

Focus: Jesus, the ambush predator

1. Last week: Jesus is sent by the Father to be the Passover Lamb of God.

- a. This week: What was Jesus' perspective?

2. A look at Jesus.

- a. CONSIDER: How do you normally think or talk about him?
 - i. Patient, kind, gentle, compassionate, merciful, etc.
- b. Compare that to some Scripture passages:
 - i. Isaiah 49:24-26 - *...I will contend with those who contend with you...*
 - ii. 1 John 3:8 - *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*
 - iii. John 12:31 - *Now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.*
 - iv. Luke 1:68-79 - *He has come to save us from our enemies...*
 - v. Luke 11:21-22
 1. *"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; but when one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoil."*
 2. Christianity: The invasion of one kingdom by a stronger Kingdom.

3. Look at the Crucifixion

- a. Church Fathers: Jesus is going to war to rescue us.
 - i. What do you see?
 - ii. What do we know about Jesus?
 1. He is the Word, he is God. (John 1:1-3, 14)
 - a. *Enemy occupied territory - that's what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful King has landed, you might say landed in disguise.* (CS Lewis)
 - iii. Ambush predator:
 1. Sweats blood, arrested, chained, judged, stripped, mocked, spit on, crowned with thorns, nailed to a tree.
 2. Trying to draw the prey close, in order to pounce.
 3. He dies. Jesus, the eternal Word of God, the Light of the World, enters into Satan's kingdom of darkness.
 4. His divine light scatters the darkness. Jesus conquers the darkness from within.
 - iv. Other images: bait on a fishhook (Gregory of Nyssa); bait on a mousetrap (Augustine)

4. A First Look at the Resurrection

- a. *"Who is he who contends with me? Let him stand in opposition to me..."* (Melito of Sardis)
 - i. Above all, Jesus is unconquerable. He conquers the one who holds us captive.
 - ii. This is God's response to sin.
 - iii. More to come for next week.

Reflection questions and homework:

1. Does this have any meaning to you? Does it open your eyes in any way?
2. Do you understand this, that you matter this much to God?
3. **Read: Colossians 1:13-14; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelation 1:9-18**