

Behold the Lamb of God

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John 1:29-39

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Introduction: Take your Bibles this morning and let's turn to John chapter one and begin reading together at verse 29. John begins his account of Christ's life on earth by revealing that Christ is the Eternal God and Creator of all things. This is not going to be like any of the other Gospel accounts. All of those start with Jesus' family tree or with the opening events of His earthly life. John starts in Eternity past and reveals who Jesus is at the beginning of his gospel.

John tells how The Eternal Son entered humanity by means of the most astounding miracle in the history of creation. The creator became one of His own creatures. But Why? Why would a perfect and good God stoop this low. It is like choosing to become an ant or ameba.

The entire Old Testament according to God was given to point to and reveal Jesus Christ. The Jewish Scripture's primary purpose was to reveal the Jewish Messiah and King.

Luke 24:25-27 ²⁵ And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

The Bible students of the day are very much like the ones of ours. They parsed and quibbled over the written words while managing to ignore the living word. Even today the church does not want to deal with Christ. They want to know about Him. They want to talk about who they imagine Him to be, but they do not want Him unleashed in their own lives. They don't want the God of Creation ruling them, directing their lives and instructing their minds and actions. A God in a box is so much easier to control. Not much has changed in 2000 years since Jesus said to the Pharisees,

John 5:39-40 ³⁹ "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ *but* you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

John the Baptist was sent by God to announce that the long promised and awaited Messiah was "coming into the world" but did not say who He was. In fact, much to our surprise, John is going to reveal that EVEN he did not know who HE was until The Father revealed it to him. So....let's read

John 1:29-39 ²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ "This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' ³¹ "I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water." ³² John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. ³³ "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to

baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God." ³⁵ Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

Our verses this morning are going to teach us four very important truths about The Lamb. God thinks you need to know these things about Jesus. Not just where he was born, or some of his most famous words, but who it is that says these things. Men need to know why the creator of the universe became one of His creatures. I am still personally in awe of that simple reality. I want you to be as well. So let's talk about:

- The Purpose of the Lamb
- The Nature of the Lamb
- The Revelation of the Lamb
- The Supremacy of the Lamb

The Purpose of the Lamb [29]

John 1:29 ²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

The next day: The events of John chapter one take place in rapid succession once the story comes down to earth with the introduction of John the Baptist. In verse 19 John is out in the wilderness east of Jerusalem preaching when the Bible experts and Theologians send a delegation out to interrogate him. Are you Elijah? "I am not" Are you the Prophet? "NO" "I am a voice...I am a preacher! Nothing more...nothing less. I have been sent to call you to turn your heart to the Messiah"

"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!: Everyone within the sound of John's voice knew about "The Lamb." John MacArthur notes here,

"This Title is used only in John's writings and is the first in a string of titles given to Jesus in the remaining verses of this chapter; the rest include Rabbi[38,39], Messiah [41], Son of God [34, 49], King of Israel [49], Son of Man [51], and Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote---Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph [45]"

The whole idea of a lamb evoked atonement for sin from the earliest dawn of God's dealings with his people. No one knows what animal God killed, but he did kill an innocent animal in the Garden in order to cover Adam and Eve who had now lost whatever blessed covering God had given them at creation.

Genesis 3:21-24 ²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. ²² Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever "--

- **God provided a lamb to take the place of Isaac.**

Genesis 22:7-8 ⁷ Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And 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 the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

Abraham so believed God when He told him that the Messiah would come through Isaac's line that he offered Isaac. God told us his thoughts centuries later in Hebrews.

Hebrews 11:17-19 ¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

- **In Egypt God commanded men to hide themselves under the blood of a lamb or die:**

Exodus 12:3-13 ³ Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴ ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old...and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. ⁷ "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it..... For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. 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.

- **God never accepted the blood of lambs as payment for sin. It was for another purpose.**

Isaiah 1:11-12 ¹¹ "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. ¹² "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts?

- **Later Isaiah revealed that the Messiah would be like a lamb....dying in the place of sinners.**

Isaiah 53:4-7 ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that

brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 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.

So what is the purpose of the Lamb? It has always been to take your place in death, judgment. In short, The Lamb was God's only provision for men to go to heaven. He rejects their religion, their race, their national identity, their good works, their accomplishments and all moral achievement. God makes this clear when He drove them out of the Garden. There will never be any going back. The way to God is barred and guarded. Mankind is hopelessly and helplessly lost.

Genesis 3:23-24 ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

Damnation was entirely man's accomplishment, but salvation would be entirely God's. And this is not just petty on God's part. God alone knows the fallen, broken moral and spiritual nature of men. God acts alone to save because mankind cannot act at all. He cannot get rid of his own sin anymore than a politician can fix the political system. Politics flows from the nature of politicians. Sin and evil are not social problems they are human problems. Human beings cannot solve their most pressing problems because we ourselves are the source of our most pressing problems. SO...God acted to save us by sending His own Son into humanity. Without sin or fallen nature Christ would bear your sins and absorb the punishment of a righteous God that should have come to you.

1 Peter 2:22-25 ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAMB OF GOD IS TO TAKE YOUR PLACE

The Nature of the Lamb [30]

John 1:30 ³⁰ "This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'

After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I: John knows and reveals that Jesus is God the Son, the Eternally existing creator of all things. At the moment John speaks, Christ had no rank at all. In fact, he was considered in Nazareth to be the illegitimate child of Mary and Joseph. They could do the math. They knew when the marriage took place and when the birth occurred.

He existed before me: John of course was born before Jesus on earth, but John exalts Christ as having a higher rank and a more worthy nature.

Luke 1:36-37 ³⁶ And behold, your relative **Elizabeth** in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God."

Paul exalted Him to the Colossians this way:

Colossians 1:15-19 ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

Paul also prayed for the Ephesians like this:

Ephesians 1:16-23 ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

To the Philippians he said:

Philippians 2:6-11 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

THE NATURE OF THE LAMB OF GOD IS DIVINE. JESUS IS GOD THE ETERNAL SON AS A HUMAN BEING

The Revelation of the Lamb [31-34]

John 1:31-34 ³¹ "I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water." ³² John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. ³³ "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending

and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water: Remember, John came as a voice crying out. God chose John and gave him physical life in an extraordinary way. Not like Jesus, but for human beings it is most extraordinary.

Luke 1:5-7 ⁵ In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was **Elizabeth**. ⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁷ But they had no child, because **Elizabeth** was barren, and both were advanced in years.

John was a called preacher and was baptizing for repentance when Jesus, whom he knew to be his cousin appeared at the river's shore to be baptized. John was reluctant, but why? On the surface of things we might think that is because John knew who Jesus was, but John did not know that Jesus was the Christ. Since he was out in the wilderness calling for repentance from sin he was reluctant to baptize someone he clearly believed was not sinful.

Matthew 3:13-15 ¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him: After baptizing Jesus, Matthew records what follows.

Matthew 3:16-17 ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

John had baptized thousands of people before this and would go on to do many more. Nothing like this had ever happened until he baptized Jesus. John's testimony here is that He did not know that Jesus his cousin was God the Son the creator of the universe until this moment. This is a prophet! Jesus said he was the greatest human ever born. His parents were awesome. His birth extraordinary, His preaching was earth shaking, His devotion to God was legend and His obedience was unequivocal and yet...he could not recognize the Messiah of God he was preaching about until God revealed Him to John. I wonder how the likes of you and me have ever recognized Christ as the God of Creation and the sole sacrifice for our sin?

1 Corinthians 2:14 ¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Peter 1:3 ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Ephesians 1:3-4 ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love

John 15:16 ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I **chose you** and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit: God had supernaturally revealed Christ to John by means of the work of the Holy Spirit. Now stop and reason with me for a moment here. John was a cousin to Jesus. They knew one another. It is not that John did not know who Jesus was...it was that he did not recognize that Jesus was the Christ. When Mary went to see Elizabeth who was six months pregnant the Scripture records this startling event.

Luke 1:39-43 ³⁹ In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, ⁴⁰ and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted **Elizabeth.** ⁴¹ And when **Elizabeth** heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And **Elizabeth** was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" ⁴³ And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me

When John was unable to reason, think or even breath, God began this process. Christ in the Womb caused John to leap in the womb and because the preacher could not yet exalt Christ with his mouth the Spirit came upon his mother and she did it for him.

THE REVELATION OF THE LAMB OF GOD IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. HUMANS PROCLAIM BUT NO HUMANS PERCEIVE APART FROM THE WORK OF GOD IN THEIR LIVES!

Matthew 16:13-17 ¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "**You are the Christ,** the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

The Supremacy of the Lamb [35-39]

John 1:35-39 ³⁵ Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ And Jesus turned and saw them

following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples: Here is the scene. John is out in the wilderness by the Jordan river. He is living out there and he is preaching to the crowds that God is driving out into the desert to repent. John has disciples with him who have embraced the message of the kingdom and are eager...like John to see the Messiah. They believe he is right at hand. John's job is to announce him...but suddenly things take a turn. The identity of God the Son on earth has been revealed to the herald. Across the shore is the man upon whom John has seen the Spirit descend. Christ's identity is now burned into his mind, heart and it is on his tongue.

And he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!": Who is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world? Was it one of the Pharisees that promoted themselves, their religion and their own scrupulous righteousness? Was it a priest who stood at the altar offering animals to God? None of these. Nothing in John's world could take away sin. And that has not changed in the least. It is still Christ alone. Not your Bible, not your doctrine, not your culture, not your nationality, not your religion, not your morality or so called "keeping of the ten commandments." Nothing, nothing, nothing, but the Lamb of God!

CONCLUSION:

The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus: So what is it you are following? This is a vital point. Is it Christianity. Please don't let it be that. Christianity is riddled with corruption, lies, greed, self-righteousness, self-centeredness, legalism and loveless judgmentalism in the form of "high moral ground."

There is exactly one person to follow. There is one to adore. There is one to love and give your life to. There is exactly one human being who volunteered to take your place in judgment and give you a righteous standing with God that you do not deserve. He calls you to follow him. To trust Him with your life. YES...even to love Him with all your heart, your soul, your mind and your strength. But the willingness and ability to do any of those things comes from Him as well. You do not have it in yourself...this is why Paul said.....

Ephesians 3:14-21 ⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith- that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.