

Encounters with the Living God, Part 1: John 1 – Jesus’ first contact with the disciples

How do you become a follower of Jesus? Many misconceptions surround the picture we have of how Jesus called people to himself – and the way they responded. In John’s gospel we are allowed to follow the first disciples’ interactions with Jesus, not at the shores of the sea of Galilee, but before. And that story changes the whole picture!

Stefan Gustavsson is a member of the European Leadership Forum Steering Committee. He is Director of CredoAkademin, a Christian study centre in Stockholm, with a strong focus on apologetics. He also serves as General Secretary of the Swedish Evangelical Alliance and holds a position as Assistant Professor in Apologetics at University College NLA Gimlekollen, Norway. He is the author of several books, he travels widely to lecture and he writes regularly for different Swedish magazines. Stefan is married to Ingrid, with three grown up children.

Intro: The Heart of the Christian Faith

“Christianity began as a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. When it went to Athens, it became a philosophy. When it went to Rome, it became an organization. When it went to Europe, it became a culture. When it came to America, it became a business.”

What does it mean to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

John 1:35-51 gives a fascinating picture!

I. You are Invited

A. Five individuals’ first contact with Jesus

1. Andrew
2. Anonymous disciple (John?)
3. Simon Peter
4. Philip
5. Nathanael

The invitation: Come and See!

B. What about the calling at the lake?

1. Matt 4:18-22, Mark 1:14-20

2. Why leave everything because of a person you do not know?

3. The conversion of Paul misunderstood?

4. The disciples were

A. prepared by John the Baptist

B. called by Jesus to come and see

C. staying with Jesus to hear his teaching and get to know him as a person before the challenge to become fishers of men.

II. You are Challenged

To Philip: “Follow me.”

Jesus is not looking for a fan club, people who admire him and quotes him. Jesus is looking for followers.

Jesus is Lord!

III. **An Adventure Awaits You**

- A. Nathanael, a sceptic:
 - “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”
 - “How do you know me?”

- B. Jesus answers with supernatural knowledge: “I saw You ...”

- C. Jesus answers with a reference to Genesis 28:17: ““Surely the LORD is in this place ... This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.”
“Nathanael is invited to see greater things, because the dream of Jacob has become reality in the Son of Man: Heaven is open.

IV. The Secret

A. The identity of Jesus

1. The Lamb of God, v. 36

2. Messiah, v. 41

3. Son of God, v. 49

4. King of Israel, v. 49

5. Son of Man, v. 51

B. From Person to Person

1. John the Baptist points Andrew to Jesus: "Look, the Lamb of God!"

2. Andrew points his brother Simon to Jesus: "We have found the Messiah"

3. Philip points his friend Nathanael to Jesus: "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote."

Conclusion

C S Lewis:

‘What are we to make of Jesus Christ?’ This is a question, which has, in a sense, a frantically comic side. For the real question is not what are we to make of Christ, but what is He to make of us? The picture of a fly sitting deciding what it is going to make of an elephant has comic elements about it.

“Come and see” – the starting point of a never ending adventure.