

The Lamb of God (John 1:29-34)^a

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Passage (John 1:29-34)

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.” And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”¹

“Behold! The Lamb of God”

1. The passover lamb as a model of the Greater Lamb to come (Ex. 12:5-13)

“Now 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 the plague shall not be on you to destroy [you] when I strike the land of Egypt” (Ex. 12:13)

A. No bones broken

I. “In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones” (Ex. 12:46)

II. “But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. . . . For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘Not [one] of His bones shall be broken.’” (John 19:33-36)

B. As a lamb, led to the slaughter (Isa. 53:7)

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth” (Isa. 53:7).

I. How clueless we can be when God has clearly revealed something!

a. John will come to doubt whether Jesus is the promised one — yet this title reveals a dominant role as sacrifice (first), not king

b. The disciples will not understand His destiny on the cross for some time to come

C. “Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1Cor. 5:7)

D. “A Lamb, as though it had been slain” (Rev. 5:6, 12)

2. God will (Himself) provide a lamb (Gen. 22:8, 13-14)

“But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” Then he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” So the two of them went together.” (Gen. 22:7-8)

“Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, “In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided.” (Gen. 22:13-14)

- A. “Provide” is **רָאָה** [rā’â] - the root for see/show—appear on the scene to provide whatever is needed
- B. “The-Lord-Will-Provide” = “The Lord will (see to it)” - provide the substitutionary atonement

“Who takes away the Sin”

1. “takes away” is **αἶρω** [airō], to carry, remove from

2. **The great exchange (2Cor. 5:21)**

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2Cor. 5:21)

3. **The relationship between Jesus’ imputed righteousness vs. atonement with animal sacrifices**

- A. Typologically related (a model), but operate in different spheres
- B. The thousands of gallons of animal blood did not contribute one ounce to the work of Christ
- C. Conversely, the work of Christ does not “complete” that which was “partial” with animal sacrifices

“of the world”

- 1. **5-Point Calvinists will need to argue that “world” here is a subset, not the sin of all people**
- 2. **They argue that if Christ takes away the sin of the entire world, then the entire world *must* be saved. That Christ’s sacrifice must be *efficacious* (effective): every individual**

whose sin He paid for *must* be forgiven/saved. Since not all are saved, therefore He could not have paid for the sin of all.

3. A typical explanation:

Arminians and universalists hold that He offered up a sacrifice equally for each and every man. The Calvinist asks, "Why then are not all men saved?" Arminians answer, "Because of the unbelief of some." To this the [5-point] Calvinist replies, "Is not unbelief a sin? Is it not therefore covered by the death of Christ? Or did He die for all our sin, except our unbelief?" The Calvinist position is that the blood of Christ is sufficient to save each and every man who ever lived, but is efficient to save only God's elect. John Owen's famous summary of the situation put it like this: **a.** Either, Christ died for all the sins of all men—in which case all men must be saved; **b.** Or, he died for some of the sins of all men, in which case none will be saved; **c.** Or, He died for all the sins of some men—in which case, while some are lost, some will be saved.²

4. Logically "tidy," but ignores the fact that unbelief constitutes the unpardonable sin.
5. Henebury: "For those who refuse to believe, the fact that their sins were atoned for is the basis on which God can justly condemn them."³

"for He was before me" - pre-existed John

1. "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58).
2. "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5).
3. "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).
4. "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 'I [am] He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death'" (Rev. 1:17-18),

"that He should be revealed to Israel" - John's preparatory role focuses on Israel (kingdom offer)

"I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him"

1. A baptism, of sorts, with the Spirit - analogous to the formation of the Church, the body of Christ
2. The Trinity present (Mat. 3:16-17)

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice [came] from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'⁴

3. First ministry of the Spirit upon Jesus - led into the wilderness to be tempted (Mat. 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1)

"I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God"

1. At Jesus' baptism, also heard the Father proclaim, "This is My beloved Son" (Mat. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22)

2. OT expectations

A. Riddle of Proverbs 30:4

"Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, If you know?"

B. Psalm 2, three titles

I. "YHWH's anointed (מְשִׁיחֹו) [*m^ešihô*] = His Messiah" (Ps. 2:2)

II. "My King" (Ps. 2:6)

III. "My Son" (Ps. 2:7)

IV. The Anointed One is YHWH's King and also His Son

3. The Son of God is a divine title

A. Gabriel's pronouncement to Mary (Luke 1:35)

"And the angel answered and said to her, 'The] Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God'" (Luke 1:35)

B. Jews understood this divine equivalence (John 5:17-18)

"But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.' Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:17-18).

C. "Father has committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22)

I. For God, the Father, to commit judgment to another implies the other is perfect

- a. God will not allow perversion of justice
- b. Perfect justice requires judgment take place by a perfect judge
- c. Therefore, the Son of God is perfect = divine

D. "All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father" (John 5:23)!

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Endnotes:

1. [NKJV, John 1:29-34](#)
2. [Ref-1363, 45-56](#)
3. Paul Martin Henebury, *Christ's Atonement: Its Purpose and Extent, Part 1*, Conservative Theological Journal Volume 9, 26 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, 2005), pp. 106.
4. [NKJV, Mat. 3:16-17](#)

Sources:

- NKJV** Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references are from the *New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Ref-1363** Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms: Expanded Third Edition* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador Emerald International, 2002). ISBN: [1-889893-72-2^d](#).

Links Mentioned Above

- a - See http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/John_by_Tony_Garland/008_John_1_29-34/index.htm.
- b - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.
- c - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org>.
- d - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/isbn.htm?1-889893-72-2>.