

Wednesday Reflection

Title: Lion or Lamb?

Date: January 18, 2026

ID: 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Scripture: John 1:29-34

In this passage, John the Evangelist writes about John the Baptist. I will refer to John the Evangelist as the Evangelist and John the Baptist as the Baptist.

The reader may wish to read all of chapter 1. Verse 1 through 18 make up the Prelude to the Gospel. It is a remarkable theological statement. Verse 19 to the chapter's end is the preparation for the Lord's ministry in the world.

Text: With verse 19 of Chapter 1, The Evangelist draws disciples (us) into the Lord's ministry. He has already called us "children of God" (1:12). Now, he wants to activate disciples. In this Sunday's passage, what the readers of this Gospel learned from the Prelude (1:1-18) becomes public and visible in the world. The Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God and the Son of God. Let's see how this proclamation involves disciples.

The Prelude also warns the reader of opposition (1:5; 1:11). The second sentence of verse 19 introduces that opposition from Israel's religious and political elite. The Evangelist names priests, Levites (1:19b), and later, Pharisees (1:24). The same groups are present at Jesus's arrest (18:3). Disciples need to know that God's Kingdom faced opposition from its first moments.

When the Baptist calls Jesus the Lamb of God, he suggests the Christian response to hostility (1:29). Calling a man *a lamb* is strange. In Revelation, the Evangelist corrects the image; he calls the Lord the "Lion of Judah" (Revelation 5:5). Would not most of us prefer the predatory strength of lion to the weakness of a lamb when attacked? But the Evangelist puts forward the Lamb as the Christian response.

The lamb image takes us forward to the crucifixion. According to the Evangelist, Jesus's crucifixion coincides with the sacrifice of the Passover Lambs in the temple, from noon to 3pm on the Preparation Day (19:14). Passover is the feast of liberation. At his trial before Pilate, Jesus testifies that He will not engage in direct, violent confrontation (18:36). Liberation from the forces of darkness occurs when disciples rise above anger and violence, instead giving of self out of love as He gives Himself out of love. The Passover Lamb is the right symbol of the Lord's mission. In Revelation, it is not the Lion but the Lamb who overcomes (5:6-14; 7:1-17; 12:11; 17:14).

Is it possible for disciples to rise above anger and violence? The Baptist announces that the Spirit came down on Jesus when He was baptized (1:32). Right after the descent of the Spirit, the Baptist says Jesus will baptize disciples with the same Holy Spirit (1:33). Before Jesus preaches a word or performs His first miracle, He offers disciples the means to participate in His mission in this world.

This week's meditation might focus on the beginning of the Lord's ministry for the sake of the renewal of discipleship. We are disciples who share God's Spirit with Jesus Christ. In the same Spirit, we are the current incarnation of God's Word and God's presence. We are to "walk in the light as he is the light" (1 John 1:7). To be light, however, we must face the darkness with the sacrificial love of the Lamb of God.