

GOSPEL MESSAGE

January 18, 2026

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Then Knowing Begins

There is a whole lot written about *knowing* in this gospel's pithy account of Jesus' debut. There is, for that matter, a lot written about knowing throughout John's gospel; it's part of this book of the Bible's particularity. But take note: Before any claims of knowing are dashed into this memoir, John the Baptizer bothers to reveal that there was, for him, a time before knowing—a time when he did not know Jesus. This little and perhaps overlooked detail, "I myself did not know him" (John 1:31), is like sugar water in a hummingbird feeder: a sweet invitation or coaxing to come, taste and see what is good.

That admission from John lures readers and hearers to pay attention not simply to events: the arrival of Jesus on the scene, his walking toward John, the act of baptizing with water, or even the flamboyant descent of a dove. These are descriptive details, but they are not the essence of what soon will overtake John and others—an invitation to know Jesus.

The difference between knowing *about* Jesus and knowing Jesus is tucked in and all around this gospel text that leads initially to the Baptizer and then moves onto a pathway beyond him. Yes, Jesus is introduced as "Lamb of God." Yes, like a dove, the Spirit was seen descending. Vivid, symbolic details, for sure, about one coming to take away sin. But it is afterward, in Andrew and Simon's curiosity and willingness to follow, when Jesus asks "What are you looking for?" and urges them to "come and see," when they begin to stay together—they with Jesus and he with them—that knowing Jesus overtakes them and they fall into the grace of what he comes to take away and what he comes to give.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.