

BEHOLD THE LAMB: TAKE-HOME 1

The Word Made Flesh

John 1:1-18

What We Found

John opens his Gospel where Genesis opens the Bible: in the beginning. We set the two passages side by side and found the same furniture in both rooms, beginning, God, light, darkness, and creation through speech. John's claim is that the speech of Genesis 1 is a Someone: the eternal Word, who was with God, who was God, and through whom all things were made.

Then the sentence no philosopher saw coming: the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The Greek verb for dwelt, *eskēnōsen*, literally means he pitched his tent. We turned to Exodus 40 and watched the glory of God fill the wilderness tabernacle, the tent at the center of Israel's camp. John says the glory has a new tent: a true human nature. What Moses begged to see on Sinai and was refused, the face of God, has now been shown to us. The only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has made him known.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Augustine of Hippo, *City of God* 10.29

Augustine recounts that a Platonist philosopher said the opening of John's Gospel deserved to be written in letters of gold and displayed in every church. The pagans could admire the eternal Word. What only faith could receive was the next line: the Word became flesh.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 2

Chrysostom marvels that these thunderclap lines came not from a philosopher but from a Galilean fisherman, speaking, he says, as from heaven itself, with a voice clearer than thunder. Everything the sages groped after, an unlettered man declares with authority.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Athanasius of Alexandria, *On the Incarnation* 54

The Son of God became man so that we might become sharers in the divine nature by grace. He took what is ours to give us what is His. The Catechism itself quotes this line (CCC 460). Every sacrament you receive is this exchange continuing in time.

Live It This Week

- **Pray the Prologue.** Take John 1:1-18 at three verses a day, slowly, aloud if you can. Do not study it; sit in it. By Friday you will have prayed the whole overture.
- **Bow like you mean it.** This Sunday at the Creed, when we bow at the words and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man, make the bow deliberately, remembering: he pitched his tent among us.
- **One act of witness.** Do one small Baptist-sized thing this week: mention the study to one person, or share one thing you noticed tonight.

Memory Verse

John 1:14 (RSV2CE)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

My Guess (seal it!)

Our study is called Behold the Lamb. Next week you will hear someone cry out those words when he sees Jesus coming toward him. Before you hear anything more, write your honest guess below, fold this section over, and do not change it. We will open the guesses together later in the study.

Why do you think Jesus is called the Lamb of God? What might it mean, and where might the image come from?

Before Next Session

Read John 1:19-51. Session 2: Come and See.

Catechism References

CCC 241-242, 291, 456-463.