

Russell Clarke, 23 May 2021

(Sermon Summary)

“Behold, the Lamb of God” (John 1:29)

John the Baptist came to prepare the way for the Messiah and to be a witness to Jesus Christ. As he saw Jesus walking by, John cried out “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

“Behold” means more than merely “Look”. This is a command to stop and pay full attention; a bit like when a teacher blows a whistle in the noisy playground. The word “behold” implies that we observe and perceive something, such as in the sentence “She looked into his eyes and beheld madness”. John is calling on us to recognise the One in whom repentance and salvation is found. There is no other name under Heaven by which we may be saved.

The meek and gentle lamb

Like a lamb, Jesus is gentle and meek (Matthew 11:29). Isaiah prophesied that He would be silent as a lamb before the shearers (Isaiah 53), and Jesus was silent before His accusers, except when he acknowledged that He was indeed the Christ. Jesus demonstrated harmlessness, innocence, gentleness and great humility, and we need to have the same mind (Phil. 2).

Though meek, He is not weak; all power and authority have been given to Him, and He will destroy His enemies. His word is a two edged sword (Rev. 1:16) which will search us and pierce our hearts.

The Passover lamb

Christ is our Passover lamb, sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5:7). The blood of the lamb on the doorposts of the Israelites saved them from destruction.

A lamb feeds us with its meat and clothes us with its wool. Likewise Jesus feeds us by His body and blood, given on the Cross, and with His Word. He clothes us with His own righteousness. We have much to give thanks for.

The lamb of God

When Isaac asked Abraham “Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”, Abraham replied “God will provide for Himself the lamb” (Gen. 22:8). This was a prophetic, messianic statement. Jesus is “a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19) who carries our sin away. Jesus is the only one who can save us from our sin and the righteous wrath of God.

Because of Christ's sacrifice, God sees the blood and cries out that we are "Not guilty" . He even says "Well done" to His servants, even though all that we add to our lives is our sin. All our righteousness comes from Christ, and we will cast our crowns before Him. We are sanctified by the offering of the blood of Christ once for all (Hebrews 10). If we trust in Christ, he has perfected us for ever. While in this life we will always be fighting sin, in one sense Christians are already sanctified and perfected.

Taking away the sin of the world

God's salvation is for the whole world, not just the Jews (Eph. 3:6, Rev. 5:9, 1 John 2:2). This does not mean that everyone in the world will be saved, but that the Gospel is for all nations.

The Pharisees could not see this and indeed failed to recognise their own need of salvation. They were blinded by their faith in tradition and the fact that they were children of Abraham - but salvation was never in Abraham.

What must we do?

1. Behold and perceive: it's not enough to read the Bible, you must come to a personal knowledge of Christ.
2. Repent (Acts 3:38).
3. Confess the Lord Jesus and believe that God raised Him from the dead.

Outwardly confessing Christ and 'praying a prayer' is not enough; a work in the heart needs to come first. Is there a reality to your confession? If you don't know Christ, repent and trust in His name for the remission of your sin. Truly behold 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'.