

**John 1:29-51**  
**April 6, 2025**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: I'd like to invite you to think back to a time when you developed a curiosity about Jesus. Who were the people who were most instrumental in helping you to "come and see" Jesus? [Let people engage]

**Transition:** In today's text, John the Baptist has the honor of introducing Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And in this process, he shares his testimony of seeing the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove. John's account creates curiosity! When his own disciples were with him, John would say, "Look, the Lamb of God!" The disciples got curious and followed Jesus. Then Jesus invited others to follow Him. The invitation to "come and see" was out! Let's read the text, and as we go through it, let's ask ourselves who we are inviting to "come and see" Jesus. How can we help those in our circle of influence to get curious about Jesus? Let's begin.

**BOOK:**

***Jesus the Lamb of God***

<sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" <sup>30</sup> This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' <sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

<sup>32</sup> Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. <sup>33</sup> I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> I have seen, and I testify that this is the Son of God."

***Jesus' First Disciples***

<sup>35</sup> The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

<sup>37</sup> When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"

<sup>39</sup> "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.

<sup>40</sup> Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. <sup>41</sup> The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). <sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter [rock]).

***Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael***

<sup>43</sup> The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”

<sup>44</sup> Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

<sup>46</sup> “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.

“Come and see,” said Philip.

<sup>47</sup> When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.”

<sup>48</sup> “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

<sup>49</sup> Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”

<sup>50</sup> Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.” <sup>51</sup> He then added, “I tell you (plural) the truth, you (plural) shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: What stood out to you? What questions do you have? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about man? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit? [Let people engage]

Q: What is your takeaway? [Let people engage]

### **LOOK:**

Philip’s example of inviting Nathanael to “come and see” Jesus encourages us to share our faith with others, not by forcing our beliefs, but by inviting them to experience Jesus for themselves. Those of us who are believers are called to follow Jesus, called to proclaim Him, called to reveal Him to others, and called to share Him with the world. Let’s be intentional to create curiosity about Jesus and invite them to “come and see” at their own pace.

### **Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 288-289). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.***

#### **Lamb of God (John 1:29–34)**

This is the second day of the week that the Apostle John recorded, and no doubt some of the same committee members were present to hear John the Baptist's message. This time, he called Jesus "the Lamb of God," a title he would repeat the next day (John 1:35–36). In one sense, the message of the Bible can be summed up in this title. The question in the Old Testament is, "Where is the lamb?" (Gen. 22:7) In the four Gospels, the emphasis is "Behold the Lamb of God!" Here He is! After you have trusted Him, you sing with the heavenly choir, "Worthy is the Lamb!" (Rev. 5:12)

The people of Israel were familiar with lambs for the sacrifices. At Passover, each family had to have a lamb; and during the year, two lambs a day were sacrificed at the temple altar, plus all the other lambs brought for personal sacrifices. Those lambs were brought by men to men, but here is God's Lamb, given by God to men! Those lambs could not take away sin, but the Lamb of God can take away sin. Those lambs were for Israel alone, but this Lamb would shed His blood for the whole world!

What does John's baptism have to do with Jesus as the Lamb of God? It is generally agreed by scholars of all denominations that, in the New Testament, baptism was by immersion. It pictured death, burial, and resurrection. When John the Baptist baptized Jesus, Jesus and John were picturing the "baptism" Jesus would endure *on the cross* when He would die as the sacrificial Lamb of God (Isa. 53:7; Luke 12:50). It would be through death, burial, and resurrection that the Lamb of God would "fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15).

Perhaps John was mistaken. Perhaps John was not sure that Jesus of Nazareth was the Lamb of God or the Son of God. But the Father made it clear to John just who Jesus is by sending the Spirit like a dove to light on Him. What a beautiful picture of the Trinity!

#### **The Messiah (John 1:35–42)**

This is now the third day in the sequence. The seventh day included the wedding at Cana (John 2:1); and since Jewish weddings traditionally were on Wednesdays, it would make this third day the Sabbath Day. But it was not a day of rest for either John the Baptist or Jesus, for John was preaching and Jesus was gathering disciples.

The two disciples of John who followed Jesus were John, the writer of the Gospel, and his friend Andrew. John the Baptist was happy when people left him to follow Jesus, because his ministry focused on Jesus. "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

When Jesus asked them, "What are you seeking?" He was forcing them to define their purposes and goals. Were they looking for a revolutionary leader to overthrow Rome? Then they had better join the Zealots! Little did Andrew and John realize that day how their lives would be transformed by the Son of God.

“Where are You dwelling?” may have suggested, “If You are too busy now, we can visit later.” But Jesus invited them to spend the day with Him (it was 10 a.m.) and no doubt He told them something of His mission, revealed their own hearts to them, and answered their questions. They were both so impressed that they found their brothers and brought them to Jesus. Andrew found Simon and John brought James. Indeed, they *were* their brothers’ keepers! (Gen. 4:9) Whenever you find Andrew in John’s Gospel, he is bringing somebody to Jesus: his brother, the lad with the loaves and fishes (John 6:8), and the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus (John 12:20–21). No sermons from Andrew are recorded, but he certainly preached great sermons by his actions as a personal soul winner!

“We have found the Messiah!” was the witness Andrew gave to Simon. *Messiah* is a Hebrew word that means “anointed,” and the Greek equivalent is “Christ.” To the Jews, it was the same as “Son of God” (see Matt. 26:63–64; Mark 14:61–62; Luke 22:67–70). In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed and thereby set apart for special service. Kings were especially called “God’s anointed” (1 Sam. 26:11; Ps. 89:20); so, when the Jews spoke about their Messiah, they were thinking of the king who would come to deliver them and establish the kingdom.

There was some confusion among the Jewish teachers as to what the Messiah would do. Some saw Him as a suffering sacrifice (as in Isa. 53), while others saw a splendid king (as in Isa. 9 and 11). Jesus had to explain even to His own followers that the cross had to come before the crown, that He must suffer before He could enter into His glory (Luke 24:13–35). Whether or not Jesus was indeed the Messiah was a crucial problem that challenged the Jews in that day (John 7:26, 40–44; 9:22; 10:24).

Simon’s interview with Jesus changed his life. It also gave him a new name—*Peter* in the Greek, *Cephas* in the Aramaic that Jesus spoke—both of which mean “a rock.” It took a great deal of work for Jesus to transform weak Simon into a rock, but He did it! “Thou art ... thou shalt be” is a great encouragement to all who trust Christ. Truly, He gives us the “power to become” (John 1:12).

It is worth noting that Andrew and John trusted Christ through the faithful preaching of John the Baptist. Peter and James came to Christ because of the compassionate personal work of their brothers. Later on, Jesus would win Philip personally; and then Philip would witness to Nathanael and bring him to Jesus. Each man’s experience is different, because God uses various means to bring sinners to the Savior. The important thing is that we trust Christ and then seek to bring others to Him.

### **The King of Israel (John 1:43–49)**

Jesus called Philip personally and Philip trusted Him and followed Him. We do not know what kind of heart preparation Philip experienced, for usually God prepares a person before He calls him. We do know that Philip proved his faith by seeking to share it with his friend Nathanael. John 21:2 suggests that at least seven of our Lord’s disciples were fishermen, including Nathanael. Fishermen are courageous and stick to the job, no matter how difficult it may be. But Nathanael started out a doubter: he did not believe that anything worthwhile could come out of Nazareth. Our Lord was born in Bethlehem, but He grew up in Nazareth and bore that stigma

(Matt. 2:19–23). To be called “a Nazarene” (Acts 24:5) meant to be looked down on and rejected.

When Nathanael hesitated and argued, Philip adopted our Lord’s own words: “Come and see” (John 1:39). Later on, Jesus would invite, “Come and drink!” (John 7:37) and, “Come and dine!” (John 21:12) “Come” is the great invitation of God’s grace.

When Nathanael came to Jesus, he discovered that the Lord already knew all about him! What a shock! By calling him “an Israelite in whom is no guile,” Jesus was certainly referring to Jacob, the ancestor of the Jews, a man who used guile to trick his brother, his father, and his father-in-law. Jacob’s name was changed to “Israel, a prince with God.” The reference to “Jacob’s ladder” in John 1:51 confirms this.

When Jesus revealed His knowledge of Nathanael, where he had been and what he had been doing, this was enough to convince the man that Jesus indeed was “the Son of God, the King of Israel.” His experience was like that of the Samaritan woman at the well. “When He [Messiah] is come, He will tell us all things ... Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did” (John 4:25, 29). The revealing of the human heart should also take place in the ministry of local churches (1 Cor. 14:23–35).

When Philip witnessed to Nathanael, the evidence he gave was Moses and the Prophets (John 1:45). Perhaps Jesus gave Philip a “quick course” in the Old Testament messianic prophecies, as He did with the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:13ff). It is always good to tie our personal witness to the Word of God.

“King of Israel” would be a title similar to “Messiah, anointed One,” for the kings were always God’s anointed (see Ps. 2, especially vv. 2, 6–7). At one point in His ministry, the crowds wanted to make Jesus King, but He refused them (John 6:15ff). He did present Himself as King (John 12:10ff), and He affirmed to Pilate that He was born a King (John 18:33–37).

Some students believe that Nathanael and Bartholomew are the same person. John never mentions Bartholomew in his Gospel, but the other three writers name Bartholomew and not Nathanael. Philip is linked with Bartholomew in the lists of names (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14), so it is possible that the two men were “paired off” and served together. It was not unusual in that day for one man to have two different names.

### **The Son of Man (John 1:50–51)**

“Son of man” was one of our Lord’s favorite titles for Himself; it is used eighty-three times in the Gospels and at least thirteen times in John. The title speaks of both the deity and humanity of Jesus. The vision in Daniel 7:13 presents the “Son of man” in a definite messianic setting; and Jesus used the title in the same way (Matt. 26:64).

As Son of man, Jesus is the “living link” between heaven and earth. This explains His reference to “Jacob’s ladder” in Genesis 28. Jacob the fugitive thought he was alone, but God had sent the angels to guard and guide him. Christ is God’s “ladder” between heaven and earth. “No man cometh to the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6). Often in this Gospel, you will find Jesus reminding people that He came down from heaven. The Jewish people knew that “Son of man” was a name for their Messiah (John 12:34).

At the close of that fourth day, Jesus had six believing men who were His disciples. They did not immediately “forsake all and follow Him”; that was to come later. But they had trusted Him and experienced His power. In the three years that lay ahead, they would grow in their faith, learn more about Jesus, and one day take His place on the earth so that the Word might be carried to all mankind.

Jesus of Nazareth is God come in the flesh. When Philip called Him “the son of Joseph,” he was not denying Jesus’ virgin birth or divine nature. That was merely His legal identification, for a Jewish person was identified according to who his father was (John 6:42). The witness of this entire chapter is clear: Jesus of Nazareth is God come in the flesh! God is here!

**Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 274-278) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books**

**b. John’s second witness (1:29–34).**

**1:29.** John’s second witness started at the beginning of a series of days (cf. **The next day** in vv. 29, 35, 43; and “On the third day” in 2:1) when Jesus’ first disciples were called and came to faith. **John** identified **Jesus** as **the Lamb of God** (cf. 1:36; 1 Peter 1:19). The connection to the Old Testament sacrifices is probably general. The sin offering which bore the sins of the nation on the Day of Atonement was a goat (Lev. 16). Daily offerings were normally lambs, but they did not atone for sin. The Passover lamb (Ex. 12) and Isaiah’s mention of the Messiah’s likeness to a lamb (Isa. 53:7) may have been in John’s mind. John, by the Holy Spirit, saw Jesus as the sacrificial Victim who was to die for **the sin of the world** (cf. Isa. 53:12).

**1:30–31.** John repeated here what he had said earlier about Jesus (vv. 15, 27). John’s fame was to be superseded by that of Jesus, whose priority stems from His preexistence: **He was before me**. But why did John say, I myself did not know **Him**? Though John and Jesus were related, as Mary and Elizabeth were relatives (Luke 1:36), nothing is known of any contacts between them in their years of childhood and adolescence. John did not know that Jesus was the coming One until He was revealed by the Father. All John knew was that he was to prepare the way for Him by **baptizing with water**. God would send His Man **to Israel** in His good time.

**1:32.** The baptism of Jesus is not recorded in John’s Gospel, but the material of the Synoptic Gospels is assumed (see “John’s Distinctive Portrait” in the *Introduction*). The Fourth Gospel does not state that this descent of **the Spirit** like **a dove** occurred at Jesus’ baptism. The significant thing is that the invisible Spirit came **from heaven** and manifested Himself in a bodily (dovelike) form. John saw the Spirit as a dove **remain on** Jesus (cf. Isa. 11:2; Mark 1:10).

**1:33.** John had been **told** by God (**the One who sent him**) that when this sign of the dove would occur, the Person so marked out by the Spirit’s coming and presence would be the One who would **baptize** by that same **Holy Spirit**. Cleansing by water is one thing, but the cleansing produced by the Spirit is of another order. Later at Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus’ resurrection, the baptism with the Holy Spirit brought in a new Age (Acts 1:5; 2:1–3), the Church Age, the “Age of the Spirit” (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13).

**1:34.** John's testimony was **that this is the Son of God**. The prophesied Davidic King was God's Son (2 Sam. 7:13), and the messianic King is uniquely the Son of God (Ps. 2:7). The title "Son of God" goes beyond the idea of obedience and messianic King to that of Jesus' essential nature. In the Fourth Gospel this title is not applied to believers. They are called "children" (*tekna*; e.g., John 1:12) while "Son" (*hyios*) is used only of Jesus.

## **2. The disciples of Jesus (1:35–51).**

### **a. Jesus' first disciples (1:35–42).**

**1:35–36.** The **next day** refers to the third day in this series (cf. vv. 29, 35, 43; 2:1). The most likely reason for this chronological notation is that the author had a particular interest in narrating how some disciples came from their positions as adherents in John's party to faith in **Jesus**. The verb tenses in 1:35–36 are unusual. **John was there** (lit., "stood,") while Jesus was **passing by** (present tense). The action in God's economy was shifting from John's baptism to the ministry of Jesus. John pointed **his disciples** to Jesus as God's **Lamb** (cf. comments on v. 29).

**1:37.** Two of John's **disciples heard** the witness of the Baptist and **followed Jesus**. The word "followed" probably has a double meaning here. They followed Him in the sense of literal walking and also as His disciples, that is, they turned their allegiance to Jesus that day.

**1:38.** The first words the disciples heard from **Jesus** were, **What do you want?** In one sense Jesus was asking a simple question and the disciples responded with a request for information as to **where** He lived. But the author seemed to imply more. Perhaps Jesus was also asking, "What are you seeking in life?" The word translated **staying** (*menō*) is a favorite word of John's. This Greek word occurs here in his writings for the first time. Of the 112 New Testament passages in which it occurs, 66 are in his writings—40 in the Gospel of John, 23 in 1 John, and 3 in 2 John (William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957, pp. 504–5). Sometimes, as here, it means "to stay or dwell" in a place; a few times it means "to last or continue"; but more often it has a theological connotation: "to remain, continue, abide" (e.g., John 15:4–7).

**1:39.** Jesus' words of invitation were, **Come ... and you will see**. A person must first come to Him; then he will see. In addition to their seeing where He stayed, these words may possibly also have a deeper theological implication. The two disciples remained with Him **that day**, beginning at **the 10th hour**. That hour was 4 p.m. or 10 a.m., depending on whether the Fourth Gospel counted days from 6 a.m. (as the Synoptics customarily did) or from midnight or noon. The 10 a.m. times seems better and was the official Roman usage (cf. comments on 4:6; 19:14).

**1:40–41.** **Andrew**, one of the two disciples who **followed Jesus**, was the first proclaimer of Jesus as **the Messiah**. In Hebrew, "Messiah" means "the anointed One," which in Greek is translated **Christ** (*ho Christos*). The idea of "the anointed One" comes from the Old Testament practice of anointing priests and kings with oil. This was symbolic of the Spirit and pointed to the future One who would come (cf. Isa. 61:1). The title "Messiah" came to be used of the future Davidic King (cf. Matt. 1:1; John 6:15). In bringing **his brother Simon** Peter to Christ, no man

did the church a greater service than Andrew. Andrew appeared two more times in John (6:4–9; 12:20–22); both times he was bringing someone to Jesus. The unnamed disciple is commonly held to be John the son of Zebedee, a brother of James and author of this Gospel. In Mark 1:16–20 two pairs of brothers (Simon and Andrew, James and John) who were fishermen were called by Jesus.

**1:42.** When **Jesus ... looked at** Simon (cf. v. 47), He knew the man's character and destiny. Jesus gave him the Aramaic name **Cephas**. **Peter** is the Greek translation of Cephas ("rock"). Simon's name in Hebrew was probably Simeon (Gr. in Acts 15:14; 2 Peter 1:1; cf. NIV). No reason is given here for the change of his name from Simon to Cephas. The common understanding is that his name indicates what God by His grace would do through him. He would be a rock-like man in the church during its early years (cf. Matt. 16:18; Luke 22:31–32; John 21:15–19; Acts 2–5; 10–12).

**b. Jesus' call of Philip and Nathanael (1:43–51).**

**1:43–44.** Though the first disciples were from Galilee, **Jesus** had called them in Judea where they were with the Baptist. On His way north to **Galilee**, He called **Philip** to be His disciple. Philip's hometown of **Bethsaida** was on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (called "Bethsaida in Galilee" in 12:21). Also **Andrew and Peter** were born there. Politically, Bethsaida was in lower Gaulonitis in the territory of Herod Philip (Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 2. 1). Philip's name is Greek but his nationality cannot be inferred from that fact.

**1:45.** Philip's testimony to **Nathanael** stressed that Jesus is **the Promised One** of whom **Moses** (Deut. 18:18–19; cf. John 1:21, 25) and **the prophets** (Isa. 52:13–53:12; Dan. 7:13; Micah 5:2; Zech. 9:9) **wrote**. Surprisingly Philip called **Jesus ... the son of Joseph**. But this is what the disciples would have believed at this time. Yet Nathanael would soon recognize that He is "the Son of God" (John 1:49).

**1:46.** **Nathanael** momentarily stumbled over the lowly origin of the Messiah. **Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?** Nathanael knew of the poor reputation of Nazareth. Surely the Messiah would come from Jerusalem, Hebron, or some other prominent city. Jesus' condescension still remains a puzzle to many people. How can the *Logos* be a Man? **Philip** was wise enough not to argue, he gently invited his friend to meet Jesus: **Come and see**. He knew that Nathanael's questions would then be resolved.

**1:47.** **Jesus**, having supernatural knowledge (cf. v. 42), called **Nathanael ... a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false** (*dolos*, "deceitful") unlike Jacob (cf. v. 51 with Gen. 28:12).

**1:48.** **Nathanael** was puzzled as to **how** Jesus knew about him. **Jesus** said He knew exactly what Nathanael was doing **before Philip** came up to him; he was **under the fig tree**. This expression often meant to have safety and leisure (cf. 1 Kings 4:25; Micah 4:4; Zech. 3:10). Perhaps here the fig tree was a place for meditation (cf. comments on John 1:50–51). Psalm 139 elaborates on the theme of God's knowledge of a person's life in every detail.

**1:49.** Jesus' supernatural knowledge moved **Nathanael** to confess Him as **the Son of God** and **the King of Israel**. This does not mean that Nathanael at this early date fully understood the Trinity or the Incarnation. Rather He understood Jesus to be the Son of God in the messianic



sense (cf. Ps. 2:6–7). This future Davidic King would have God’s Spirit on Him (Isa. 11:1–2) and thus would have supernatural knowledge.

**1:50–51.** Jesus promised Nathanael a **greater** basis for belief, probably referring to the miracles in chapters 2–13. From 1:48, 51 it can be inferred that Nathanael was meditating on Jacob’s life, particularly on the incident recorded in Genesis 28:12. Jacob saw the angels going up and down a ladder. But Nathanael would see ... **the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man**. Just as Jacob saw angels from heaven communicating with earth, so Nathanael (and the others; though **you** is singular in John 1:50, the **you** in v. 51 is plural) would see Jesus as the divine Communication from heaven to earth. The Son of Man, replacing the ladder, is God’s link with earth (cf. Dan. 7:13; Matt. 26:64). Perhaps Jesus was also indicating that He is the new “Bethel,” God’s dwelling place (Gen. 28:17; John 1:14).

As the Son of Man, Jesus left heaven to come to the earth. Jesus used the term “Son of Man” of Himself more than 80 times. It speaks of His humanity and suffering and His work as “the ideal Man.” **I tell you the truth** (“Verily, verily,” KJV; lit., “Amen, Amen”) occurs 25 times in John and always calls attention to important affirmations: 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24–25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; 12:24; 13:16, 20–21, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18. Interestingly this double “Amen” does not occur in the Synoptic Gospels.

**White, J. E. (1998). *John*. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (pp. 467-468). Broadman & Holman Publishers.**

### **Lamb of God (1:29–34)**

John the Baptist’s confession upon seeing Christ, that here was “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” is of great significance. The Jews used a lamb as a sacrifice for the Passover Feast, which celebrated Israel’s deliverance from bondage in Egypt (Exod. 13:1–10; see John 13:1). Isaiah offered the idea of the Suffering Servant in terms of a sacrificial lamb (Isa. 53). John was declaring that Jesus was the true sacrificial lamb for the passover; His death would now serve as the deliverance of God’s people from their sins. As Paul wrote in his letter to the church at Corinth, “Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Cor. 5:7).

John the Baptist then gave testimony that he saw “the Spirit come down from heaven and rest” on Jesus. This confirmed to John that Jesus was the Messiah. For he then declared: “I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”

### **Witnessing about Jesus (1:35–42)**

The calling of Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was the direct result of John the Baptist’s testimony concerning Jesus as the Lamb of God. The second person mentioned in this account is not named, but many surmise that it was the author of this Gospel, the apostle John. Andrew immediately sought his brother, Simon Peter, and proclaimed that the Messiah had been found. Upon encountering Simon, Jesus declared that he would “‘be called Cephas’ (which, when translated, is Peter),” Both “Cephas,” which is Aramaic, and Peter, which is Greek, mean rock. That Peter would be given this name is interesting in light of the fact that he was anything but “rocklike.” Peter was impulsive and undisciplined in spirit, a rough-hewn man of raw emotion. Yet Christ was calling those whom He would develop, and Peter would indeed become the pillar of the church, the “rock” upon which the early church would depend (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2).

### **Son of Man (1:43–51)**

Jesus used the term “Son of Man” as His favored description for Himself. It has been suggested that the title “Son of God” is Jesus’ divine name (Matt. 8:29); “Son of David,” His Jewish name (Matt. 9:27); and “Son of Man,” the name that ties Jesus to His earthly mission. The term itself is based on Daniel 7:13–14, where it served as a reference to God.

***Allen, J. P. (1972). John. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher’s Bible Commentary (pp. 666–667). Broadman and Holman Publishers.***

### **God Comes to Man (John 1:1–51)**

*The passage*—Matthew and Luke had already told of the birth events. John starts from further back. He wrote toward the end of the first century when some were skeptical that Jesus was God. Others doubted that he was truly man. John affirms both. He identifies Jesus as the eternal Son, the Word, agent of creation. He leaves no room for doubt.

Such is the nature of the famous prologue, verses 1–18, done in classic style. But his purpose was not speculation or debate. He established a base for the climax of verse 14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (RSV).

The rest of the chapter is a firsthand account of how Jesus the man related to other men. It is the way God wishes to act with his sons.

*Special points*—The first actor on the stage is John the Baptizer—always referred to as merely “John.” It is noteworthy that the author of this Gospel, John the disciple, never refers to himself by name. He calls himself, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (21:20), and “the other disciple” (20:4), and one of the “sons of Zebedee” (21:2). It is a good evidence of his authorship.

One can be sure of the preparation young John received from the Baptizer. John was *his* disciple, and an apt one, before he was Jesus’. The forerunner surely taught his small group all he knew about the promised Messiah. On a wonderful day John the Baptist baptized that Messiah. And then there was silence. We know that Jesus was six weeks in the wilderness of temptation, but they did not know that. They had to be perplexed by his absence.

Then one day, verse 29 the forerunner saw Jesus reappear. No doubt he eagerly told John, and Andrew of Bethsaida (v. 40), that he was back. It was time to change masters, John the Baptist must have said; follow him not me. He gave them a sign so they would recognize Jesus whom they had not seen.

It was the “next day” (v. 35) that John would never forget. Writing years later, he even remembered what time it was when he first heard Jesus’ voice inviting him to “come and see” (v. 39).

Now the circle begins to expand. One finds another. Note that there was available a number of spiritually-minded men. Often the Jews of Jesus’ day are branded as shallow and traditional beyond hope. Their rulers tended to be, but the Mosaic law did produce some good soil for the gospel sowing. Jesus chose learners who were responsive and offered promise.

*Truth for today*—There is an excellent contrast in the two sections of this chapter. It begins in the misty reaches of eternity. The glory and majesty of an eternally existing God give the reader a sense of insignificance. How remote is the God whom no man has ever seen (v. 18)! Suddenly God acts to close the gulf between. He comes to men. And when he does, he likes them, talks to them, associates with them. He is now within reach. That is the basic note of the “good news” in Christ.

Regard also the invitation of Jesus. His first call was not to full belief in himself. It was to the adventure of following him: “Come and see.” Those who kept company with him usually arrived at a vital personal faith. It is never faith in a doctrine, but in a person. Jesus’ basic call is still the same, “Follow me.”

**The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). John 1:29-51. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.**

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