

JOHN 1:29-34

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.' I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

THE LAMB OF GOD

I have always been fascinated by the unstated undertones of the stories about Jesus, the things that are left unsaid, yet may be implied.

One of those undertones is the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus. They are 3rd cousins, by our definition of blood separation. Their mothers are cousins.

But we know nothing of their ongoing connections, other than that the two mothers shared a time together, before the birth of their sons.

Simon and Andrew were fishermen from Bethsaida on the northern-western shore of the Sea of Galilee and Jesus, lived in Nazareth,

which is on the south-western side of the Sea of Galilee. What is left unsaid is the knowledge that the fishermen had of Jesus, prior to his baptism by John the Baptist.

In the first instance, John stated that he didn't know that Jesus was the Messiah, until this was revealed at the time of Jesus' baptism. The implication we have often worked with is that Jesus and John didn't know each other. Yet, when you read the Gospel of John, it is hard to ignore the possibility that John knew Jesus well; he just didn't know that he was the Messiah, until his baptism.

Likewise, it is incredible that there is a small group of men who travelled to Bethany and already seemed to be disciples of John, part of his community. The timing in John's Gospel suggests that after Jesus had called Andrew, and then Simon, whom he renamed Peter, to follow him, they immediately returned to Galilee for a wedding feast. The disciples were included in the invitation. Does that include all of his disciples, or just the four (don't forget Philip and Nathanael) who were with Jesus at Bethany (across the Jordan)? They all certainly seemed to be with him when he traveled to Jerusalem, not long after.

In the other Gospels, the public ministry of Jesus began with the calling of the twelve, from among a large number of followers. And the numbers seemed to have been flexible, with other commitments affecting how often they might have followed Jesus on his work, or on his journeys to the festivals in Jerusalem.

It is quite possible that Jesus knew many, or at least some, of his apostles long before he began his public ministry. But it was his call to them, to follow, which had the most impact on their lives. He chose! He called! And they followed Jesus, into a life of caring, preaching and often martyrdom. But their lives were blessed by the grace of Christ.

Your shepherd-servant and brother in Christ.

Pastor Geoff