

The Lamb of God (John 1:35–51)
By Pastor Jeff Alexander (5/2/2021)

Introduction

Jesus inherited the role God assigned to Israel—to be His light to the nations to bring them back to God. Israel failed, not giving God His due, not heeding the covenant, or obeying the law. They were also allured to idol worship with all its pagan and immoral accoutrements. This failure brought the nation under judgment. The final act of rebellion as described by Daniel was “*finishing the transgression*” (Daniel 9:24). This *transgression* involved their putting the Son of God to death when He came to them as the Lamb of God.

Israel “*filled up the measure of their father’s guilt*” (Matthew 23:32), “*finished*” or completed Israel’s transgression, by killing the Son of God, “*sealing up the vision.*” Their judgment came to them: “*The people of the prince who is to come (the Roman legions of Caesar) shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (A. D. 70)*” (v. 26).

Messiah’s death would (1) “*put an end to sin*” (*sin offerings* —the sacrificial system: “*He shall put an end to sacrifice and offering*” [v. 27]), (2) “*atone for the iniquity of His people,*” and (3) “*bring in everlasting righteousness.*”

John explains Christ’s entry into the world as the Word made flesh (John 1:14), whom John the Baptist announced as “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*”

I The Sacrificial Lamb

1. Two terms for Christ describe Him in the figure of a lamb.

John used a term for *lamb* found only in early Greek, probably because of its appearance

The normal term for *lamb* (*arnion*, the diminutive of *aren*) is used of Christ 30 times in the Revelation. It is suggested that the figurative use of these terms deliberately contrast Christ’s submission unto death as a sacrificial Lamb (Isaiah 53:5) with that of the risen Lamb, victorious and triumphant (Revelation 5:5, 6).

An interesting passage in Jeremiah applies here (Jeremiah 11:19, 20). Who is speaking here? Is it the prophet or Christ?

2. The image of the lamb is linked also to the Passover of Exodus 12.

Delivering the people of Israel out of the slavery of Egypt was accomplished by a series of judgments leveled against the Egyptian gods. The final judgment was the death of the firstborn. For the people of Israel to escape this judgment, a lamb was to forfeit its life and the blood was to be applied to the door of the dwelling. When the judging angel saw the blood, he would pass over that house. Now, “*Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed*” (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8).

II. The Lamb and His followers

1. Here is an enigma: The Lord requires His people to follow a lamb—the Lamb.

When John the Baptist pointed out Jesus (John 1: 29, 30), two of his disciples were with him. On the previous day, John had announced: “*Behold, the Lamb [amnos] of God, who*

takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.'"

Now John repeated his announcement: "*Behold, the Lamb of God!*" The two disciples heard him and turned to follow Jesus. As they did so, "*Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, 'What are you seeking?'*" They left following John the Baptist and became followers of Jesus.

Although the death of saints in martyrdom has no saving merit, their deaths will provoke the final judgment of the world, just as Jesus' death brought on Israel's day of the Lord.

2. The call of defenseless lambs is to a dangerous life in the midst of wolves (Luke 10:2, 3; Matthew 10:16–18).

Lambs are considered harmless and vulnerable to the enemy. Like the Savior, His followers are also lambs (1 Corinthians 1:27–29; 2:3–5).

What many fail to understand is that these followers, like the Lamb, are under the sovereign care of the Spirit of God. Their life and work are demonstrations of the power of God. This is God's plan to bring in His kingdom and to overthrow the kingdom of this world.

III. Triumphant Lamb and the Day of the Lord

1. Through the Lamb, "*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever*" (Revelation 11:15; Daniel 7:13–14).
2. The Lamb takes over the government of the world by opening the book of destiny in the heavenly council (Revelation 5:6–10). Can you imagine the scene when the Lamb opens the sixth seal? (Revelation 6:12–17).
3. In the Revelation two things involve Christ's followers that God uses as the catalyst for the final wrath of the Lamb: the prayers of the saints and the divine revenge on the blood of the saints. Both are also closely related (Revelation 5:7, 8; 6:9, 10; 8:3–5).

Finally, note: "*So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence [in vengeance of God], and will be found no more. ... [Why? Because] in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on earth*" (Revelation 18:21, 24).

Rejoicing breaks out in heaven: "*Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality and has avenged on her the blood of his servants*" (Revelation 19:1, 2).