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John 1

The Word Became Flesh — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Jesus is the eternal Word who made everything, and He became flesh and pitched His tent among us so that men like me could see God and become His children. He is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, and He still says, "Come, and you will see."

00 The Text

JOHN 1 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him.

8 He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.

9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"

16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

19 This is the testimony of John, when the 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 Christ."

21 They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

22 Then 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 LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.

25 They asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

26 John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know.

27 "It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."

28 These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 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 on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'

31 "I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water."

32 John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.

33 "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'

34 "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,

36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and 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, for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).

42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

43 The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me."

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of 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 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 of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"

48 Nathanael said to Him, "How 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.”

Marked in the text

- **v1** “the Word was God” — God — His character & actions
- **v3** “All things came into being through Him” — God — His character & actions
- **v4** “In Him was life” — Promise / blessing
- **v5** “the darkness did not comprehend it” — Sin / warning
- **v6** “a man sent from God” — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** “those who were His own did not receive Him” — Sin / warning
- **v12** “the right to become children of God” — Promise / blessing
- **v13** “but of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “the Word became flesh” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “dwelt among us” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “full of grace and truth” — Promise / blessing
- **v16** “grace upon grace” — Promise / blessing
- **v17** “the Law was given through Moses” — Time / place / contrast
- **v18** “He has explained Him” — God — His character & actions
- **v20** “I am not the Christ” — Time / place / contrast
- **v23** “MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD” — Command / instruction
- **v27** “I am not worthy to untie” — Time / place / contrast
- **v29** “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” — God — His character & actions
- **v32** “the Spirit descending as a dove” — God — His character & actions
- **v33** “the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit” — Promise / blessing
- **v39** “Come, and you will see” — Command / instruction
- **v41** “We have found the Messiah” — Promise / blessing
- **v42** “you shall be called Cephas” — Promise / blessing
- **v43** “Follow Me” — Command / instruction
- **v46** “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” — Sin / warning
- **v47** “in whom there is no deceit” — Promise / blessing
- **v49** “You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel” — God — His character & actions
- **v51** “the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man” — Promise / blessing
- **v4** “Light” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v7** “testify” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v15** “testified” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v19** “testimony” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v7** “witness” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v29** “The next day” — Time / place / contrast (every occurrence)

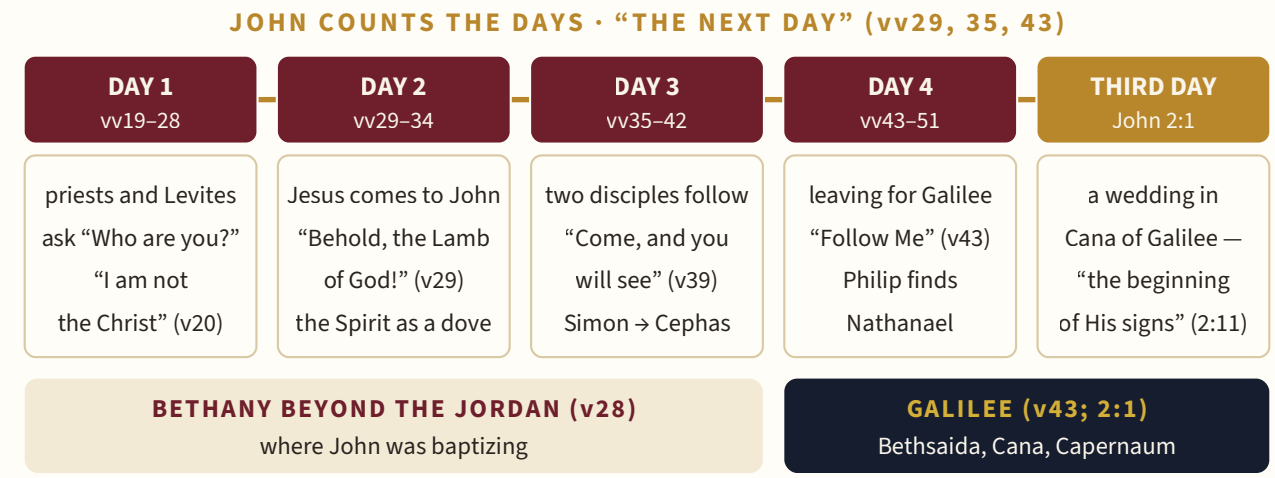
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 1:18

"No one has seen God at any time; △the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, △He has explained Him."

FIGURE · JOHN COUNTS THE DAYS



From the delegation's question to the wedding at Cana, John dates each scene; the witness of one day becomes the following of the next.

Setting. John writes last of the four Gospels and starts earliest — "In the beginning" (v1), before creation. Verses 1–18 are the prologue; verses 19–51 move to the Jordan, at "Bethany beyond the Jordan" where John was baptizing (v28), and then toward Galilee (v43). John tells us his purpose at 20:31: that we may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life in His name.

Structure:

- vv1–5 — **the eternal Word:** with God and was God (v1); all things came into being through Him (v3); in Him was life, the Light of men; the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it (vv4–5).
- vv6–13 — **witness and response:** a man sent from God, John, to testify about the Light (vv6–8). The true Light came into the world; the world did not know Him; His own did not receive Him (vv9–11). But as many as received Him received the right to become children of God — born of God (vv12–13).
- vv14–18 — **the Word became flesh:** He dwelt among us; we saw His glory, full of grace and truth (v14). John's testimony (v15); grace upon grace (v16); Law through Moses, grace and truth through Jesus Christ (v17); the only begotten God has explained the Father (v18).
- vv19–28 — **day 1, the voice:** priests and Levites ask, "Who are you?" Not the Christ, not Elijah, not the Prophet (vv19–21); "a voice of one crying in the wilderness" (v23, Isaiah 40:3); not worthy to untie His sandal (v27).

- vv29–34 — **day 2, the Lamb:** "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (v29). The Spirit descended as a dove and remained on Him (v32); He baptizes in the Holy Spirit (v33); "this is the Son of God" (v34).
- vv35–42 — **day 3, the first followers:** two disciples follow; "What do you seek?" — "Come, and you will see" (vv38–39). Andrew finds Simon: "We have found the Messiah"; Simon is named Cephas (vv40–42).
- vv43–51 — **day 4, Philip and Nathanael:** "Follow Me" (v43); "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" — "Come and see" (v46); "an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit" (v47); the fig tree; "You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel" (v49); the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man (v51).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "God" ×13 — vv1 (×2), 2, 6, 12, 13, 18 (×2), 29, 34, 36, 49, 51.
- "Jesus" ×12 — vv17, 29, 36, 37, 38, 42 (×2), 43, 45, 47, 48, 50.
- "see / saw / seen" ×15 — see vv33, 39, 46, 50, 51; saw vv14, 29, 38, 39, 47, 48, 50; seen vv18, 32, 34.
- "John" ×9 — vv6, 15, 19, 26, 28, 32, 35, 40 (the Baptist) and v42 (Simon's father).
- "testify / testified / testimony / witness" ×7 — vv7 (×2), 8, 15, 19, 32, 34.
- "Light" ×6 — vv4, 5, 7, 8 (×2), 9; "darkness" ×2 — v5.
- "baptize / baptizing / baptizes" ×6 — vv25, 26, 28, 31, 33 (×2).
- "world" ×5 — vv9, 10 (×3), 29.
- "found" ×5 — vv41 (×2), 43, 45 (×2).
- "Word" ×4 — vv1 (×3), 14; "grace" ×4 — vv14, 16 (×2), 17; "Christ" ×4 — vv17, 20, 25, 41.
- "follow / followed / following" ×4 — vv37, 38, 40, 43.
- "Behold" ×3 — vv29, 36, 47; "Lamb of God" ×2 — vv29, 36.
- "The next day" ×3 — vv29, 35, 43.
- "believe" ×3 — vv7, 12, 50; "Spirit" ×3 — vv32, 33 (×2).
- "Son of God" ×2 — vv34, 49; "Son of Man" ×1 — v51; "He existed before me" ×2 — vv15, 30.

Contrasts: Light ⟷ darkness (v5). The world made through Him ⟷ the world did not know Him (v10). Did not receive Him ⟷ as many as received Him (vv11–12). Born of blood, flesh, the will of man ⟷ born of God (v13). Law through Moses ⟷ grace and truth through Jesus Christ (v17). No one has seen God ⟷ the only begotten God has explained Him (v18). "I am not" (vv20–21) ⟷ "This is the Son of God" (v34). Water baptism ⟷ baptism in the Holy Spirit (v33). "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" ⟷ "You will see greater things than these" (vv46, 50).

Shape of the chapter: an overture in eternity (1–18), then four dated days on earth (19–51). The prologue says who He is; the days show men finding it out — by testimony, by following, by being found.

Chapter theme (my words): The eternal Word, who is God and made all things, became flesh to show us the Father and to take away the sin of the world as God's Lamb. Some refuse Him, but everyone who receives Him becomes God's child — and every man who comes to see Him goes and brings someone else.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 1:29

"The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, △the Lamb of God who ☆takes away the sin of the world!"

FIGURE · WHO IS HE? TEN NAMES IN ONE CHAPTER

TEN NAMES IN ONE CHAPTER · JOHN 1

- **THE WORD** — vv1, 14 · John the writer
- **THE LIGHT** — vv4–9 · John the writer
- **THE ONLY BEGOTTEN GOD** — v18 · John the writer
- **JESUS CHRIST** — v17 · grace and truth
- **HIM OF WHOM MOSES WROTE** — v45 · Philip
- **THE LAMB OF GOD** — vv29, 36 · the Baptist
- **THE SON OF GOD** — v34 the Baptist · v49 Nathanael
- **RABBI — TEACHER** — v38 two disciples · v49 Nathanael
- **THE MESSIAH** — v41 · Andrew to Simon
- **THE KING OF ISRAEL** — v49 · Nathanael

AND THE NAME HE GIVES HIMSELF: "THE SON OF MAN" (v51)
the ladder between heaven and earth (Genesis 28:12; Daniel 7:13)

Read the names in order and notice who speaks them — the writer, the Baptist, the new disciples — and that Jesus' own name for Himself comes last.

Who is "the Word"? John uses a word both Jews and Greeks already had. Guzik: for Jews, God's self-expression; for Greeks, the reason behind the universe — and John fills it with a Person. Sproul: "In Hebrew thought, the Logos is personal." Henry pictures a man's thought becoming speech: Christ is the mind of God made known.

"The Word was God" — or "a god"? In Greek the word order is *theos ēn ho logos*; *theos* without the article tells us what the Word is (God in nature) without saying He is the Father. Guzik calls the Jehovah's Witness rendering "a wrong and misleading translation." Verse 1 gives the whole doctrine of the Trinity in seed: the Word is distinct from God ("with God") and is God. Sproul: "That sentence alone was enough to keep the theologians busy for three hundred years."

"Comprehend" or "overcome" (v5)? *Katelaben* can mean either. The darkness did not understand the Light, and it could not put it out. Guzik: "The light cannot lose against the darkness; the darkness will never overcome it." Spurgeon: "How should darkness understand light?"

Which comes first — receiving or new birth (vv12–13)? Verse 12 says those who receive and believe get the right to become God's children; verse 13 says they were born "not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." Spurgeon reads the new birth as first: "no man lets Christ into his heart until first God has made him to be born again." Guzik stresses the same source — "born of God, but not of human effort or achievement" — while describing faith simply as receiving. Christians differ on the order; all four teachers agree the birth is God's work, and the invitation to receive Him is real.

"Dwelt" — the tabernacle (v14). *Eskēnōsen*: He pitched His tent. The glory that filled the tabernacle (Exod 40:34) now lives in flesh. Spurgeon: the tabernacle "was full of law rather than full of grace"; Christ "is not the shadow, but the substance." Henry: "He dwelt here as in a tent, not as at home."

"Only begotten God" or "only begotten Son" (v18)? The oldest manuscripts (and the NASB, SBLGNT) read *monogenēs theos*; the KJV follows later manuscripts. Either way the Son who is God has *explained* the Father — Jesus is God's exegesis. Guzik: "Jesus, the Word, is the perfect declaration of the unseen God."

Was John Elijah (v21)? John says "I am not." Jesus later says John came in Elijah's spirit and power (Luke 1:17; Matt 11:14). Sproul holds both: not Elijah in person, but the Elijah-like forerunner. I hold, with my futurist reading, that Malachi 4:5 still has a fuller fulfillment before the day of the LORD.

The Lamb of God (v29). Sproul answers critics who call the title John's invention: Isaiah 53, the ram God provided in Abraham's son's place (Gen 22), and the Passover. Guzik lists the lamb from Eden to Isaiah. Henry: Christ takes away both the guilt and the power of sin. "The sin of the world" does not mean every person is automatically forgiven; it means the Lamb's sacrifice is big enough for every sinner who comes (Guzik: it "has all the capacity to forgive every sin and cleanse every sinner").

Jacob, Nathanael and the ladder (vv47–51). "No deceit" contrasts Nathanael with Jacob the deceiver; Jesus then gives him Jacob's vision (Gen 28:12) with Himself as the ladder. Guzik suggests Nathanael may have been meditating on that very passage under the fig tree. "Son of Man" is from Daniel 7:13 — Sproul: a title of heavenly glory and authority, "by far Jesus' favorite self-designation."

Word study (Greek):

- **Word — *logos* (G3056):** God's speech and reason, now a Person (vv1, 14).
- **comprehend — *katalambanō* (G2638):** grasp, seize; "comprehend" or "overcome" (v5; 12:35).
- **testify — *martyreō* (G3140):** bear witness of what one has seen; seven times in the chapter.
- **right — *exousia* (G1849):** granted authority, legal standing (v12).
- **received — *lambanō* (G2983):** take hold of, welcome (v12).
- **children — *teknon* (G5043):** born ones; ties to verse 13's birth.
- **dwelt — *skēnoō* (G4637):** pitched a tent, tabernacled (v14; Rev 21:3).
- **only begotten — *monogenēs* (G3439):** unique, one of a kind (vv14, 18; 3:16).
- **grace — *charis* (G5485):** "grace upon grace" (v16); four times in vv14–17.
- **explained — *exēgeomai* (G1834):** led out, made known; our "exegesis."
- **voice — *phōnē* (G5456):** the carrier, not the message (v23).
- **make straight — *euthynō* (G2116):** level the road (v23).
- **lamb — *amnos* (G286):** sacrificial lamb; John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 1:19.
- **takes away — *airō* (G142):** lifts and carries off; present tense.

- **remained — *menō* (G3306):** stayed, abode (vv32, 33, 38, 39).
- **Messiah — *Messias* (G3323):** Anointed One; only John 1:41; 4:25.
- **deceit — *dolos* (G1388):** cunning, guile (v47).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **John starts before Genesis** — the Word already *was* when the beginning began.
2. **"The Word was God," not "a god"** — distinct from the Father, equal in nature.
3. **The darkness neither grasped nor quenched the Light** (v5).
4. **Rejection is not the end of the story** — "but as many as received Him" (v12).
5. **The glory moved into a tent of flesh** (v14; Exod 40:34).
6. **Jesus is God's exegesis** — no one has seen God, but the Son has explained Him (v18).
7. **The greatest man born of women called himself a voice** (vv20–23).
8. **God provides His own lamb** (v29; Gen 22:8).
9. **Every disciple in this chapter came through someone** — John, Andrew, Philip.
10. **Jesus saw him first** — under the fig tree (v48).

Cross-references: Gen 1:1–3; 22:8; 27:35; 28:12; Exod 12:13; 33:20; 40:34; Deut 18:15; Ps 33:6; Isa 9:2; 40:3; 53:7; Dan 7:13; Mal 4:5; Matt 11:14; Luke 1:17; John 3:16–19; 12:35; 20:31; Acts 8:32; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2–3; 11:17; 1 Pet 1:19; 1 John 1:1; 4:9; Rev 21:3.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 1:12

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,"

Truth to believe — the Word was God and became flesh. Jesus isn't a good teacher I add to my life; He is the One through whom my life came into being (v3). And He didn't stay far off. He pitched His tent in the middle of us (v14). For the men I walk with who think God is up there and they are down here — in a cell, in a relapse, in a mess — this verse says He came down here.

Promise to trust — "as many as received Him." I know men whose own families did not receive them. Verse 11 says Jesus knows that pain: His own did not receive Him. Verse 12 is the promise: everyone who receives Him gets the right to become a child of God — not by bloodline, not by willpower, not by somebody else's decision, but of God (v13).

Sin to confess — making myself the center. John the Baptist could have had a following of his own. He kept saying "I am not." I confess the ways I want to be the light in my family, my group, my ministry, my recovery story. I am at best a voice. My job is to point and say, "Behold, the Lamb of God."

Command to obey — "Come, and you will see" / "Follow Me." Jesus didn't hand those two men a doctrine sheet; He invited them to spend the day with Him (v39). This week I will give Him unhurried time — not to get through a reading plan, but to stay where He is staying.

Example to follow — Andrew. The first thing Andrew did was find his own brother (v41). Spurgeon: "Let thy religion begin at home." Andrew had two talents and found Peter. I will name one man — a brother, a son, a cellmate, a coworker — and say "Come and see."

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. If Jesus is the eternal Word through whom all things came into being, what part of my life am I still treating as outside His authority? (1:1–4; Col 1:16) *Outside of Him there is no life (Sproul); He made all things, and He is not a lesser god.*
2. Verse 12 says the right to become children of God is given to those who receive Him. What does receiving Him look like for a man who has been rejected by his own family? (1:11–13) *Born not of blood or the will of man, but of God — a new family and a new name.*
3. "The Word became flesh" — He came all the way down. Where do I need to believe that God has come close to me, not just to good people? (1:14–17) *He dwelt as in a tent among us; grace upon grace, not law upon law.*
4. John the Baptist kept saying "I am not." Where am I tempted to make myself the center of a ministry, a family or a recovery story? (1:19–27) *A voice, not the Word; John hides himself behind his Master.*
5. What changes when I stop trying to take away my own sin and look at "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"? (1:29; Gen 22:8; Isa 53:7) *God provides His own lamb; the Lamb is taking it away — present tense.*

6. Who is the one person I could say “Come and see” to this week, the way Andrew went for his brother? (1:39–46)
   Found Christ, finds others — and religion begins at home.

Worship. Before there was a sunrise, there was the Word. He made the light, then walked into the dark as a Man. He is the Lamb God provided, the Son of God, the King of Israel, the ladder between heaven and earth — and He saw Nathanael under a fig tree before anybody called him. He sees me too.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, eternal Word, You were with God and You are God, and You became flesh for me. Thank You for coming close. I receive You — make me Your child, not by my effort but by Your birth. Behold, the Lamb of God: take away my sin, the sin I’ve carried and the sin I keep picking back up. Let me be a voice that points to You, not a light that competes with You. Give me Andrew’s heart for my own brother, and let me say to the men around me, “Come and see.” Amen.

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