



LOOKING FOR THE MESSIAH

January 14, 2018 John 1: 35-42 (43-51) & 1 Sam 3: 3b-10, 19

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Link to [Beck](#) (paywall) other [Beck](#)

Stone, Naomi. [How does the Beloved call You](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [Less People are going to Church....](#)

[Monastery Sunday Homilies](#)

#### ENTERING THE SCENE:

John's gospel is the only one that tells people to follow Jesus not himself. Thanks to John, we are pointed in the right direction. Very quickly, the word spreads and before long the gathering of apostles begins. It was through one person inviting another that people are drawn to Jesus and his message. As this new liturgical year unfolds, we also are invited to come and see, and then share what we have seen. What plans have you made to "see" more, and what ways do you envision that will help to invite others to see what you have found?

John 1: 35-42 (43-21) Revised Common Lectionary

35 The next day John was there again with two of his **disciples**. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the **Lamb of God!**" 37 When the two **disciples** heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "**What do you want?**" They said, "**Rabbi**" (which means Teacher), "where are you **staying?**" 39 **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**. 40 **Andrew**, **Simon Peter's** brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing **Andrew** did was to find his brother **Simon** and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). 42 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**).

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for **Galilee**. Finding **Philip**, he said to him, "Follow me." 44 **Philip**, like **Andrew** and **Peter**, was from the town of **Bethsaida**. 45 **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**." 46 **Nazareth!** Can anything good come from there?" **Nathanael** asked. "**Come and see,**" said **Philip**. 47 When Jesus saw **Nathanael** approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true **Israelite**, in whom there is nothing false." 48 How do you know me?" **Nathanael** asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the **fig tree** before **Philip** called you." 49 Then **Nathanael** declared, "**Rabbi**, you are the **Son of God**; you are the **King of Israel**." 50 Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the **fig tree**. You shall see greater things than that." 51 He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see **heaven** open, and the **angels** of God ascending and descending on the **Son of Man**."

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Jesus' first followers were people who saw him as the one they waited for and then quickly invited others to join them in following. Who invited you to follow Jesus, and who have you invited?

**PRAYER:** Lord, you invite me to come and I will see. But first I have to overcome the fears that I have learned from others. Thank you for sending me someone along the way that invited me to share what they had found in faith. To them I owe everything. Help me now to be alert to ways that my life and example become examples of invitation for others. Help me to live in a way that others ask me "where are you coming from? How did you get your faith?" Amen.

#### WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

**DISCIPLES:** A disciple is one who is learning from another.

*Have you ever been a disciple? Has a teacher ever passed you on to another teacher more skilled?*

**LAMB OF GOD:** The lamb was a symbol of innocence and helplessness. It was the most often used animal of sacrifice in the temple. *What make a lamb a good metaphor for Jesus? What do you think the people made of John's use of this metaphor?*

**WHAT DO YOU WANT?:** When you are asked what you want, the imitative is left up to you.

*Are you comfortable, or able to name what you want in your faith search?*

**RABBI:** Another word for Rabbi was teacher, or my master.

*What are the disciples saying to Jesus when they call him Rabbi?*

**STAYING:** This seems a strange response to Jesus' question.  
*Why do you think they wanted to know where Jesus was staying?*

**TENTH HOUR:** This would have been about 4 in the afternoon, and the Sabbath regulations called for no work or traveling after sundown.  
*If you wanted to have a long talk with Jesus, would you, like the disciples want to get somewhere to settle in?*

**COME AND YOU WILL SEE:** Some realities just have to be experienced.  
*Have you ever said "you just had to be there?" What were you trying to say with that? Can this help you understand this response?*

**ANDREW:** This name means 'manly'. He was a disciple of John the Baptist, and the first to call Jesus the "Christ" in this gospel.  
*What does this tell you about the search that Andrew was on at the time?*

**SIMON / PETER/ CEPHAS:** (rock /stone) In many cultures a person is given a new name to signify a change that has occurred in their life.  
*Have you ever gone through something that changed you enough to need a new name afterwards? How do you think Simon felt after being re-named?*

**PHILIP:** Philip was the one to make the connection of Jesus with Moses, the law, and the prophets, in John's gospel.  
*What does this tell you about what Philip was looking for?*

**BETHSAIDA:** Philip, Andres and Simon came from Bethsaida. It means "house of fishing".  
*What is it about fishing that makes for good disciples?*

**NATHANAEL:** Nathanael means "El has given". He was from Cana, the site of Jesus first miracle in John's gospel. He is remembered for his remark; "can anything good come from Nazareth?"  
*Can you identify with Nathaniel's initial response? What unlikely places (Nazareth's) have you seen wonders come from?*

**MOSES / LAW / PROPHETS:** All these signify the faith history of the people. They were essential elements if anything were to be trusted. But Nathanael was reluctant to respond.  
*Have you ever been reluctant to respond to what appears to be too good to be true? If so, why?*

**GALILEE:** Most of the Jewish revolts came from the north country of Galilee. Those from the south of Judea had a saying "Can anything good come out of Galilee."  
*What is Nathanael warning the others when he reminds them of this fact?*

**NAZARETH:** Nazareth is the home of Joseph and Mary and is not mentioned at all in the Hebrew Scriptures.  
*Where are the 'no places' you know of that are thought to be unlikely places for anything important to occur?*

**ISRAEL-ITE:** Jesus called Nathanael an Israelite in whom there is no guile. What you saw was what you got in this man.  
*Has anyone seen you so clearly that it was scary? What made this possible?*

**FALSE (GUILE):** To be clear and consistent is to have no falsehood or guile.  
*Do you know anyone like this? Are you like that?*

**FIG TREE:** Rabbi's often sat under fig trees to study. (See below)  
*How does this help you to understand what significance Jesus' remark must have made for Nathanael?*

**SON OF GOD:** All believers who tried to live in accordance with God's will were seen as 'sons/daughters' of God, and great people (Caesar's / Socrates etc.) were often called sons of god's.  
*When Nathaniel called Jesus the King of Israel, what was he saying to Jesus?*

**HEAVENS:** The heavens were thought to be the residence of the god's.  
*When Jesus said the heavens would open what was he saying? Can you think of an example of something that you might use this example to describe?*

**ANGELS:** Angels are seen ascending and descending, and are often seen as messengers from God.  
*What does this imply?*

**SON OF MAN:** This is Jesus' favorite self-description. In the incarnation he truly becomes one of us.  
*How does scripture study help to incarnate Jesus in your life?*

**PARALLEL TEXTS:** Mt. 4: 18-22; Mk. 1: 16-20; Lk. 5: 1-11;

**OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK:** 1 Sam. 3: 3-20; [Ps. 40: 2-10](#); 1 Cor. 6: 13-20; Jn. 1: 35-42;  
Revised Common Lectionary: 1 Sam. 3: 1-20; [Ps. 139: 1-6, 13-18](#); 1 Cor. 6: 12-20; Jn. 1:43-51.

#### **SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:**

In an interesting article by D. Moody Smith called "John: Historian or Theologian" we find the author making the point that even though John's gospel is thought to be the most distant from the Resurrection in history, it could be the most accurate in its remembrance of the words of Jesus. Bible Review: 10/2004 Pgs. 23ff.

**BETHSAIDA:** "Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida" (Jn. 1:44) and it was in Bethsaida that Jesus cured a blind man by spitting on his eyes and laying on his hands – (Mk. 8: 22-25) and where he fed the multitude (Luke 9: 10-15). Though an important Christian site, Bethsaida disappeared after its destruction by the Romans during the First Jewish Revolt (66-70 A.D.), not to be found again until the summer of 1987, when Rami Arav of the University of Nebraska at Omaha began excavating north of the Sea of Galilee. He uncovered a Hellenistic and Roman-era residential quarter; on a subsequent dig he and his team found an Iron Age city that contained the largest and best-preserved city gate yet discovered in Israel from that period. This season Arav and co-director Richard Freund of the University of Hartford will continue excavating the gate and the Hellenistic-Roman quarter.  
Biblical Archaeology Review 1-2-06 Pg. 28.

If I looked for my glasses in the morning in the way most seekers search for God, I would stumble around half blind all day.  
Dr. A. W. Tozer

"I would rather lose in a cause that will someday win, than win in a cause that will someday lose!" Woodrow Wilson

And the day came when the risk it took to remain tight inside the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom. Anais Nin

#### **FIG TREE FICUS CARICA**

*Figs are fitter for medicine than any other profit that is gotten by the fruit of them.*

The trees may grow to 18 feet (5.5 m) and bear a fleshy inflorescence, which is neither flower nor fruit, and called a fig. The leaves are deeply lobed and deciduous.

**Where to find it:** A native of the Middle East, but grows wild throughout the Mediterranean. It is cultivated in gardens in milder regions, but the figs do not always ripen. **Flowering time:** The fig ripens towards the end of the summer.

**Medicinal virtues:** The milk from the leaves or branches dropped upon warts takes them away. The decoction of the leaves clears the face of morpew and the body of white scurf, scabs and running sores. Dropped into old fretting ulcers, it cleanses them and brings up the flesh. Made into syrup, a decoction of the leaves taken inwardly dissolves congealed blood caused by bruises or falls and helps the bloody flux. The juice dropped into a hollow tooth eases pain, and dropped into the ears relieves deafness and pain and noises in them. Syrup made of the leaves or green fruits are excellent for coughs, hoarseness or shortness of breath and all diseases of the chest and lungs. It is also very good for dropsy and failing-sickness.

**Modern uses:** The fig is laxative, but also soothing and nutritious. Syrup of Figs is a mild laxative, which can be given to children. The stronger Compound Syrup of Figs contains Figs, Senna and Rhubarb, and is more suitable for adults. These preparations are official and obtainable from pharmacies. The milky juice will remove warts if applied to them. The soft, pulp interior of roasted figs can be applied as a poultice to boils and carbuncles.

[Gospel of the Ebionites](#) (in Ephiphanius, Against Heresies XXX 13.2-3) There was a certain man named Jesus, about thirty years old, who chose us. Coming to Capernaum, he entered the house of Simon, who is called Peter, and said, "As I passed by the lake of Tiberias, I chose John and James, sons of Zebedee, and Simon, Andres, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas Isacriot; and you, Matthew, sitting at the tax office, I called and you followed me. You, therefore, I desire to be twelve apostles, as a witness to Israel." Throckmorton, Burton, Jr. Ed. [Gospel Parallels](#). NY. Thomas Nelson Pub. 1949.

I was only a man who daydreamed and would have wished to forget a few things. A plump fig, I sat there under the leaves ripe for picking. If only I had known he could mind read. Bausch, William J. [Storytelling](#). Mystic, CT. Twenty-Third Pub. 1984. Page 53.

Now for the first time in my life, I was aware that all the factors needed for a decision were already prepared in the unconscious part of the mind, without the conscious mind having any part in the deliberation. This is why is hard to answer the first question that is

often asked, “How do you choose a play?” Is it accident or choice? Is it frivolous or the result of deep thought? Rather, I think, we reject until the true solution, which was already there, suddenly comes into the open. One lives within a pattern: to ignore this is to take many false directions, but the moment the hidden movement is respected, it becomes the guide, and in retrospect one can trace a clear pattern that continues to unfold...” The faith that comes from only hearing about Jesus is not enough. In the gospel of John, after Andrew has talked to Jesus and experienced life through him, he runs to his brother Simon to tell him that he has found the Messiah. Simon does not take it on Andrew’s word but goes out to meet Jesus. ...In the presence of certain people we are catapulted into the presence of God. We call these people holy because through them we are initiated into holiness. Their presence activated the presence of God. Yet these people, in turn, talk about the fact that they experience God through Jesus.

Shea, John. Stories of Faith. Chicago. Thomas More Press. 1980, Pages 141-3.

...there is a sense that God’s call is not so much a demand for perfection as it is an invitation to intimacy in the present moment.” Parabola. Spring 1994. War of the Heart by Norvene Vest. Page 43.

As the sun cannot withhold its light, we cannot withhold what feels real. As the Earth keeps going by turning itself toward the light day after day, we have no choice, despite all forms of etiquette and training, but to keep turning toward what we feel is real. Otherwise, we become cold little planets spinning in the dark. Nepo, Mark. The Book of Awakening. Berkeley, CA. Conari Press. 2000. Page 107.

A call has the effect of setting a weight down on one side of a scale; equilibrium cannot be restored until an equal weight, a response, is apportioned on the other side. pg. 322

Saying yes to the calls tends to place you on a path that half of yourself things doesn’t make a bit of sense, but the other half knows your life won’t make sense without. Pg. 2 Levoy, Gregg. Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life.

To follow the vocation does not mean happiness; but once it has been heard, there is no happiness for those who do not follow. C. S. Lewis

For only when we act despite all our uncertainties and doubts do we have the chance to shape history. Paul Rogat Loeb

And then there is today’s reading from John’s Gospel. Very prominent in the reading is the call of Peter. The story that John tells here combines the call of the first disciples with another, the re-naming of Simon as “Peter,” the Rock. This part is very similar to that which the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—relate as the turning point in the middle of their Gospels. The episode marks the end of the ministry in the villages of Galilee. From this point on Jesus turns his face to Jerusalem, where his story will reach its climax in the Passion, Death and Resurrection. Here in John’s Gospel it is all happening in the first chapter. But then, John has his own way of arranging the events of Jesus’ public life. And he adds some details not found elsewhere. For instance, it’s his brother Andrew who brings Peter to Jesus. Only to have Peter become the more famous member of the family. But it is another feature of the Gospel reading—one that might go unnoticed—but one that catches my attention. Most likely because I’ve been primed by the first reading with its initial misdirection and subsequent correction. Notice that Andrew and his friend were disciples of John the Baptist. It is John who points Jesus out to them, with the words, “Behold, the Lamb of God.” The next line reports: “The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus.” So, at John’s suggestion, they switched their discipleship from John to Jesus. One can’t exactly say that they got it wrong the first time. It might be better to say that their first allegiance was incomplete. So they changed direction. This too seems to be a common story of discernment. The first vocation is not always the final vocation. Not because the first was wrong, necessarily. But that it was incomplete, there was more to be done, more to learn. Fr. Robert Beck 1/18/2009 Witness column

Jn. 1.35–51: Call of the disciples. 37: One disciple is Andrew (v. 40); the anonymous other is sometimes identified as the beloved disciple. 38: Rabbi, originally meaning “my master,” became at an uncertain date the term for one qualified to pronounce on matters of Jewish law and practice. The Hebrew root of rabbi is “rav,” meaning “great” in biblical Hebrew, a title denoting reverence. In Second Temple Judaism it did not refer to a religious functionary or clergy person but primarily to a person whose authority was accepted by the speaker. Teacher is therefore not a literal translation but captures the general sense of the term. In Hebrew sources it does not appear before the Mishnah, though the Gospels of Matthew (e.g., 26.25), Mark (e.g., 9.5), and John use the term to refer to Jesus; Mt 3.7–8 refers more generically to “rabbis” and may be the earliest evidence of its usage to denote a classification of learned individuals. 41: Messiah is the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic, “meshih .a” (“the anointed one”); the Gk translation is “Christos” (Christ). This term recurs in 4.25 and 4.29 but nowhere else in the NT. 42: Cephas means “rock” in Aramaic; this disciple is also called Peter (Gk “Petros,” also “rock”); cf. Mt 16.18. Pg. 160. The Jewish Annotated New Testament

#### SELECTED READINGS:

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2015. Pgs.29-32. . To order contact [Carol.Oberfoell@loras.edu](mailto:Carol.Oberfoell@loras.edu)  
It Would be Easier by Nancy D. Wayne. Page 89. Choice by Mary Anne Morefield. Page 141.  
The Reality of the Future by Joan More. Page 142. Metamorphoses by Hazel Nowell Ailor. Page 143.  
Grana, Janice, Ed. Images. Winona, MN. St. Mary’s College Press. 1976.