

Series: John

Title: The Lamb of God

Text: John 1: 29-37

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The first message I ever preached in 2000 was from this text. The day after the priests and Levites came to question John as to who he was our text begins.

John 1: 29: The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. 30: This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31: And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32: And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33: And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34: And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. 35: Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; 36: And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! 37: And the two disciples heard him speak, [Andrew and Peter] and they followed Jesus.

This was after John baptized the Lord Jesus. He speaks of seeing the Spirit descend upon him which occurred after his baptism. This would be after the 40 days of temptation in the wilderness. The Lord Jesus came back to where John was. The day after being questioned by the men from Jerusalem, *“John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”*

From the beginning of our Lord’s ministry, John the Baptist declared who Christ was and why Christ came—*“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”* John’s message was Christ the Substitute—the sacrificial Lamb—the Lamb by whose death the sin of his people all over the world would be removed. So from the beginning of our Lord’s ministry this was the message concerning who he is and what he came to do.

This is the gospel in a sentence. John preached for a verdict—*“Behold”*—salvation is in a look; beholding by faith the Lord Jesus Christ.

John declared who Christ is—*“Behold the Lamb of God.”* God has so loved rebellious, ungrateful sinners, as to appoint us a Savior in the person of His only Son.

John declared what Christ accomplished—*“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin...”*—Christ took away sin by his one offering.

John declared for whom Christ accomplished it—*“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”*—each one for whom Christ died have had their sin purged by the blood of the Lamb in whatever age of the world they lived, wherever they lived throughout the world. They are a people whose sin Christ took away.

Proposition: Salvation is in beholding by faith, the Lord Jesus who is the Lamb of God who has taken away the sin of his people throughout the world.

THE GOSPEL IS A COMMAND—“BEHOLD”

The gospel is not an offer; the gospel is a command—“*Behold!*” An offer puts the final say in the sinner’s hands. That is to take the offense out of the cross. John preached for a verdict. Not a verdict to merely accept Christ. A verdict to bow down and confess yourself a sinner in need of another to do all the saving. As John saw the Lord Jesus coming toward him he told all his listeners to look upon Christ, “*Behold.*” Salvation is in a look, beholding by faith the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is by a look. Like the serpent in the wilderness, God said, “*look and live!*” Salvation is not in our doing. Salvation is not by our keeping the law or doing good works. It is the very opposite of doing. Salvation comes by believing—“with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”

THE GOSPEL IS THE LAMB OF GOD—“*Behold, the Lamb of God*”

John declared who Christ is—“*Behold the Lamb of God.*” John did not point at our Lord Jesus and say, “Behold our example.” There is no better example. But that is not the command. He did not say, “Behold, a greater teacher come to teach us.” There is no better teacher than the Lord Jesus Christ. But that is not the gospel.

He declared, “*Behold, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.*” The Lord Jesus is the Gospel! The Gospel is the Lamb of God. He is the Substitute. Christ is the Sacrifice. It is his Blood that put away the sin of his people—“without shedding of blood is no remission of sin.”

In eternity, God the Father set him forth as the Lamb of God—“the lamb slain before the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8). In eternity, Christ entered covenant with the Father to save his people by his own blood. Therefore, in eternity Christ was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The works were finished from the foundation of the world. Peter said, we are redeemed

1 Peter 1:19...with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,...

So from the beginning of history when time began, God began declaring that salvation is by the Lamb slain in place of God’s people. Christ is the Lamb that every slain lamb pointed to and foreshadowed. God was declaring that in order for the mercy of God to be dispensed to such offenders as his elect are, His justice, His law, and His honor must be upheld. The blood of animals could not take away sin, nor display the righteousness of God in pardoning it. This was the appointed, covenanted work of MESSIAH, and He alone could perform it. So all those slain lambs pointed to Christ the Lamb of God.

When Adam sinned in the garden—Genesis 3: 21: Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. God slew a lamb. God made a covering for their nakedness. God stripped them of their fig leaves. God clothed them with the skins. The Spirit of God strips us of our self-righteous refuge and clothes us in Christ’s righteousness through God-given faith in him.

The night God brought the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage he commanded they slay a Lamb—Christ is our Passover lamb. The head of the house put the blood on the doorpost picturing Christ our Head through the Spirit purging our conscience with his blood and washing us in his blood. God said, “when I see the blood, I will pass over you.” Every firstborn child died in Egypt that night. But those in Israel died in the lamb. Every sinner

must die under God's justice. But God spared the lives of his elect whom he slew in Christ the Lamb. That is our gospel.

Christ was typified in the lamb that God provided for the sin-offering in all the Levitical sacrifices. They were all insufficient to put away sin. But they all pointed to Christ the Lamb who did!

Notice our text, Christ is the Lamb *of God*. The Lord Jesus is the Lamb *provided by God*. God called Abraham to offer up his only son, Isaac. Abraham obeyed. As they headed up the mountain to make a burnt offering, Isaac noticed they did not have a lamb.

Genesis 22: 7: And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? 8: And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

John said, "Behold, God providing himself a Lamb." God provided his only begotten Son for vile sinners like us. In his Son, God provided himself—Christ is the Lamb who is God himself. We are "the church of God which he purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28)

CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED THE WORK—"*Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*"

Being eternal God and Man, Christ bore our sin and died, accomplishing eternal redemption by his blood. Christ took away sin by his one offering.

The gospel means good news. The gospel would not be good news if Christ did not accomplish what the Father sent him to do. It would not be good news if Christ only made it possible for our sins to be taken away. We know that when we know our ruin in sin.

Christ is the Lamb "*who taketh away the sin.*" It means to bear and to take away. The Lord Jesus bore the sin of his people upon Himself. And the Lord Jesus took away the sin. John does not say "the sins" but "the sin." The whole mass of sin was taken off his people and laid on Christ our Lamb. The Lord Jesus our Substitute bore the sin, the transgression of his people. The government was on his shoulder when on him the whole load of our transgression was borne in one heavy load.

Christ took the sin away into a land not inhabited so that God remembers our sin no more. The sin of God's elect does not exist on the record books of God. The justice of God is satisfied. His law is honored and magnified. God's government is upheld in honor. Holy God is a just God and a Savior in Christ the Lamb.

A SINLESS PEOPLE—"*Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*"

There are a people in this world who are sinless because Christ took away their sin. Who are they? We discern who the "world" is by what brings the most glory to Christ. The angel said, "His name shall be called Jesus for he shall save HIS PEOPLE from our sins." Christ finished the work. So the world is his people. They are those whose sin Christ took away forever. Justice has been poured out on the Lamb instead of on them. Therefore justice must not, it shall not, be poured out on them a second time. They must be called. "The world"

means not only God's elect among the Jews but also God's elect amongst the Gentiles. The Lord Jesus prayed to the Father,

John 17: 1: These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given...9: I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine...20: Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. 21: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Our Lord Jesus did not pray for everyone in the world. He prayed for those God gave him out of the world—those he called in his day as well as those he has called in every generation—Christ always gets what he asks for. He gave eternal life to the world of his elect. Therefore the world of his elect shall be brought by God's grace to believe on him. So it ran through the ages until Christ brought the gospel to me and you.

Oh, what good news! There is salvation for Gentiles and Jews, male and female, rich and poor, educated and uneducated. Each one for whom Christ died have had their sin purged by the blood of the Lamb in whatever age of the world they live in, wherever in the world they live. Christ took away the sin of his people throughout the world!

The Lamb of God accomplished salvation for some here today. God has brought you to '*Behold the Lamb of God* and he is all your hope. But there are more who have not yet been called effectually. Oh! that God would speak effectually into someone's heart today and command you in power, "*Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*" If he calls you irresistibly then God shall reveal to you that you are one whose sin has been taken away by the Lamb. Then you will do as Andrew and Peter—"*And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*"

Brethren, one day soon we are going to behold the Lamb and sing a new song:

Revelation 5:6: And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7: And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. 8: And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9: And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. 11: And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. 14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

One day we will be right there, believer, worshipping the Lamb! We do now, and we will then, give the Lamb of God the glory for saving us from our sins!

Amen!