

✠ John 1:29-42a ✠

IN NOMINE IESU

The first and chief article of the Christian faith is this: Jesus of Nazareth, the Anointed One of God, who is our God and Lord, died for our sins and was raised again for our justification. He alone is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and God has laid upon Him the iniquities of all mankind. All have sinned and are freely justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood. Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

God has provided the ram caught in the thicket to spare you, O Isaac. And God Himself is the ram. The hand of God will not move against you. It has moved against Jesus, the Son of God. You were ransomed from the sinful ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake, who through Him are believers in God. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world; your sin.

You yourselves did not know Him. But for this reason John came baptizing with water, that He might be revealed to you, O Israel of God. You yourselves did not know Him, but the One who sends the prophets and preachers has borne witness concerning Him saying, “The One upon whom the Spirit of God descends and remains, He is my Son, the Christ.” Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world; your sin.

Hear the voice of the Lord. “Listen to me, O people of Hoisington, and give attention, you peoples from far off. The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother He named me almighty God, Redeemer of mankind. I am the Lamb of God who takes away your sin and the sin of the whole world.

“What are you seeking? Pleasure? Riches? Fame? Power? Influence? Are you seeking to set yourself up as the one to be followed, as the one who will tell others what to do and where to go? Who are you, o man, that I should be mindful of you? Who are you that I should listen to your prideful hearts and stubborn ways? I do not live in the darkness for I am the light of the world.

“You cannot contain me. You cannot build buildings enough to contain me. You cannot build up your knowledge enough to contain me. I do not reside in savings accounts. I do not reside in perfectly manicured lawns. I do not reside in politics or in special interest groups. I do not reside in anything that you have created, o man.

“You cannot silence me when I speak and you cannot not force me to speak when I am silent. I am greater than Moses and Solomon. I am greater than my prophets who are my messengers. Deny their words and their warnings and I will still be heard, for if they are silent even the rocks will cry out on my behalf.

“My hand encompasses the whole universe. Who among you thinks that I must reside in houses you have built for me; houses of wood and straw; houses that are built to show me off, as if you dictate to me and to the world what I say and who I am?

“I am ‘Rabbi’. I am Teacher. I am Master. I am not to be schooled by you who would presumptuously tell me how to be your Redeemer, or how to be your Lord. I am that I am. It is you, o man, who will listen to me. It is you, o children of Adam, who will be broken by me. You will not break me. You will not conform me into your image, into your likeness, into your ideas of who I am supposed to be. It is I who will break you. I will conform you into my image, into my likeness. I will mold and shape you into my idea of who you are supposed to be.

“If you are seeking, you will find. If you are not seeking, but are content where you are shaped by your loves and sense of self-image and self-righteousness, then you will be lost. If you are asking, then I will answer you. But if you are dictating and demanding, then you will not hear me. You will be lost, for my sheep hear my voice and follow me. My sheep do not presume to dictate to me. If you are knocking, then the door of my kingdom will be opened to you and you will live and reside with me. But if you are not knocking, or are knocking only to remove me from where I have said I will be, then you will be cast out of my kingdom, and the door will be shut by my hand.

“I have redeemed you, my children. I have loosed the bonds of Satan and Death, and have bought you at a price. You are mine. Come and see where I am staying. It is not where you might think. It is not in fine buildings or carefully crafted theologies of mindless men. It is not even in peace among men. I do not live in social ethics or organizations. I do not reside in being neighborly or as one of the good ‘ol boys. All of those things, if they are good and descent, come from me; they do not contain me, they do not define me. I do not live in temples made by hands.

“I live in my Temple; the Temple I have crafted and created for myself. I have sanctified my Temple with my Spirit. I have placed my name upon my Temple. That is how you know that I reside there; I have set my name upon my Temple, my Church.

“Not the shrines of men dedicated to gods I do not know, but my Church; the place where I give my gifts to men; the place where I undo the damage and destruction done by sinful living and evil desires. My Church, where I wash babies with my holy water and cover the sins of the old with my baptismal flood, dressing them in garments of salvation and righteousness. My Church, where I speak to my sheep and comfort them with my promise of life, salvation, and peace from above. My Church, where I gather to myself a people for myself who listen to me and follow me.

“Come and see where I am staying. Come and find me in the words of my mouth – your sins are forgiven, you have been redeemed. Come and find me, not in constitutions and by-laws, committees and programs, but in my sacraments; those vehicles of my grace where I reside for you and where I call you to reside with me.”

The search is over. You have found the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Holy One of God. It is Jesus. You live here with Him and He with you.

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.

✠ AMEN ✠