

Behold the Lamb of God

John 1:29-34

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Pastor Gary Hollinger

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” (Matthew 3:1-2)

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar... (Luke 3:1)

John the Baptizer’s testimony reaches its apex with his identification of Jesus as the Lamb of God who is God Himself.

I. John’s identification of Jesus indicates that the prophetic pictures of the OT sacrificial system were culminated in Christ. (v. 29)

...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... (Romans 3:23)

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”

Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.”

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?”

“Yes, my son?” Abraham replied.

“The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

“Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”

Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that

place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.” (Genesis 22:1-18)

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death. (Hebrews 11:17-19)

A. Jesus is our Passover lamb.

Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household...The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD’s Passover.

“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. (Exodus 12:3, 5-8, 11-13)

Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. (1 Corinthians 5:7)

This naming of Jesus as the Lamb of God also would undoubtedly remind of the words of Isaiah in the great passage that prophetically describes the ministry of the Messiah, where it is written as though it had already occurred...

He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)

B. Jesus fulfilled the need for a daily sin sacrifice.

“This is what you are to offer on the altar regularly each day: two lambs a year old. Offer one in the morning and the other at twilight. With the first lamb offer a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil from pressed olives, and a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering. Sacrifice the other lamb at twilight with the same grain offering and its drink offering as in the morning—a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the LORD. For the generations to come this burnt offering is to be made regularly at the entrance to the tent of meeting, before the LORD.” (Exodus 29:39-42)

C. Our sin was transferred to Him as pictured by the scapegoat.

“Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat. (Leviticus 16:6-10)

“When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat’s head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness. (Leviticus 16:20-22)

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1-2)

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” (1 Peter 2:24)

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. (1 Peter 1:18-21)

II. The Baptizer testified to the eternal nature of Jesus. (v. 30)

A. He affirms that Jesus is greater than he.

B. He affirms the eternality of Jesus.

III. John the Baptizer's purpose was to identify the Messiah to Israel. (v. 31)

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
to shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace." (Luke 1:76-79)

IV. The Baptizer testified having seen a vision of the Holy Spirit come upon Jesus. (v. 32)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"
Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.
As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17)

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him. (Luke 2:39-40)

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. (Luke 2:41-47)

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. (Luke 2:52)

And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel. (Luke 1:80)

First, Jesus was identifying Himself with the sinful people.

Second: John's baptism of Jesus could be seen as a priestly presentation of the Ultimate Sacrifice.

Third: Jesus' baptism was an affirmation and approval of John's ministry.

Finally: Jesus' baptism revealed the triune nature of God.

The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—

the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,

the Spirit of counsel and of might,

the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—

and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. (Isaiah 11:2-3a)

V. God had supernaturally told the Baptizer that a visible apparition of a dove would identify His Messiah. (v. 33)

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”
(Matthew 3:11)

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.
(Acts 2:3).

Our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29).

“His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3:12).

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:10-15)

VI. The Baptizer solemnly swears personally having observed Jesus true identity. (v. 34)

He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. (2 Samuel 7:13-14a)

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him... (Isaiah 42:1)

Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:12)