

## **A The testimony of John the Baptist:**

### **❖ Introducing the Messiah. John 1:19-23.**

- The Sanhedrin sent delegates to ask John if he considered himself the Messiah, the Christ (Jn. 1:19). But John was not the Messiah. He had a particular mission: to prepare the people to receive the true Messiah (Jn. 1:22-23).
- John testified that Christ was superior to him:
  - (1) John considered himself an unworthy servant of the One who existed before him (John 1:27)
  - (2) John baptized with water, Christ would do it with the Spirit (John 1:33)
  - (3) Christ is the Son of God, John merely pointed him out as such (John 1:34)

### **❖ Introducing the Lamb of God. John 1:29-37.**

- John the Baptist was of priestly lineage and had a clear understanding of the work of the Messiah. For him, Christ was not a national liberator, but the one of whom Isaiah spoke (Is. 53:7).
- How many times did John confess his sins by placing his hand on the lamb and then slaying it with his knife? Each time he did so, he thought of the One who would bear his sins and die for them.
- Warned by God, he recognized Jesus as the expected Lamb (Jn. 1:31-33). Of course, he did not remain silent. He proclaimed to everyone who the Christ was, and what his role was as the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29).
- This statement gives us light on the meaning of the sacrificial system that God commanded Israel. In the shed blood of the Lamb of God there is power to cleanse every confessed sin.

## **B The testimony of the first disciples:**

### **❖ Following the Messiah. John 1:35-39.**

- Who were the first two disciples to follow Jesus (Jn. 1:35-37)? John only identifies one, Andrew, omitting his own name (Jn. 1:40).
- In fact, they literally followed Jesus. That is, they walked behind Him for a while, until Jesus Himself turned and spoke to them (Jn. 1:38).
- Jesus' question – What are you looking for? – allowed them to express what they expected from Him. What would you have answered? Why do you follow Jesus?
- The two disciples had already accepted Jesus as the Messiah. Now they just wanted to be with Him. They sought His company; to hear His teachings; to drink from His wisdom.
- Overjoyed at having found the Messiah, Andrew introduced his brother Simon to Jesus. Jesus demonstrated that he knew Simon Peter's heart and temperament perfectly (Jn. 1:40-42).

### **❖ Bringing others to the Messiah. John 1:43-51.**

- The third disciple who followed Jesus was called directly by Him: Philip (Jn. 1:43-44).
- Like Andrew, Philip feels that he must lead others to Jesus. Unlike Andrew, Philip does not directly identify Jesus as the Messiah, but as the one who was foretold by Moses and the prophets, thus leaving Nathanael (Bartholomew) to draw his own conclusions (John 1:45). But Jesus did not fit the stereotype of the Messiah that Nathanael expected .
- Born in Nazareth, a place of such bad reputation? Philip did not enter into the discussion. It was not a theoretical problem. He would only be convinced by seeing Jesus (Jn. 1:46).
- Nathanael had prayed under the fig tree for an encounter with the Christ announced by John (DA 140). When Jesus said to him, "I saw you," all doubt was dispelled (Jn. 1:47-49).

## **C The testimony of Nicodemus:**

### **❖ Discovering the Messiah. John 3:1-21.**

- Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin, was amazed by Jesus' miracles. He became convinced that Jesus was a great prophet sent by God... but not the Messiah ( John 3:1-2).
- Jesus confronted him directly with his greatest need (which is also ours): a change of heart (Jn. 3:3-5).
- Although he tried to avoid the issue, Nicodemus received from Jesus the highest teachings about his mission as Messiah, and heard the most sublime words ever spoken (John 3:16).
- He also received a small reprimand, with which Jesus wanted to open his mind to the truth (Jn. 3:9-12).
- Little by little, Nicodemus discovered the Messiah, until he openly accepted him at the foot of the cross (Jn. 7:50-51; 19:39).