

BEHOLD THE LAMB: TAKE-HOME 2

Come and See

John 1:19-51

What We Found

John the Baptist, asked three times who he is, answered first in a chain of denials: I am not the Christ. I am not. No. The one identity he claimed was borrowed from Isaiah 40:3, the voice preparing the way of the LORD, and in Isaiah the one whose way is prepared is God Himself. Then he cried the sentence our study is named for: Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. And he never explained it. Neither did we. Our guesses stay sealed.

The rest of the chapter travels person to person. Jesus' first spoken words in this Gospel are a question, what do you seek, and his first invitation is come and see. Andrew's first act after finding the Messiah was to fetch his brother, and Jesus renamed Simon on sight: you shall be called Cephas, the rock. In Scripture a divine renaming commonly marks a mission, and this one hangs over the whole Gospel like a promise waiting to be kept.

The chapter ends with Jesus stepping into someone else's dream. We turned to Genesis 28 and found Jacob's ladder, the angels ascending and descending, and Jacob's cry: this is the house of God, the gate of heaven. Jesus told Nathanael the angels would ascend and descend on the Son of Man. He is the ladder. He is the place where heaven and earth meet.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Augustine of Hippo, Tractates on the Gospel of John, Tractate 7

On Nathanael under the fig tree, Augustine hears an echo of Eden and its fig leaves. When Jesus says, before Philip called you, I saw you, Augustine reads the shape of every conversion: Christ sees us in the shadow of our sin before we ever catch sight of him. We think the story begins with our decision to come and see. We were seen, and loved, first.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homily 19

Chrysostom lingers on one small verse: Andrew first found his brother Simon. Having found the Messiah, Andrew could not hold the treasure alone even overnight. This, he says, is true brotherly love, to share spiritual goods and not only earthly ones. From one brother fetching another came the leader of the apostles.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. John Henry Newman, Meditations and Devotions

God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. Each disciple in this chapter is found differently, called personally, each by name, and Newman insists the same is true of you: somehow you are necessary for His purposes, a link in a chain.

Live It This Week

- **Let him ask you.** Once this week, take ten minutes of real silence and let Jesus ask you his first question: what do you seek? Answer him honestly, even if the honest answer is confused.
- **Be an Andrew.** Andrew's evangelization method was one sentence and one introduction. Pick one person by name this week and make one small introduction: an invitation, a question, a mention of what you are finding here.
- **Listen for it at Mass.** This Sunday, just before Communion, the priest will lift the Host and say words you have now heard at their source: Behold the Lamb of God. Do not solve it. Just notice that the Church has placed the Baptist's unexplained cry at the summit of her worship, and hold your sealed guess a little tighter.

Memory Verse

John 1:29 (RSV2CE)

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Before Next Session

Read John 2. Session 3: The First Sign. Bring your sealed guess sheet with you every week; do not peek.

Catechism References

CCC 438, 719-720, 858, 878.