

## THE GOSPEL OF

**JOHN****Come and  
See the  
Messiah****INTRODUCTION**

John 1:35-51

Like the other Gospel writers, John shows us the paradox of service in Jesus' kingdom. As his first disciples and trusted servants, Jesus chooses unlikely men, mostly fishermen, all of whom will fail him at one time or another. God chooses the weak in order to exalt his name (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26–27). This is good news for all of us who recognize our own weaknesses and sin. Our failings do not disqualify us from Christ's kingdom. Spiritual heroism is not what qualifies us for heaven. There is only one hero in the gospel story: Jesus himself.

The most important qualification for Jesus' disciples is to know his name—that is, to be absolutely clear in heart and mind about who he is and what he has done. Thus, the first disciples were given an immersion course in Christology. In the span of 16 verses, Jesus is identified as “the Lamb of God,” “the Messiah,” “the Son of God,” “the King of Israel,” and “Son of Man”—all messianic names that take on a fuller meaning throughout John's Gospel.

At the heart of all these names is the truth that Jesus has come to save—to be the ladder from heaven to earth of which Jacob dreamed (Gen. 28:12) and to which Jesus alludes in John 1:51. But we do not climb our way up to God; God in Christ came down to us.<sup>1</sup>

**OPEN IT**

1. During elementary school team games, were you more likely to be picked first, or more likely to be picked last? Why?

---

<sup>1</sup>ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible. Crossway, 2018.



# APPLY IT

## ***The Sin-Remover***

Jesus is followed as “the Lamb of God,” the sin-remover of the world. John had already said in verse 29, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” To call Jesus the Lamb of God meant that finally, at the climax of Israel’s history, God was sending the final sacrifice for sin that would end all other sacrifices. Jesus would die in our place the way the Lamb was sacrificed in the Old Testament in place of the sinner.

The point of the connection between verses 36 and 37 is that following Jesus calls attention to his strength, not ours. His goodness, not ours. His wisdom, not ours. Jesus made this crystal clear, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mark 2:17). The reason these two disciples of John left him and followed Jesus was because Jesus is the Lamb of God. They are sinners. And he is a sin-remover.<sup>2</sup>

**7. Why is sin such an unpopular topic in our culture?**

**8. Why couldn’t John the Baptist have been the one to remove our sin and eternal punishment?**

**9. What is one reason you are thankful that Jesus is the sin-remover?**

---

<sup>2</sup>Piper, John. <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/we-have-found-the-messiah>

### ***The Identity-Changer***

Jesus has the authority to change our identity. Verse 42: “He [Andrew] brought him [Andrew’s brother Simon] to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, ‘So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas’ (which means Peter).”

There is no explanation in John’s Gospel why Jesus changed Simon’s name to Cephas (Aramaic), that is, Peter (Greek)—no explanation as in Matthew 16:18 that Petros means rock and you will found my church. That’s not the point. The point here is: Jesus has authority to give you whatever name he pleases and, in giving you a name, determine your destiny. The point is the glory of Christ, not the glory of Peter.<sup>3</sup>

**10. How would you describe your identity before you became a follower of Jesus?**

**11. What is one moment that as you look back, you can tell Jesus was changing your identity?**

**12. Read Romans 12:1-2. Write a two-sentence prayer to God to ask Him to continue transforming you.**

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

### ***The Circumstance-Knower***

Jesus knows two kinds of things about Nathaniel. He knows what's going on inside, and he knows what's going on outside. The first thing Jesus says is, "You are a man without deceit." That's the truth about the inside. And the second thing he said was, "While you were out of my sight I saw you. You were under a fig tree when Philip found you." That's the truth about the outside. Nathaniel is astonished and says in verse 49, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

It is a great grace to us that Jesus today, as the Son of God and the King of Israel, knows our condition inside and out. If you are alone and get into trouble and no one knows what is happening to you, Jesus knows. You will never be in a situation where Jesus is not fully aware of what's going on in your life. And if you believe that he loves you and that he is stronger than any force in the world—even... all the terrorists in the world combined—then the fact that he knows your circumstances is a great grace.<sup>4</sup>

**13. What was your original reason for following Jesus?**

**14. Nathanael's response when He realized Jesus is the Messiah was to worship. How does your response of worship show up in your life?**

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

**15. Why can it be easy to forget that Jesus knows what you're going through?**

***The Messiah to Come and See***

The last few paragraphs of chapter 1 establish the pattern of Christian evangelism. One by one, people hear testimony about Jesus from their friends and relatives and come to believe in him. John the Baptist identifies Jesus to two of his disciples, who then tell Peter. Similarly, Philip tells Nathanael and brings him to Jesus. From the beginning, this is how God has intended for people to hear about Jesus—through the lives and words of those who believe in him.<sup>5</sup>

**16. Who is one person in your life who invited you to "come and see" Jesus for yourself?**

**17. Who is one person in your life you can invite to "come and see" Jesus? What is your next step in that relationship?**

---

<sup>5</sup> ESV Story of Redemption Bible. Crossway, 2018.

This study was compiled and questions were written by David Wood (Aurora Campus)—[www.villagebible.church/smallgroup](http://www.villagebible.church/smallgroup)