

“Behold, the Lamb of God”

Wednesday in the Octave of Epiphany 1 ✕

Text: John 1:29-34

January 16th, A.D. 2019

Zion Evangelical Lutheran of Detroit, MI

I.N.I.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

- 1. The late President George H. Bush used the phrase *"a thousand points of light"* in his speech accepting the presidential nomination at the 1988 Republican National Convention. In that address, he likened America's clubs and volunteer organizations to "a brilliant diversity spread like stars, like a thousand points of light in a broad and peaceful sky." Epiphany is the great season of light in the Church Year. Epiphany marks God's revealing Himself to Gentiles, non-Jewish people, represented by Gentile Wise Men or Magi. Epiphany begins with celebration of visit of Magi to Bethlehem to worship *"the One born King of the Jews."* Epiphany is the great season of light, fresh starts, and Christian witness and evangelization. In short, it is the season of pointing to the radiant Light of God in Christ, more powerful than a thousand points of light in the night sky.**
- 2. The words of John the Baptist.: *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:29), begin with the imperative "behold," "look," "see." That word grips us; it gripped John's hearers. At Bethany across the Jordan River, John had already given testimony to the people that he was not the Christ, the promised Messiah. Now, in this moment of Jesus coming to him, to John the Baptist, he gives witness to Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Agnus Dei, the sinless Lamb of God. People had already thought John was great, this recognized prophet there in the Judean wilderness by the Jordan. John, who had baptized Jesus and on Whom he saw the Holy Spirit descend as a dove, had heard the majestic voice of God the Father, acknowledging His beloved Son in Whom He was well-pleased. Now John is telling his fellow Jews, "I'm of lesser important as the forerunner. He is the important One." John acknowledges Jesus as the very Son of God and the Epiphany Light of the world and Light of life.**
- 3. God Himself gave John the unmistakable proof which led to the unmistakable testimony that Jesus is, in very truth, the eternal Son of God. John did know Jesus; he was Jesus' cousin. But now, at the Baptism of Jesus, John knew Him as the Messiah, the Lamb of God. And now John confesses Jesus as the One who takes away the sins of the world – yours, mine, all humanity's. Shame on us when we fail to give testimony like John, when we squander God-given opportunities to point others to the Savior. Humbly we confess that sin. Thanks be to God that in the Confession and Absolution, in the proclaimed Word of God, and in the Holy Supper of our Lord's Body and Blood, we receive forgiveness of sin and Divine peace. Boldly, like John, we seize every opportunity to manifest Christ to the nations. Our faith in the Messiah is to be shared, not kept as a private relationship between God and each of us.**

4. **The verses that follow today's text beautifully tell of Jesus' calling of His first disciples, Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael. Again, that word, "behold" jumps out in the text as John the Baptist tells his disciples, "Look, behold, there is the Lamb of God." A sermon for another time.**
5. **Meanwhile, there is another "behold." It is yours and my testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that by believing, others may have life in His name. Recently, I gave only a half a testimony of my Savior to a friend who was just diagnosed with an aggressive breast cancer. God-willing, I'll have that opportunity again. May God grant that we acknowledge the One who is the Light of the world to those who sit in darkness that they may come to know and believe Him who is also the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen