

**So Much More Than a Teacher**  
**John 1:19-51**

**Sermon Outline**

**Introduction:** The first thing that the “Word made flesh” does when he comes on the scene is to ask a question: What are you seeking? It invites us to ask, What do we want from Jesus? What do we hope he will do for us and for others?

**I) Jesus isn’t just another teacher.**

**A) Evidence: This is why John the Baptist distances himself from Jesus so rigorously**

John was a great man—highly respected

John was the last in a long tradition of prophets of the Lord.

But he says, “I am just a voice, not even worthy to loose Jesus’ sandals

**B) Application:**

If all we want from Jesus is some solid and reliable information about God or from God about ourselves, we will be disappointed.

Knowledge alone doesn’t fix anything.

**II) Jesus is the leader of the new, better, and final exodus—the one who has come to change everything in and around us**

**A) Evidence:** vs. 23 quotes from Isaiah 40—the promise of a new exodus

**B) A brief history of Israel:** The deliverance from bondage in Egypt was the defining moment in Israel’s life, but it turned out to be the first chapter in a long, sad story that ended in exile, followed by a return from exile that never came near to restoring Israel’s glory under Solomon. The long sad story gave rise to prophecies like Isaiah 40, in which God himself would one day march through the wilderness to his beloved city, there to liberate his still exiled people and create of Jerusalem a place of everlasting joy and grandeur into which not only Israel, but the world, would flow. John the Baptist is here saying that Jesus is the Lord marching through the wilderness to accomplish these things.

**III) What, more specifically, has Jesus come to do, and what does it have to do with us?**

**A) He has come to annihilate evil in the world**

**1) Evidence:** vs. 29 (36): *Behold the Lamb... who takes away the sin of the world*

Egypt of old had become in the mind of Israel’s prophets a symbol of all that is wrong in the world.

Jewish apocalyptic literature foresaw a conquering lamb who would destroy the evil (

*Revelation 17:14: ...The Lamb will conquer [the kings of this world], for he is Lord of lords and King of kings...*

**2) Application**

If we are looking for Jesus simply to make us happy and able to cope with our crises, we will be disappointed. He comes to enlist us in the overthrow of darkness and injustice everywhere.

**B) He has come to deliver us from sin**

**1) Evidence:** vs. 29 (36): *Behold the Lamb... who takes away the sin of the world.*

He is called the Lamb not only to declare that he is the conqueror, but to show how he conquers.

Like the lambs slaughtered at the Passover so that Israel would escape the angel of death.

**2) John 1:11: He came to his own and his own received him not...** The refusal to receive the “Word made flesh” came to a head in the crucifixion, the crime which, in God’s hands, was the moment of our deliverance.

Jesus was the sin bearer.

### **3) Application:**

If all we want from Jesus is to feel better about ourselves, or to receive consolation during a tough time, or to receive strength to get through something, we may be disappointed. Jesus came not to relieve our symptoms but to heal our deepest disease.

Why do we get anxious and depressed? Often it is because of our idolatry or our ingratitude. Jesus may not lift the anxiety and depression, because he wants us to face the reality about the idolatry and know the forgiveness that the cross gives.

### **C) Jesus comes to create a new society**

#### **1) Evidence:**

Why is Jesus' first action the calling of Peter, Andrew, Philip, Nathaniel, and John?  
Because the leader of the new exodus must create a new Israel—the church

**2) Lots of people have trouble with the church**—especially the institutional church. But Jesus loves the church—even the institutional church—and wants us inside it.

#### **3) Application:**

If you want Jesus simply to walk you through a private spiritual pilgrimage, you will be disappointed. This is not his intention.

### **D) Jesus comes to bring heaven into our experience**

#### **1) Evidence:**

This is the point of the “stairway to heaven” (*vs. 51*).

Jacob's dream after wrestling with the angel: The discovery of “Beth-el” (the house of God)

Jesus' death on the cross cleansed us so that heaven could safely come in. He is the “ladder” (he is able safely to baptize us with the spirit) because of the cleansing cross.

#### **2) Application:**

If we want Jesus simply to give us safe and comfortable community, or principles to live by, or peace of mind so that we can carry on with our own plans, or a free pass to heaven when we die, we will be disappointed. His purpose is up-end our lives by bringing God into them

## **Questions for Reflection this Week**

- 1) Jesus began his public ministry the same way God approached Adam after he sinned: Not with lots of noise, or a display of power, or a stunning declaration, but with a question. What does this tell us about God? What questions have you felt God to be asking you lately?
- 2) Why did John the Baptist labor so vigorously to elevate Jesus above himself?
- 3) Respond to the following: “To use Jesus simply for information—even ethical and theological information—won't get us very far, because knowledge alone does not fix anything important.”
- 4) What evidence do you find in the passage for the notion that the intention of the writer is to convince us that Jesus is the leader of a new and final exodus?
- 5) Do you look for Jesus simply to get you through tough times, or do you see him as enlisting you to join him in the struggle against all that is wrong in the world. If the latter, for what tasks has he enlisted you?
- 6) Respond to the following: “Jesus may be slow to lift your anxiety and depression, not because he cares little about your suffering, but because he wants to expose your deeper issues (idolatry, unbelief, and unthankfulness). If he lifts the symptoms, he will mask the disease.”
- 7) Discuss the following: “Jesus has not come simply to help individuals make their way on solitary spiritual pilgrimages; he has come to make a new society and to put us in it. There is ordinarily no salvation outside the church.”
- 8) What evidence is there in your life that you really want God, rather than simply wanting God to do stuff for you?