

The Lamb of God

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29

Good morning. My name is John and I'm glad to share God's Word with you. If you are visiting today, on behalf of the pastors and elders, I want to thank you for coming today. It would be our pleasure to meet you all after the church service today. Today at the end of the service today, we will be celebrating a special occasion with several people, believer's baptism. If you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, but have yet followed the Lord in believer's baptism, please see one of the pastors or elders after the service as we are preparing for the next baptism in a few weeks, Lord willing.

Last Sunday, Pastor Jeremy laid the framework for the sermon series that he will be giving for the book of Revelation. In part of his sermon, he focused on the principal character of the book, written by the Apostle John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. As part of our collective bible reading so far during the month of January, we have looked at the books of Genesis and Matthew which gives us a glimpse into who is this Lamb of God and what is His purpose.

The Apostle John writes in the Gospel of John the declaration of the Prophet John the Baptist these words in *John 1:29*:

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

The word "Behold", means to **pay close attention to**, or to **focus**, to remove all distractions. Behold, look at him, He is the Lamb of God! When John the Baptist declares "Behold" or pay attention here, the reason for which he is so passionate is because Israel had been anticipating and looking for this person for centuries. They had been waiting for the One who was promised to come who would address the

issue of sin. John the Baptist declares that the wait is over. He has arrived! ***Behold, the Lamb of God.***

To understand why Jesus is called the Lamb of God, we need to go back to the Old Testament. In Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to fix the problem themselves. They sewed some fig leaves together and wrapped them around themselves to try to cover themselves. The problem was that their attempt to cover their sins was unacceptable to God. It's not that they did try or attempt to come up with a new sewing fashion program. But it's that their attempt to cover their sin by sewing the leaves did not satisfy the demand of God. Therefore, God himself had to slay an animal and shed blood in order to provide a covering for Adam and Eve that He would accept. He would not accept the covering that they offered, but He would only accept the covering that He provided.

We see this concept again in the story of Abraham and Isaac. When Abraham and Isaac were going up to Mt. Moriah for Abraham to offer his son Isaac in obedience to God's command, Isaac asked his father about their sacrifice and worship to God.

Genesis 22:6-8

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together.

7 And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

8 Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

God had provided a cover for Adam and Eve. This would lead to a sacrificial system throughout the whole Old Testament by which the wrath of God against sin would be appeased. The main focus of this sacrificial system went back to an event in Exodus 12, called the

Passover. Right before Israel left Egypt, God said about the last plague that he was going to take the life of every firstborn in every Egyptian home. In order for Israel to bypass the judgement that God was about to do, they had to slay a lamb and shed its blood. Then they were to take the blood and paint it on the doorposts of their houses. And then when the death angel comes over to slay the firstborn of those rebellious Egyptians, here is what the scriptures say.

Exodus 12:13

The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

In other words, the blood will advert judgement based on God's justice. ***When I see the blood.*** Why the blood of the lamb? Why couldn't the lamb have a heart attack? Why did God require the blood of a lamb?

One of the principles of scripture is that the life of the flesh is in the blood.

Leviticus 17:11a

For the life of the flesh is in the blood...

God says that there must be the **shedding of blood** to advert my just wrath. In the Old Testament, God established a system of sacrifices by the slaying of the lamb. It was a **temporary solution** to advert God's judgement. You may read the following passages to see God's requirements for these sacrifices in ***Hebrews 10:1-14 & Hebrews 9:11-14***. In these passages, it states that all of those sacrifices would not fix the problem of sin. They would be to delay the judgement for sin. So, every year the High Priest would go into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement and offer the blood on the altar for the sins of the people. People would offer sacrifices so that the judgement of God would bypass them.

That was the Old Testament system. The Old Testament sacrificial system looked forward to the day when God would provide a **permanent solution** to sin by having an **acceptable sacrifice**. That sacrifice, or lamb, was for the purpose of the **substitutional atonement**. The issue is that God must judge sin. We have all sinned. We are all under judgement. God's standard is so high is that only perfection will meet it. The whole Old Testament system would anticipate through the lamb slaying, the time that God would provide the perfect lamb. We see in the book of *Isaiah 53*, the Prophet Isaiah describes this lamb that would come.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth

10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore, I will divide with him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Now, back to John the Baptist, he declares, "Behold!" Pay attention and focus on this man before you. He is that one, the Lamb of God. Listen now, He is not just a lamb, He is the Lamb of God. In other words, it's God's solution to the problem. It's not the lamb that you and I came up with. It is the lamb that God provided. God is the standard by which is acceptable to Him. Behold! The Lamb of God.

John sets the stage for people to realize that Jesus is the one that the prophets of the Old Testament have been telling about for centuries. We see in *1 Corinthians 5:7*, that the Apostle Paul tells us that Christ is our **Passover lamb**.

7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may have a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

Why is that important. Let's look again at *John 1:29*

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

The Lamb of God is God's provision for a substitutionary atonement. God must judge sin. But He does accept a substitute, one who will take the judgement on behalf of another. This verse says that the Lamb of God will take away the sin of the world, the whole wide world. We call this unlimited atonement, that is to say, that the death of Christ was so sufficient that it addressed every sin of every person who has ever lived for all time. Take a moment to let that sink in. The bible says that Jesus tasted death of all mankind. The bible says that He reconciled the whole world to Himself.

2 Corinthians 5:19

19 That is, in Christ God was reconciling the whole world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Christ was the Lamb of God who satisfied the demand of God because he met the standard of God. The Lamb of God had to be perfect. Jesus Christ was perfect. The Lamb of God had to be human. Jesus became a man. God the Son became a man.

Hebrews 2:17

17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and a faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Christ, the Lamb of God, had to be human, but he had to be a perfect human. Jesus Christ fulfilled the requirement to be the substitute. On the cross, Jesus Christ bore every sin, of every person, who has ever lived, for all time.

Why is that important? People die and go to hell, they miss heaven, not because their sins haven't been forgiven. Because Jesus paid it all! People die and go to hell because they reject the substitutional death of Jesus Christ on the cross for their sins. Jesus' last words on the cross were, "***It is finished!***" The Greek word *tetelestai*, which means "paid in full." When non-believers are judged at the final judgement in Revelation 20, their sins are never mentioned. Their sins had been paid for on the cross. However, the problem is that they do not possess eternal life because they did not believe on Jesus Christ who died in their place for their sins.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

What is missing in unbelievers is life. The verse that explains this is ***2 Corinthians 5:21***

21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

There was a credit transfer. God took the perfect credit of Jesus and transferred the perfect credit to the imperfect person who receives Christ as their Savior.

To understand all of this, there are three words in *Romans 3:24-25* that describe the results of Christ's substitutional atonement on the cross.

Romans 3:23-25

23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

24 And are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

25 Whom God put forth as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because of his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

The first word we see in verse 24 is the word **justification**. The bible says that when we are saved, or the word justified, we receive a gift. Gifts are not earned. If we earn it, then it is no longer a gift, but a wage. Gifts are free. The bible says that we receive ***his grace as a gift***.

The word justification is a legal word which means to be declared legally no guilty. To be declare innocent. It is like a judge saying that you are not guilty. It is a legal term. When an unbeliever believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior, he is declared by God not guilty because of the righteousness transfer that we just talked about. We are as guilty as sin, but God says, "not guilty," because He looks at Christ and exonerates you and me. Justification is a legal term that means we are not guilty before a Holy God.

The second word that is mentioned in this passage is the word **redemption**.

24 And are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

Redemption means to be released by the payment of a price. The analogy came from where slaves were put on a slave block, or a type of auction. They would be bought by someone and then set free. It would be redemption. To redeem means to buy something by paying a price in order to release it. God declared you righteous so that you would be released from the bondage of sin. It would have taken all of eternity for you and me to pay the price that God demands for our sin. However, since we could never ever pay that price, Jesus Christ took that bill and paid for it in full so that you could be set free. That's redemption.

The last word in this passage, which is hard to pronounce, is the word **propitiation**.

25 Whom God put forth as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because of his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

The word propitiation is a theological word which means satisfaction. To be propitiated means to be satisfied. When the bible says that Jesus was put forth as a propitiation, it means that he satisfied the just demands of a Holy God with his substitutional atonement. God said that he's satisfied. What Jesus has done on the cross has satisfied the holy demands on all of mankind who has ever lived. He reconciles the world to himself because he accepted the substitutional atonement. Now, Jesus Christ offers eternal life to all who responds to him. Justification, redemption, and propitiation.

It was Jesus' death on the cross, when we really understand what he did for us, should affect the rest of our lives. On the cross, not only did Jesus pay for our sins, but his resurrection broke the authority of Satan.

Revelation 1:17b-18

17b ...Fear not, for I am the first and the last.

18 And the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

Keys are a symbol of authority. Jesus is sovereign over death. He declared victory over death and the grave! Now, as a saved person who has been declared justified, who has been redeemed, and has been propitiated, we can have victory over the devil in our lives because we have been bought with the blood of the Lamb! When the devil tempts us, when he wants to discourage us because of our sin and failings, we can go to him with the word of God and resist him, and remind him that we have been saved by the blood of the Lamb. The blood has not nor will it ever lose its power!

The hymn writer Andrae Crouch wrote these words:

*The blood that Jesus shed for me
Way back on Calvary
The blood that gives me strength
From day to day
It will never lose its power
It reaches to the highest mountain
It flows to the lowest valley
The blood that gives me strength
From day to day
It will never lose its power.*

As Pastor Jeremy continues the series in the book of Revelation, we find that Jesus is called **The Lamb, 28 times.** The Apostle John tells us 28 times that Jesus is the Lamb. That's a big deal. Let's look at ***Revelation 5:6-14***

6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

7 And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.

8 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

9 And they sang a new song saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation

10 And you made them a kingdom and priest to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,

12 Saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

13 And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

14 And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshipped.

So, every morning when you wake up, you can shout, “Behold!, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” As a saved, blood bought redeemed child of God, you can have victory in your life because of the blood of the Lamb.

Tony Evans, a North American pastor, gives this illustration to describe what the Lamb of God did for us. There’s a story about a little boy who had captured two birds and put them in a cage. The boy, with his two captured birds in a cage, was walking down the street when a man saw him and asked him, “young man, where are you going with those captured birds in your hand?” The boy replied, “I’m going to play with the birds for a little bit, and then I’m going to feed them to my cat.” “What?” the man asked. “I’m going to play with the birds and then feed

them to my cat,” replied the boy. The man then asked the boy, “How much will you take for me to buy the cage and the two birds?” “I will pay you whatever price that you require.” The young boy thought about it and came up with a very high price for which the man pulled out his wallet, took out the money, and bought the cage with the two trapped birds. After he paid the price, the man walked to the side of the road with the trapped birds and the bird cage, he opened the cage door and let the birds go free.

Now, lets look back at what just happened. The boy had the birds in a cage. They were trapped and couldn't get out. Not only were the birds trapped with no way out, the plan was for their destruction. He was going to feed them to his cat. Not only were they trapped in life, but they had no hope for the future.

All the boy said that he was going to do with them was to play with them. Isn't that what the devil does with us. He traps us, and then he wants to play with us only to eat us up later on. But someone came along and asked, “how much will you take for those two birds?” Then he paid the price in order to get the cage and the birds. When he got the cage and the birds, he set the two birds free. Two birds, who were only going to be toys for a little boy, were now set free. Two birds, who were going to be lunch for the boys cat, were now set free. As good as that story is, what happened when the birds flew out of the cage, was that they flew around the man and started singing, as if to thank him for paying the price to deliver them from their bondage and destruction.

Let me tell you that Jesus saw that Satan had taken you and me captive and that he had plans to destroy us. But on the cross and by his shed blood, Jesus paid the price in full. He has opened the cage door, that when we trust Him as our Lord and Savior, the bible says in ***John 8:36***

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed!”

So, now as you live your life as a justified and redeemed child of God, you can sing praises to the one who has paid the price to set you free. You can sing: Worthy is the Lamb! He is worthy to be praised!

Let's pray.