

“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (Jn. 1:29)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. After enduring the temptation to by-pass the cross (see session 4), Christ was now ready to become the *Lamb of God* – the sacrifice for the sins of the world.
- B. While the idea of a sacrifice may seem strange to our minds, to the people of that day it was a very real and meaningful image. Simply because something seems odd to our modern mind does not mean that is not important or should be ignored. Scripture tells that there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood. Something, or someone, has to pay the debt of sins committed against God.

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22; ESV)

II. THE ANNOUCEMENT

- A. After returning from the wilderness, John saw Jesus at a distance near the Jordan River. John appealed to a well-known symbol and tradition in the Jewish mind, that of a sacrificial lamb.
“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (Jn. 1:29)
- B. John boldly declared that what the world needed wasn’t just a miracle worker, prophet, teacher or king; they *needed* a sacrificial lamb. This stood in stark contrast to human wisdom. Human wisdom searches for human answers. The wisdom of God gives divine provision – only God could intervene in the human plight.
 - 1. The world searches for a miracle worker to relieve their temporal suffering; they seek a prophet to relieve their temporal dullness; they seek a teacher to relieve their temporal lack of understanding; they seek a king to relieve them of their temporal poverty.
 - 2. The issue with seeking these is that they all provide *temporal* solutions for an eternal problem. Humanity needed a Savior, not from temporal problems, but from an eternal condemnation.
 - 3. The *only* way out was for a substitution of their guilt onto an innocent party. This party had to endure the penalty for their sins.
- C. John was pointing to a Man, who when sacrificed, would take away all the sins of the world.
- D. Just as Isaac asked his father, Abraham, “Where is the lamb?” for the sacrifice, John here answers the question, “Where is the way out of our problem?” Abraham answered his son:
⁸ ... “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” So the two of them went together.
- E. God had provided the lamb for the offering – His own Son.

[He was] smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Is. 53:4-6)

III. THE NATURE OF THE LAMB

- A. Lambs were often used as a sacrificial animal, chosen because of their innocence and mildness. No icon more perfectly describes the character and demeanor of Christ. It was this title – the Lamb of God- that would be the announced name for the Messiah.
- B. When the Lamb fully suffered at the hands of wicked men, it wasn't because He wasn't strong enough to defend Himself, but He allowed Himself to suffer. He put on Lamb-like qualities to accomplish what no one else could. He humbled Himself, choosing rather to be like a Lamb led to slaughter rather than a lion to prey.
- C. It was His love for sinners that compelled Him. Voluntarily He clothed Himself in self-restraint and meekness, choosing betrayal, denial, suffering, and humiliation to conquer sin once for all and deliver the souls of humanity.
...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12:2)
- D. Peter would summarize the beauty of this reality.
¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. ²⁰ He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you ²¹ who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (1 Pt. 1:18-21)

IV. THE ETERNAL LAMB

... the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8b)

- A. The cross of Jesus was not an afterthought that followed the rebellion of humanity. The Son always possessed the qualities of character that embodied the innocent meekness of a lamb.
- B. At creation, before God even spoke, "Let there be light," the cross and His own self-sacrifice hung before Him. It was a *present reality* even when he placed Adam and Eve in the garden. He knew where it was going and He seized upon it. His self-sacrificing love, as the very definition of love, was eternally evident in the Son.
- C. Without the cross, humanity wouldn't have seen the glory of the meekness and self-denial of God. We would have continued, as the seas of people who look to the numerous false deities who promise wealth and power for their followers yet never lift a finger to assist them.

- D. Christ walked in our stead. Drank our drink. Ate our food. Breathed our dust. Suffered our death. No other god is like the Lamb.

V. THE FATHER WOULD ONLY GIVE THE EARTH TO A LAMB

- A. The Father holds the deed to the earth. As Creator and Author of all life it is He who would commit the authority of the nations to whomever He desired.

... And I saw in the right hand of Him [the Father] who sat on the throne a scroll [the title deed to the earth] written inside and on the back, sealed [closed] with seven seals. (Rev. 5:1)

- B. But the Father won't just causally give humanity to any person. The question is posed, "Who can actually open this title deed?" A search begins to find someone worthy.

² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy [capable; able] to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. ⁴ So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. (Rev. 5:2-4)

- C. It is revealed that it is the Lamb that the only One worthy enough to inherit the nations.

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (Rev. 5:6)

1. John sees Christ not as the conquering king as expected, but as a sacrificed, blood covered lamb.
2. The Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes. Throughout the bible the number seven speaks of *perfection*. The eye speaks of *wisdom* and the horn speaks of *authority*. So we see that is the Lamb, and only the Lamb, who is deemed wise enough and powerful enough to inherit the nations.

- D. The Lamb prevails where angles, demons and humans fail. He prevails not through mighty displays of power but through sacrifice. His sacrifice is what qualifies Him and empowers Him to rule the nations.

⁷ Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. (Rev. 5:7)

- E. Redeemed Heaven erupts in praise that the Lamb endured and is found qualified. How is He qualified? By blood and sacrifice. By demonstrating to the *so-called wise minds* the **truer** more ancient wisdom of God's nature – a meek Lamb.

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals;

For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, (Rev. 5:9)

F. The unredeemed **earth** erupts in rage at the revelation of the Lamb.

¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves [like Adam did] in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!” ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Rev. 6:15-17)

1. The kings have no grid for a *Lamb-leader*. They only know oppression and dominance. Rather than running to the Lamb to be washed in His blood and spared from His wrath they run from Him.
2. They do not receive His free gift of redemption, they rage against Him. Their inheritance is not salvation but wrath.
3. The Lamb-leader – Christ, humble and meek is the one who is judging the nations of the earth in the book of Revelation.