

The Lamb of God- Rev. Roddy J Campbell

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[0 : 00] seeking the Lord's help and blessing, let us turn back to the portion of Scripture that we read together in the New Testament in the Gospel according to John, in chapter 1.

And this morning we shall look at words found in verse 29. The next day he saw Jesus coming towards them and said, Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Now these are words that may be very familiar to us, and I'm sure that many of us have heard sermons from these very words.

And that at times can leave us reluctant to repeat sermons upon them. But here is John, and he is proclaiming Jesus, as the Lamb of God.

And then the very next day, what was his text? We read in verse 35, Behold the Lamb of God. He was not afraid of repeating the same words, and I think that reason may be that he realized, as we all have to do, that the Lamb of God is central to everything.

[1 : 21] He is the foundation upon which we must build our faith. He is the heart of the Gospel that we preach.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth and says, For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Tim crucified.

For the Jews demand signs, and the Greeks seek wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews, and folly to Gentiles.

But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. He wrote to the church at Galatia, and he said, Be far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ was everything to Paul. The Lamb of God was everything to Paul, and it ought to be everything for every Christian.

[2 : 37] And we cannot think of the cross without thinking of the one who died on the cross, and therefore to think of him as the Lamb of God.

But first of all, who was this John? Who was this John that made this great proclamation regarding Jesus?

Well, he was not the writer of this Gospel, but he was John the Baptist. He was sent by God as a prophet. And as we have already intimated this morning, he was the last of the Old Testament prophets.

He was sent as the herald of Christ. He was sent to prepare the people of Israel for the coming of Jesus Christ, their Messiah.

And in announcing the coming of Christ, John the Baptist called the people to repentance and to faith. And he insisted that this was to be seen and made manifest in a reformation of life, that their lives were to be transformed.

[3 : 53] When Jesus finally appeared, John announced him in the words of our text, Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

We may consider it strange that Jesus is likened to and identified with an animal. But here and in other places throughout Scripture, he is likened to a lamb.

But he is also likened to a lion. He is said to be the lion of the tribe of Judah. And as we shall see that Jesus being identified as a lamb brings before us certain characteristics that belongs to his person, and especially his sacrificial work, the work of the cross.

And just as he has been identified as a lion of the tribe of Judah brings before us his sovereignty and his kingship and informs us that he came from the tribe of Judah.

Well, there are three great truths contained in our text. It tells us of the identity of Christ. Who is Christ? He is the Lamb of God.

[5 : 16] It tells us of the work of Christ. He is to take away the sin of the world. And it also tells us of our privilege and our responsibility that we are to behold him.

We'll look at the text this morning under these three headings. The identity of Christ. He is the Lamb of God. The work of Christ.

He is to take away the sin of the world. And our privilege and responsibility is to behold him. Now, I don't want to spend a lot of time going over what this phrase, Lamb of God, would mean to the Jewish mind and to Jewish society in which these words were first spoken.

Lambs played such an important role, not only in the economy, but also in the religious life to which the Old Testament bears witness, which is filled with reference to lambs.

The main annual feast, called the Passover, bore witness to the importance of the lamb, as it was through the shedding and sprinkling of the blood of the lamb that their fathers were set free from the last plague and from the bondage of Egypt, a feast that they were commanded constantly to keep.

[6 : 45] But long before the Passover feast was instituted by God, actually from the Garden of Eden and after Adam sinned, man was taught the importance of sacrifice, which was instituted by God himself.

when God clothed Adam and his wife with skins which we believe came from a sacrifice. And this before man was expelled from the garden.

It was a lesson that, which Adam passed on to his sons, to his family. In the very garden, our first parents were taught that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission or no forgiveness of sin.

Sacrificial worship was not something that Adam invented. It was not something that man invented. It was something that was instituted by God himself.

It was not of man's invention or of man's thinking. It was God that instituted sacrificial worship.

[7 : 54] And here we find that John is declaring that the person who was standing before the people was God's provision, appointed by him in the covenant of redemption to redeem a people.

And that he came into the world on purpose that he might save his people from their sins or from the consequences of their sin.

That he was a fulfillment of all the sacrifices of the Old Testament. What was before them in the person of Jesus was the very heart of the gospel message.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

God required a sacrifice. And God provides the sacrifice. Not from outside himself but from within.

[9 : 19] The son of God the second person of the Godhead becomes the lamb of God. The son becomes God manifest in the flesh.

Among the Jews the lamb was their main sacrifice. Twice a day they sacrificed a lamb as a burnt offering as a morning and evening sacrifice.

Lambs were constantly used as a sacrifice. A man would pick out from his flock a lamb that was without spot or blemish it had to be a perfect lamb and he would bring it to the priest in order for it to be offered upon the altar that was in the outer court to make atonement for him.

For the person to receive the benefits of the atonement that person would have placed his hands on the head of the lamb. And this action of the offerer gives us a view of faith.

For a lamb as a sacrifice to have any meaning for an Israelite he had to have faith. The offerer puts his hand on the head of the lamb in the Hebrew it means that he leaned his hand.

[10 : 53] It was not just a touch it was a leaning. In other words the leaning of the hand expressed the identity of the offerer and the offering.

In other words the offerer became identified with the offering. The offering stood in the place of the offerer.

The offering say a lamb became the substitute for the offerer. The writer to the Hebrew comments like this he says for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin.

Why then all the sacrifices of the Old Testament? Why all this killing of lambs? Why was all this blood shed in the Old Testament if it was impossible for it to take away sin or to deal with sin?

It was all pictured for us. They all prefigured what was to become true regarding the lamb of God.

[12 : 06] which is Jesus Christ. Maybe this is best illustrated to us in the case of one of Adam's sons called Abel.

As we said sacrificial worship was instituted by God. It was not of man's invention. Worship of God must always be in accordance to the word to the word of God.

We are not to take in to the worship of God our own inventions. We must worship God in the way that he has prescribed for us in his word.

And a sacrificial worship was not something that the Old Testament church thought of and said this is the way we're going to worship God. No. They worshiped God in the way that God taught them and that was sacrificial worship because it was a prefigurement of what was to become true in the fullness of time and in regards to the Lamb of God Jesus Christ.

And Adam would have taught his children of what God required. He would have taught them of the necessity of a blood sacrifice by which sinful man was to approach God.

[13:31] In Genesis chapter 4 we read in the course of time Cain that's the other son another son of Adam Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions and the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering but for Cain and his offering he had no regard so Cain was very angry and his face fell.

You see Cain brought the works of his own hands. He probably laboured extremely hard and there was probably much that commended that offering to himself.

But what was the problem with Cain's offering? There were two things. Two things. First, it did not involve the shedding of blood.

There was a great difference between the offering of Cain and his brother Abel. Abel brought a sacrifice that pointed forward to the deliverer, that pointed forward to the atoning death of the spotless substitute in the fullness of time in the person of Jesus Christ at Golgotha.

We'll say more about that in a moment. As I've already said, we cannot come to God in any way of our own devising.

[15:09] That is what Cain did. He decided for himself how he was going to approach God. Here is a picture for us of all those who come, pointed to their own works, pointed to their own merits, pointed to their own righteousness, those who reject and despise coming to God in the way which he has appointed through the sacrifice of his own beloved son, Jesus Christ.

So the first thing was it did not involve the shedding of blood. The second difference and the key point is that it was empty of faith.

The writer to the Hebrews in chapter 11 says, By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous.

God commending him by accepting his gifts, and through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

John Calvin says, the sacrifice of Abel was more acceptable than that of his brother, only because it was sanctified by faith.

Paul tells us that for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. You see, Abel came in faith, while Cain came in unbelief.

[16:39] All the sacrifices of the Old Testament, as we have already noted, prefigured what was true, or to become true, of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

Most of the sacrifices of the Old Testament had to be without blemish. They had to be perfect. A lamb had to be perfect. Prefiguring what was true of the Lamb of God.

He was sinless. Why, then, did he have to die? He died as a substitute of his people.

In 1 Peter, we read, who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree. The prophet Isaiah says, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The guilt and punishment of our sins were imputed or reckoned to Christ. He stood in our place and he bore in himself what our sins deserved.

[17:48] The just and sinless Lamb of God bore God's wrath and curse against, that was against our sins. He who knew no sin was made sin for us.

That is, he became the sin bearer. He became the offering for our sin. There was no other way whereby our sins could be taken away or dealt with.

There was no other way whereby our sins could be forgiven except by laying it on Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh.

Well, do you know him today as your substitute? Was he at Golgotha at the place of the cross in your place? Did he suffer for you what your sins deserved?

He takes away sin. How? Again, 1 Peter, we read, Who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree?

[19 : 00] The prophet Isaiah says, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all, the guilt, the punishment of our sins being reckoned to Christ.

Him standing in our place, bearing what our sins deserve, bearing the wages of sin. And the Bible makes it clear that the wages of sin is death.

And he suffered death in all its aspects. He suffered death physically, death spiritually, he suffered death eternally.

He suffered death. He suffered what our sins deserve. The just and sinless Lamb of God, bearing the consequences of our sins.

He who knew no sin became the sin offering for us. He became the sin bearer for us. There's no other way whereby our sins could be taken away, whereby we could receive forgiveness for our sin.

[20 : 15] Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He came to take away sin. He did not come to take away poverty or pain or sickness or sorrow, but he came to take away something like beneath all of these things, namely sin.

He came to take away the source of all these things, poverty, pain, sickness, sorrow, and so on. Sin is the central problem of mankind. Sin has caused all our misery.

It is the cause of our poverty. It is the cause of our pain. It is the cause of our sorrow. It is the cause of death. The catechism answers to the question, what is the misery of that estate when into man fell?

And the catechism answers, all mankind by their fall lost communion with God are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

Well, what is man to do? How can the consequences and punishment of our sins be taken away?

And here John directs us, and he says to us, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[21 : 45] In 1 John chapter 3 verse 5, we read, you know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. He could never have taken away the sins of others if he had sins of his own.

He was sinless, and only God could provide a sinless man who had the purity to be the adequate substitute for sinners like me and you.

And he did so by sending and delivering up his own son. Paul, writing to the church at Rome, says, he spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all.

The Lamb of God, his own son, is God's provision for sinners like me and you. If we are going to be saved from what our sins deserve, here's the only provision, God's son, the Lamb of God.

The Lamb of God had a mission to accomplish. He was to take away the sin of the world. The world here means both Jews and Gentiles. Salvation was for Jew and Gentile.

[23 : 12] He came to save out of every kindred, out of every tribe, out of every tongue, out of every nation. He came to save people of every kind, the harlot, the publican, the beggar, the religious, the world.

God. And if you are part of the world, and you are, you may have hope for the taking away of what your sins deserve. If you come by repentance and faith, and behold the Lamb of God.

Jesus is to be looked upon as our only hope of forgiveness, of our only hope of being reconciled to God, our only hope of having peace with God, our only hope of heaven, is through Jesus Christ and Him crucified, is through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God's only provision for salvation. There is salvation in no other except in Jesus Christ. Not only was our sins laid upon Him, but He took them away.

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Where did He take it? Well, Psalm 103 we sang earlier, as far as the east is from the west, so far He removed our transgressions from us.

[24 : 44] In Micah 7 we read, You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Jesus on Golgotha took the sin of all believers away so completely that, according to the prophet, they sank into the bottom of the sea.

God has cast all the sins of believers behind His back. They shall not be mentioned against them any more forever.

They shall never be brought up in order to condemn the believer. They have been cast into the depths of the sea.

Forgotten. In heaven, there is no more sea, so they cannot be brought up from the sea. He took away their guilt and punishment.

Theology calls this by the word justification. In Isaiah 53 we read, By His knowledge my righteous servant shall justify many for he shall bear their iniquities.

[25 : 54] No longer can God condemn His people as sinners because He has condemned their sin and what their sins deserve in His own Son. And God manifests in the flesh.

But He gives us what belonged to Him, His garment of righteousness. He gives us His righteousness while we give Him our sin.

That is what took place at Golgotha. On the cross of Golgotha, what did you give Jesus? You could only give Him your sin. But what did He give you if you believe in Him, if you trust in Him?

You gave Him your sin and He gave you His righteousness. He gave us His righteousness while we gave Him our sin.

God took our sins, laid it upon Him and He did not refuse to take them. He took them voluntary and He took them willingly, knowing full well what it meant for Him.

[27 : 05] And as a result, God declares us righteous in His sight as persons clothed with the righteousness of Christ. This is illustrated for us in the prophecy of Zechariah chapter 3, where we read regarding Joshua the high priest.

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and was standing before the angel. Then he answered and spoke to those who stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him.

And to him he said, I see I have removed your iniquity from you and I will clothe you with rich robes. I have removed your iniquity from you and I will clothe you with rich robes.

And there's no richer robe than the righteousness of Christ being reckoned to us, being imputed to us. There is no richer robe in this world than the righteousness of Christ than being robed with the righteousness of Christ.

The righteousness that was knit, the cloth, the garment that was knit by his own pierced hands. He has dealt completely with our sin.

[28 : 21] He cried out, It is finished. And when he ascended to the right hand of the father, he sat down, which is a symbol of completeness. The high priest in Israel was not allowed to sit down.

The prophets who lived a long time before the coming of Christ forethrew witness to Christ as the Lamb of God according to the life they had. Jesus said to the Jews of his own day, Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day.

He saw it and was glad. How did he see him? How did the prophets see him? How did the Old Testament see him? How did Abel see him?

In fact, how did John the Baptist see him? It is true to say that John the Baptist and others saw Jesus with their physical eyes, but there had to be something more for John to cry out, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

There had to be more than just physical sight. John and all the prophets and all God's people throughout the Old Testament, and this is also true of the New Testament believers, it's also true of me and you today, we must see Jesus by faith, by faith.

[29 : 45] As all the prophets and John saw Christ by faith, and as John now actually looked upon him and bore witness to him, so you and I must see him, not without physical eyes, the sight of him without eyes which is reserved until our resurrection, but we must see him with the eyes of our mind, our heart, in the exercise of faith.

It is the sight of Jesus by faith which shall bring us to salvation, to truly see Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

We must trust in him. What is faith? It is trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. Mary's mother, who gave him birth, who nursed him, who washed him, who fed him, had to receive the sight of her son for her salvation.

Her physical beholding of him would not secure her salvation. She had to have this other sight of him, of trusting in the son to whom she gave birth for her salvation.

That he was truly the deliverer. That he was truly the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Well, you know about him and you have heard of him, but have you truly seen him?

[31 : 19] Have you seen Jesus? Have you seen Jesus by faith? Have you seen Jesus by trusting in him?

Those who have truly seen him can say with the psalmist, you are fairer than the sons of men. Grace is poured upon your lips. John directs his ears to do something in reference to the Lamb of God, and he says that they are to behold him.

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The word behold means more than just to glance at him. It means to focus upon him.

To set our whole mind and heart and will upon him. To focus upon him with our entire mind, our entire thought, our entire heart, our entire will.

To look upon him in faith, in belief, in trust. To become dependent upon him as the Lamb of God who can take away your sin, who can reconcile you to God, who can bring you to that place where you have peace with God, to take you to that place where you have that hope of heaven, to take you to that place where with great anticipation and expectation of heaven, to become dependent upon him as the Lamb of God, as the one who can truly deal with your sin.

[33 : 00] I cannot but think that his identification as the Lamb has reference to the fact that he took the nature of the flock. Very often in the Bible, God's people are spoken of as a flock, a flock of sheep.

And I cannot but think that his identification as the Lamb has reference to that, that he took our nature, that he came to the people he came to save, that he took their nature, and that he did not discard it, but that he took it to the very throne room of God, and now appears in heaven for us in that very nature, that he took to himself.

But we leave that, God willing, for the evening. We look upon him at the beginning of our Christian life, as the Lamb of God.

And today we still look upon him as the Lamb of God. For this we are exhorted to do always, to look into Jesus, and we shall still be looking upon him in heaven under the same character.

We shall not have to change our thought of him, but we shall see him as the Lamb that has been slain. Here we see him by faith, in heaven we shall behold him by sight.

[34 : 27] Well, this morning I exhort you to look to him and see in Jesus the perfect provision by the grace of God to take away your sin, to reconcile you to God.

I exhort you to cast yourself entirely upon him, to believe in him, to trust in him, to rest upon him, and receive him today as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

I exhort you to follow him, to abide with him, and I exhort you to witness for him, to behold him today by faith as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, to trust in him as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

And if you trust in him today as the Lamb of God, then with anticipation and great expectation that the day shall dawn in your experience when you will also see him as the Lamb of God, as the Lamb of God, he will be forever for his people in that character of the Lamb of God.

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. With the Lord bless our thoughts, let us pray. Eternal and ever-blessed Lord, we give thanks today for the revelation that has been given to us of thee as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

[36 : 34] Grant to us, O Lord, that by faith that we may behold you and that we may know the benefit and the blessings that you have purchased for thy people as being the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

We ask, O Lord, that thou would go before us in all things that we endeavour to do in thy name and bless thy word to us and forgive us for our sins. In Christ's name, Amen.

We shall conclude at this time by singing to the Lord's praise from Psalm 118 and at verse 24. This is a day God made in it will joy triumphantly, save now I pray thee, Lord I pray, send now prosperity, blessed is thee in God's great name that cometh us to save we from the house which to the Lord pertains you blessed have.

That is Psalm 118 we shall sing from verse 24 to the end of the psalm to the Lord's praise. This is the day God made in it will joy triumphantly.

This is the day God made in it will joy triumphantly.

[38 : 04] Save thou I pray thee, Lord I pray, send thou prosperity, young ■■■■ give you thy name read it thou hast in thy name whom go with love today we from the house which to the Lord pertains you blessed thou good is the Lord who unto us and made light to arise

I do unto the altar's heart with court to sacrifice thou art my God I thee exalt my God I will thee praise give thanks to God for he is good his mercy lasts always the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

and the love of
God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more amen and because
we don't but we do