

March 5 Su Reading 64 — John 1:19-28 — Not the Christ

¹⁹ *And this is the witness of John, when the ^[fn]Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"* ²⁰ *And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the ^[fn]Christ."* ²¹ *And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."* ²² *Therefore, they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"* ²³ *He said, "I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE ^[fn]LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said."*

²⁴ *Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.* ²⁵ *And they asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the ^[fn]Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"* ²⁶ *John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, [but] among you stands One whom you do not know.* ²⁷ *[This One is] He who comes after me, of whom I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandal."* ²⁸ *These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

LSB Footnotes

(1:19) Often refers to Jewish leaders in John's gospel

(1:20) Messiah

(1:23) In OT, Yahweh, cf. Is 40:3

(1:25) Messiah

One Whom You Do Not Know — John was not a self-proclaimer, and neither was Jesus. Later in His ministry, Jesus even "*warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ*" (Matt. 16:20). He demonstrated His deity. In our passage for today, Jesus had not yet begun His public ministry, but this One whom the Pharisees did not know (John 1:26) would continue to be a mystery to them because they did not want a Messiah to upset their political hold on the Jews who attempted to follow God. Some of those Pharisees did come to recognize Jesus as the Messiah and had faith in Him. God never provides enough evidence to eliminate the need for faith. We are surrounded today by people who do not know Jesus as their eternal hope. We need to tell them that there is hope beyond the kind of life they have experienced. We need to show them that the Holy Spirit dwells within us and makes a drastic difference in our lives, because we *know* Whom we have believed.

[I Know Whom I Have Believed - YouTube](#)

I know not why God's wondrous grace
To me He hath made known,
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love
Redeemed me for His own.

But I know Whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day.

— D. W. Whittle (1883)

March 6 M Reading 65 — John 1:29-34 — This Is the One

²⁹ *On the next day, he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* ³⁰ *This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who has been ^[fn]ahead of*

me, for He existed before me.'³¹ I did not know^[fn] Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing with water."³² And John bore witness saying, "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He abided on Him."³³ And I did not know^[fn] Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The One upon whom you see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him, this is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'³⁴ And I myself have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

LSB Footnotes

(1:30) Or *has a higher rank than*

(1:31) As the Messiah

(1:33) As the Messiah

Lamb of God, Son of God — John the Baptist presented two important titles for Jesus in this paragraph. The first was "*the Lamb of God*" (v. 29). That is a huge step beyond being called the Messiah—it encompasses the primary mission of Jesus. He came to die, and even though there is some evidence in the Old Testament of that purpose, the picture most seen was that the Messiah would powerfully rule over Israel, and even more widely. That will still happen in the future, but His first coming was to be in the role of the sacrificial Lamb of God. The second title was "*the Son of God*" (v. 34). This shows that the expected Messiah was to be God Himself. Yahweh provided Himself to satisfy His justice by being the perfect sacrifice to pay for the sins of humanity. Although John was almost a year older than Jesus, he said, "*He existed before me*" (v. 30). That points to the eternality of God the Son, which was also indicated in Jesus' later statement that "*before Abraham was, I am*" (John 8:58). Jesus is the eternal, perfect sacrifice for our sins; the Son of God was the Lamb of God.

[Lamb of God - YouTube](#)

Your only Son, no sin to hide,
But You have sent Him from Your side
To walk upon this guilty sod
And to become the Lamb of God.

Oh Lamb of God, Sweet Lamb of God,
I love the Holy Lamb of God.
Oh, wash me in His precious Blood,
My Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

— Twila Paris (1985)

March 7 Tu Reading 66 — John 1:35-42 — Graduated Disciples

³⁵ On the next day, John again was standing^[fn] with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ And the two disciples heard him speak and followed Jesus. ³⁸ And when Jesus turned and noticed them following, He said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day. It was about the^[fn] tenth hour. ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John [speak] and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means^[fn] Christ). ⁴² He brought him to Jesus. When Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated^[fn] Peter).

LSB Footnotes

(1:35) Lit *and*

(1:39) 10 a.m.

(1:41) Gr *Christos*; lit *Anointed One*

(1:42) Gr *Petros*; lit *stone*

Early Evangelism — There are three examples of early evangelism in this passage. One was John the Baptist's declaration to two of his disciples: "*Behold, the Lamb of God!*" (v. 36). It was an invitation by John that *his* disciples should become *Jesus'* disciples. That was sacrificial evangelism; John was willing to lose something in order for others to gain. Today, our only sacrifice might be the possibility of losing a friend who would reject our invitation to take a closer look at Jesus. John declared what he had learned from the heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism. Jesus was the Sacrifice—the Lamb of God. The second example of evangelism was from Jesus Himself, when he invited Andrew (and probably the Apostle John) to where He stayed: "*Come, and you will see*" (v. 39a). They apparently stayed with Jesus for the whole day, beginning from 10:00 a.m. ("*the tenth hour*"—v. 39b). Wouldn't you love to have a recording of what Jesus said to them that convinced them that He was the Messiah? "Come and see"—that is an invitation we could give to friends we invite to church or a small group Bible study. Jesus was the Inviter — "*Come!*" The third evangelistic effort was when Andrew went to get his brother, Simon (Peter), and bring him to Jesus. His declaration was, "*We have found the Messiah*" (v. 41). Can you imagine the impact of that statement to a Jew whose ancestors had been waiting for the Messiah for hundreds of years? Jesus had convinced Andrew, and Andrew turned into an evangelist. Jesus was the Messiah—the "Anointed One"—the Christ.

[Come and See - YouTube](#)

Come and see the glory of the Lord;
Come, behold the Lamb!
Come and know the mercy of the King,
Bowing down before Him.

For He is Lord above the heavens,
Lord in all the earth,
Lord of all the angels,
Worthy to be served.

— Lenny Le Blanc (1989)

March 8 W Reading 67 — John 1:43-51 — Calling Philip and Nathanael

⁴³ *On the next day, He desired to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me."* ⁴⁴ *Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.* ⁴⁵ *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and [also] the Prophets wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."* ⁴⁶ *And Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"* Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷ *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said about him, "Behold, truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!"* ⁴⁸ *Nathanael said to Him, "From where do You know me?"* Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." ⁴⁹ *Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."* ⁵⁰ *Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these."* ⁵¹ *And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see THE HEAVENS OPENED AND THE ANGELS OF GOD ASCENDING AND DESCENDING on the Son of Man."*

Supernatural Savior — We see something of the supernatural character of Jesus in today's reading. He displayed supernatural knowledge in "seeing" Nathanael under the fig tree before Philip called him. A fig tree grows out and down more than up, providing relative concealment for anyone under it.

Perhaps Nathanael (also called Bartholomew, “son of *Tholomaios*”) was taking a nap. Nathanael had doubted Philip’s claim that Jesus was the Messiah because He came from Nazareth, but when he heard Jesus say that He had seen him under the fig tree, he knew it was supernatural knowledge and, therefore, that Jesus was the Messiah. He called Jesus “*Rabbi ... the Son of God ... the King of Israel*” (v. 49), the long-awaited Messiah. Jesus complimented Nathanael’s faith from what he had heard, but He predicted that he would “*see greater things than these*” (v. 50). He would, indeed! The next statement, Jesus said “*to him*” (v. 51), was referring to Philip, but others were probably there also because the two second-person pronouns (“*you*”) that followed (“*I say to you, you will see...*”) are both plural. What would they see? “*THE HEAVENS OPENED AND THE ANGELS OF GOD ASCENDING AND DESCENDING on the Son of Man.*” This OT quote refers to Jacob’s literal experience at Bethel (Gen. 28:12). Most commentators say that Jesus’ prediction here was only figurative, indicating His opening the door of communication with God. On the other hand, Nathanael, Philip, Peter, Andrew, and John were all in attendance at the Ascension, when Jesus was literally caught up into the heavens. Angels were also present because two of them asked the disciples, “*Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking toward heaven? ...*” (Acts 1:11). Even though Luke did not mention that the angels were ascending and descending, perhaps that was just omitted because of the focus on the challenge and promise communicated by the angels to the disciples. Remember to ask about that when we all get to heaven!

Jesus Messiah - YouTube

Jesus Messiah, name above all names,
 Blessed Redeemer, Emmanuel.
 The Rescue for sinners, the Ransom from heaven,
 Jesus Messiah, Lord of all.

— Chris Tomlin, et al. (2008)

March 9 Th Reading 68 — John 2:1-12 — Jesus’ First Miracle

¹ *And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there;* ² *and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.* ³ *And when the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."* ⁴ *And Jesus said to her, "Woman, ^[fn]what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come."* ⁵ *His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do [it]."* ⁶ *Now there were six stone water jars set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing ^[fn]two or three measures each.* ⁷ *Jesus said to them, "Fill the water jars with water." So they filled them up to the brim.* ⁸ *And He said to them, "Draw [some] out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it [to him].* ⁹ *Now when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, ¹⁰ and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when [the people] have ^[fn]drunk freely, [then] the inferior [wine]; [but] you have kept the good wine until now."* ¹¹ *Jesus did this in Cana of Galilee as the beginning of [His] ^[fn]signs, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.*

¹² *After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and [His] brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.*

LSB Footnotes

(2:4) Lit *what to Me and to you* (a Heb idiom)

(2:6) Approx. 20-30 gal. or 75-115 l, a measure was approx. 10 gal. or 38 l

(2:10) Or *have become drunk*

(2:11) Or *attesting miracles*

Water to Wine — Jesus must have had a brief talk with the Father between telling His mother, “*My hour has not yet come*” (v. 4), and telling the servants, “*Fill the water jars*” (v. 7). The fact that Jesus was the Messiah was revealed to John at Jesus’ baptism, and to Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and probably the Apostle John individually, but not yet on a more public scale. With the miracle of changing water into wine, however, He “*manifested His glory*” (v. 11) to the servants and to His disciples. When Jesus performs a miracle, He does it right! This was a miracle of *quantity*: the six jars held 120-180 gallons (450-690 liters), probably producing much more wine than was provided at the beginning of the wedding. It was also a miracle of *quality*: the headwaiter thought the bridegroom had saved the best wine for last (v. 10). Do you think those servants told others about what they knew Jesus had done? Certainly! It was an experience of a lifetime. How about the miracle Jesus performed in our own lives? That was also a life-changing experience. Are we spreading the Good News that Jesus is still making drastic changes in human vessels?

[Our God - YouTube](#)

Water You turned into wine, opened the eyes of the blind;
There's no one like You, none like You.
Into the darkness You shine, out of the ashes we rise;
There's no one like You, none like You.
Our God is greater; our God is stronger;
God, You are higher than any other.
Our God is healer, awesome in power, our God, our God.
— Matt Redman, et al. (2010)

March 10 F Reading 69 — John 2:13-22 — Cleansing the Temple

¹³ *And the Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.* ¹⁴ *And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated [at their tables].* ¹⁵ *And He made a scourge of cords, and drove [them] all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables;* ¹⁶ *and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a ^[fn]place of business."* ¹⁷ *His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME."* ¹⁸ *The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us ^[fn]as your authority for doing these things?"* ¹⁹ *Jesus answered them, "Destroy this ^[fn]sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up."* ²⁰ *The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this sanctuary, and will You raise it up in three days?"* ²¹ *But He was speaking about the sanctuary of His body.* ²² *So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.*

LSB Footnotes

(2:16) Lit *house*

(2:18) Lit *that You do these*

(2:19) The inner part of the temple

Zealous for Holiness — This passage does not say that Jesus was angry, but He certainly was violent. He drove out the oxen and sheep with the whip and spilled the money changers’ coins on the ground, but He only *spoke* to the dove sellers, telling them to leave (v. 16). His intent was not to ruin the merchants, but to cleanse the temple area. He was zealous for holiness. Their business was a helpful service to Jewish travelers coming to the temple to offer sacrifices, but it was taking place in the Court of the Gentiles, an area reserved for their worship. They were restricted to this area; it was their only place for worship at the temple. For them, it was probably somewhat like I feel when I

pause to thank God for my food in a noisy restaurant. It is not conducive to worship. Jesus was sensitive to the needs of the Gentiles and He was sensitive to God's honor at the place where God's presence was represented. Jesus not only displayed violence in His actions, He also acted with authority. The Jewish leaders were horrified. Since Jesus was not one of their leadership group, they demanded for Him to explain His "*authority for doing these things*" (v. 18). They asked for a supernatural "*sign*" to prove His authority. He would provide that sign about three years later when He raised "*the sanctuary of His body*" (v. 21) after they had killed Him. Jesus was zealous for holiness, and He had the authority for cleansing the temple because He was God.

Here is an appropriate song recorded during the pandemic by a Chinese-Filipino church choir in Cebu City, Philippines, where I have preached several times.

[This is My Holy Place - YouTube](#)

This is Your holy place; this is Your secret place.
We feel Your love and grace as we stand face to face.
Lord let Your healing flow so all the world will know,
This is Your secret place; this is Your holy place.

— Don Moen (1989)

March 11 Sa Reading 70 — John 2:23-25 — He Knew All Men

²³ *Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, when they saw His signs which He was doing.* ²⁴ *But Jesus,* ^[fn] *on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,* ²⁵ *and because He had no need that anyone bear witness concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.*

LSB Footnote

(2:24) Lit *Himself*

Divine Omniscience — The word “But” at the beginning of verse 24 presents an important contrast between what the people believed (“*many believed in His name*”—v. 23) and what Jesus knew (“*Jesus ... was not entrusting Himself to them*”—v. 24). The same Greek verb is used for the people’s faith (“*believed*”) and for Jesus’ hesitant faith (“*not entrusting*”), but there is a huge difference in the object and level of their faith. The people believed that Jesus was supernatural, “*when they saw His signs which He was doing*” (v. 23). That was faith based on external evidence—Jesus’ miraculous signs. On the other hand (“*But...*”), Jesus knew what was internal; He knew their hearts, which were sinful with selfishness and limited in knowledge. No one needed to inform Jesus about what was in their hearts because “*He Himself knew what was in man*” (v. 25b). It was supernatural knowledge, or divine omniscience. Jesus knew everything about mankind; He knew that He could not depend on them. We are not to be trusted either. Although the divine Spirit of God now dwells in each believer, we still have our sinful nature that cannot be trusted. We are in a training process of growing in godly wisdom and action, but we are faulty. That is not a reason to excuse our sinful thoughts, words, and actions, but it is a reminder of our weakness and how much we need to rely on God’s strength. “*My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness*” (2 Cor. 12:9).

[Search Me, O God - YouTube](#)

Search me, O God, and know my heart today;
Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray.
See if there be some wicked way in me;
Cleanse me from ev'ry sin and set me free.

— J. Edwin Orr (b. 1912)