.

Narrator Peter: And so, Andrew brought me to Jesus. As we approached, I thought, "Could this humble looking man really someday defeat the Romans in battle?" (**Action:** *Jesus makes His way downstage center, then Peter comes from the other direction.*) Could He lead us to destroy them, and restore our temple and our faith in God from such vile corruption among our leaders, and become king and ruler of all Israel?" (**Action:** *Peter arrives in front of Jesus, and Jesus does a subtle, but significant bow. Peter returns the bow.*) Jesus looked at me and said,

Jesus: (**Action:** *Placing His hand on Peter's shoulder*)...You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Peter.

(*Lights fade out, then fade back on*)

Isaiah: For He grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground;

Jesus: ...I had no form or majesty that you should look at Me, and no beauty that you should desire Me.

Isaiah: He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

Jesus: ...and as one from whom men hide their faces I was despised, and you esteemed Me not.

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Isaiah: Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace,

Jesus: ...and with My wounds you are healed.

(Light/Curtains/End of Episode #1)

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Episode Spotlight

In this episode, we find Peter and his companions having a discussion about the various fees and taxes that they have to pay to the Roman government. We immediately see the oppression that the Romans have imposed on the Jewish people. But it gets worse if we continue in the scene. James, John, and Peter begin to discuss all of the fees they had to pay in the temple. The Jewish temple was the center of Jewish religious practice. It was also an economic center that could cause a burden to the Jewish people, which is not what God intended. In both cases, we see the would-be disciples are looking for a messiah to come and resolve all of their issues. They were looking for a messiah to deliver them from their oppression.

We get to listen in on them as they describe what they think the Messiah would look like. It sounds more like a superhero than Jesus Christ. They were looking for a conquering king that can rescue them from their oppression, but at the beginning of our story we see the disciple John giving a description of Jesus from [John chapter 1](#). Let's consider this His origin story. John says some really powerful things that while it may not look like Jesus is a superhero when His future disciples see Him, it is clear that Jesus is more powerful than they ever could imagine. John describes Jesus as the physical manifestation of the Word of God. Not only is He the manifestation of the Word of God, but He is God himself. He is not just any superhero. He is the all-powerful Savior of the universe.

The beginning of the scene not only gives us an introduction to who Jesus is, but also why Jesus came to earth. There is a quotation from the prophet Isaiah that details Jesus' plans. Jesus has come to bring liberty to people who are captive, to bring healing to people that are broken-hearted, and to bring good news to those that are downtrodden. This sounds like a superhero, but it doesn't sound like someone who is coming to overthrow an empire. Rather, Jesus came to bring a different kind of power and a different way of looking at power. That's not exactly what His future disciples were looking for at that point.

This is very important because this gives us an early look into how the disciples would view and receive Jesus. They were looking for a superhero, not just a religious leader. By the discussion that we imagined in the episode, we can tell that they were tired of their oppression, and they were looking for an answer. So when Andrew shows up, it is no wonder that they were so excited to go and meet Jesus.

Think back to when you first met Jesus. What was your life like? What needed to be changed about your life? What were the things that were oppressing you? This is

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important to remember so that we can share our testimony with others. If they know that Jesus delivered us from our oppression, they may be more inclined to let God deliver them from theirs. Remember how excited Andrew was when he came and told his brothers that he had seen the Messiah? Could you imagine what it felt like after living in darkness for so long, to see the light of Christ and know that your life was about to change? No wonder they wanted to follow Him.

We see in this text three examples for Biblical witnesses. First of all, we learn from John the Baptist that our discipleship is not to generate our own glory or make a name for ourselves, but to help people meet Jesus. Then we see that Jesus shows us that it's not always just our words that will convince people, but also our actions that truly show the light of Christ. When the would-be disciples asked Jesus for information, He simply said, "Come and you will see". Jesus knew His actions would speak for themselves. Once they saw His actions it was easier to listen to the good news He preached. Doing good things is no substitute for evangelism, rather our actions amplify our words. Finally, Andrew encourages us to bring others to Jesus after we have experienced His goodness. Look at the keyword "follow". In the Greek, it means not only to go after, but also to obey. The fruit of these three witnessing events was that the disciples became obedient followers of Jesus. They weren't just chasing after Him, but they were also taking heed of His commandments.

Let's Discuss

1. Did anything stand out to you as you experienced the Scripture? _____
2. How does God want you to respond to His Word today? _____
3. Think back to when you first met Jesus.

What was your life like? _____

What needed to be changed about your life? _____

What were the things that were oppressing you? _____

This is important to remember so that we can share our testimony with others. If they know that Jesus delivered us from our oppression, they may be more inclined to let God deliver them from theirs.

4. Remember how excited Andrew was when he came and told his brothers that he had seen the Messiah?

Could you imagine what it felt like, after living in darkness for so long, to see the light of Christ and know that your life was about to change? _____

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Character Spotlight

John the Baptist

What was it like to be John the Baptist? _____

John was a peculiar man. He did not eat what most people ate and he didn't speak the way most people speak. John had disciples, but he wasn't trying to have them follow him. As he spoke, he talked about the Messiah, someone whose sandals he wasn't worthy to buckle. Think about the humility it takes to be John. People are listening to you, and you are gaining popularity, but you cannot point to yourself. Rather, you are pointing to the Messiah, one who is coming to save the world.

As you meditate on John, think about the way you influence others in your own life.

Is it to gain fortune or popularity? _____

Or is it pointing to something bigger than yourself? _____

We should all be willing to point to Jesus, for He is the one that can truly save us from our sins.

Andrew

Andrew must have been looking for the Messiah. When we find Andrew, he is already following John the Baptist, who is preaching about the coming of the Messiah. When John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Christ, Andrew immediately chases after him.

Who in your life is waiting for an answer? _____

Who is waiting to find Jesus? _____

There is someone in your life who is questioning and looking to find God. What are you doing to point them to the Messiah? _____

Peter

We don't learn much about Peter in this first episode. What we do know is he is looking for an answer to this oppressive Roman system. Maybe that is why he decided to follow his brother Andrew to meet Jesus. The narrator describes Peter's first impression of Jesus. Could Jesus be the person that Peter was looking for? _____

When Jesus sees Peter, who was usually called Simon, He immediately calls him Peter, which means the rock.

How did Jesus know Peter? _____

Could it be that Jesus' immediate response to Peter formed a connection? What happened when you first came in contact with Jesus? _____

Did you feel convicted? _____

Did you feel seen? _____

Did you feel loved? _____

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And...Action!

At the beginning of the script, in John 1, we experience Jesus' origin story, like pulling back the curtain to see Jesus before the manger, when He was the Creator of the Universe with His Father, God. We have the benefit of the full story, but do you feel the anticipation of the would-be disciples, not knowing when and how the Messiah would come? God became mortal man for us, God incarnate. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." ([John 1:14](#)). God knowingly sent His Son to Earth to be sacrificed for us, to pay the penalty of death for our sins, to provide a way for us to be with Him, to be rescued from this world of sin, oppression, and pain. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him." ([John 3:17](#)). His mission was clear from the beginning, Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).

John the Baptist also had a unique origin story, he knew his mission, identity, and purpose and he clearly communicated it to others. Spoiler alert, Peter eventually did too. [1 Peter 3:15](#) says, "but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,".

Have you considered your own origin story? We have a responsibility to share our origin story as a testimony to spread the hope of the Gospel. Do you have the hope of the Gospel, have you considered how your story will end? If not, you can know your eternal destination and have hope today! [2 Corinthians 6:2](#) says, "Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Let today be the day of your salvation and freedom from oppression. Know the truth and grace of Jesus and experience light and life. [John 1:12](#) shows us how, "But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God". To become a child of God, is to be transformed into Christ's likeness. Jesus came to Earth to bring good news to the afflicted, heal the brokenhearted, and free people from their oppression! ([Isaiah 61:1-2](#))

If you have the hope of the Gospel, then spread the hope! Share your own origin story, like John the Baptist. He knew his mission and always pointed people to Jesus. He was brave enough to obey God to say the hard things, are we?

Action: Be ready to share your own origin story, the reason for the hope within you. Reveal your journey to knowing Jesus with transparency, openness, gentleness and respect. There is value in your testimony!

How:

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1. Be authentic, share your own adversities and struggles and how Jesus healed your broken heart, freed you from oppression, and is the good news to you!
2. Who is the villain in your story, maybe your own selfish behavior or pride?
3. Share what shapes your beliefs and values. How have you changed/transformed into a new creation? ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#))
4. What motivates you, what is your hope, what is the mission God has created you for?

Ways To Share:

1. Write your story and practice telling it to others.
2. Video your story and share it on social media.
3. Illustrate your life before and after Jesus through an artistic medium and make it available to others. For example, use the gifts God has given you such as painting, sculpting, music, drama, or digital art.
4. Obey God to share in the ways He has put before you, wherever He has placed you, even when it means facing your fears!