

## The Gospel of John Part 05: The Lamb

**John 1:29–39 (ESV)** — **29** *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ 31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” 32 And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.” 35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which 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.*

Today we will be in John 1:29-39. We will refer back to the Old Testament books of the law several times to make sure we have the same imagery in our head that the original hearers would. The two things we will focus on the most today will be the phrases; “Lamb of God” and “What are you seeking?”

This section of scripture starts out with the author saying the next day. If you were here for the last lesson you already know that the day before this the Pharisees or Jewish religious

## The Gospel of John Part 05: The Lamb

leaders, which we compared to the ones who try to control the church, sent the priest to find out what John the Baptizer was doing. He informed them that the King or Messiah was coming and they should prepare as he was doing. If you weren't here you can quickly read verses 19-28 and see the conversation.

We can assume John the author was there that day since he gives us so much information on what was said. So this is the next day, John and Andrew<sup>1</sup> are listening to their teacher the baptizer when he looks up sees Jesus and says, "*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*" He goes on to remind them that this is the man he was referring to the day before. The one that he said he was not even worthy to be a servant for.

John tells his disciples I did not know that he was the messiah, but God had told me go and baptize people with water and I will send the One to you. You will know Him because when you baptize Him you will see the Spirit descend on Him and it will stay on Him. He is the one that baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

Just imagine John's surprise when His cousin Jesus<sup>2</sup> walked up to Him to be baptized. John looks at Him in amazement. John grew up with Jesus. He knew Him as having a special connection with God. Yes, John could hear the voice of God, but Jesus was so much closer. The relationship between Jesus and God was so much more special. Jesus seemed to be so much more able to resist the temptations to sin. John knew how hard he tried to not sin, yet he still failed. Jesus was perfect. Jesus never sinned.

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<sup>1</sup> See verse 40 to see where it tells us this is Andrew. The other is assumed to be the author since he knew the details and did not feel it was important to tell us who the other disciple was.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 1:36

## The Gospel of John Part 05: The Lamb

So when Jesus came to him he asked, “How can I baptize you. You should be baptizing me.” Let’s look at Matthew 3:13-17 to see what the bible says about the baptism of Jesus.

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. 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; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*<sup>3</sup>

Just imagine John standing in the water staring at his cousin Jesus and it all makes sense. Jesus was the son of God, Jesus was the savior. No wonder the relationship between Jesus and God seemed so close. The King had arrived. God had arrived.

Back to John verse 1:35 John is standing again with John and Andrew when Jesus walked by and John said again, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” John and Andrew look at each other and they have thought about that all night the Lamb of God. He takes away sin. He is the Son of God.

Let’s look now at the Old Testament imagery they would be thinking of so we can be in the same mindset that they were upon hearing for the second time that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

*The Old Testament*

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<sup>3</sup> Mt 3:13–17 ESV

## The Gospel of John Part 05: The Lamb

A lamb would have special significance to a Jewish person at the time of Christ. If we go all the way back to Genesis 22 we can see one example of the significance of this statement. Abraham is told by God to go to the Mountains in the land of Moriah and sacrifice his son to God, As they are traveling Issac realizes that they have no Lamb for an offering so he asks his father about it and Abraham responds, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together. <sup>4</sup>

So the first reference in the bible talks about God providing a lamb for the sacrifice in place of a human. That is significant because that is exactly what Jesus did He was the Lamb of Sacrifice for you and me. He took our place.

Let’s look at Exodus 29:38- 39. *“Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs a year old day by day regularly. One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. Now look at verse 42. It shall be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there.*

God tells the Israelites they should daily sacrifice to Him. This is to remind them that they constantly need to be purified of their sin. Lets look at Leviticus 3:6-8. *“If his offering for a sacrifice of peace offering to the Lord is an animal from the flock, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. If he offers a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before the Lord, lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it in front of the tent of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar.*

Leviticus 4:27-28, *“If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally in doing any one of the things that by the Lord's commandments ought not to be done, and realizes his guilt,*

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<sup>4</sup> Ge 22:8. ESV

## The Gospel of John Part 05: The Lamb

*or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for his offering a goat”*

look at verse 32 *“If he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish and lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering. Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out all the rest of its blood at the base of the altar.”*

Now look at Leviticus 5:6 *“ he shall bring to the Lord as his compensation for the sin that he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin.”*

The Jewish people were accustomed to sacrificing lambs to atone for their sin. God had them do these sacrifices not to take away their sins but to help them realize they continually needed to be cleansed. Let’s look at how the author of Hebrews put it. *“would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”*<sup>5</sup>

So an Israelite would continually offer up a sacrifice to cleanse him of the guilt of his sin. What John is saying in the statement , “Behold the lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world.” Is that Jesus is the final sacrifice. Our sins are no longer just washed away they are gone. Jesus did not die as a reminder of our sin, but to take away our sin.

I skipped the Passover earlier so lets cover it real quick. Lets go to Exodus. I’m going to cover the plagues really quick in case any one is not familiar with them and if you are to help you get the picture in your head. We will start in Exodus 7. Let me build the background while

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<sup>5</sup> Hebrews 10:2-4

## **The Gospel of John Part 05: The Lamb**

you are turning there. The Israelites moved to Egypt with Joseph during a famine. Eventually Joseph died and the Israelites lost their power in Egypt. They became slaves and were treated harshly because everyone was scared of them.

Pharaoh the ruler of Egypt decides to have babies aborted as they are being born, if they are males. The child Moses manages to be born and actually gets adopted and raised by Pharaoh's daughter. His mother is actually the servant that gets to take care of him as he grows up. He has to flee Egypt and several years later while feeding sheep God shows up and tells him, "I need you to go and bring my people out of Egypt." Moses says, "yeah, I'll get right on that."

To make a long story short Moses and his brother Aaron meet up in Egypt and God is going to use them as His messenger to Pharaoh. They will tell of a plague if Pharaoh doesn't listen. It starts in Exodus 7 with the first plague. God through Moses turns the water in the Nile to blood. That didn't phase Pharaoh he still wouldn't let the Israelites go. So in chapter 8 God fills the land with frogs. Next he fills the land with gnats, then flies. In chapter 9 their livestock die of disease, the men get sores and boils and a hail storm came and did a lot of damage. In Chapter 10 Locust come to destroy what is left of the crops and then a plague of thick darkness that lasted for three days.

And lastly chapter 11 we come to the last plague the one that caused Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. The death of the firstborn son. So as we enter Exodus chapter 12 God is ready to deal his final blow to Egypt. He had been gentle with them up until now. Now it is time for His wrath against their rebellion to come. Now they will see death upon them and will know what it is to be under God's wrath.

Chapter 12 verses 3-14 *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.*

## **The Gospel of John Part 05: The Lamb**

*And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, 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. “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. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.*

*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. 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.*

*“This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.*

So all of that review is to get to the point to where you realize that the Passover was about God's wrath passing over those who were marked by the blood. The Message paraphrase states this as “Here he is, God's Passover Lamb! He forgives the sins of the world! <sup>6</sup> Jesus is the

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<sup>6</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message : The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 2002), Jn 1:30.

## The Gospel of John Part 05: The Lamb

Passover sacrifice. Just as those who did not have the blood of the Passover lamb on their doorpost those who are not marked by the blood of Jesus will suffer God's wrath, but if you have been marked by Jesus God's wrath will pass over you Jesus died for you!

*What are you seeking?*

So John and Andrew are standing there in verse 35 of John 1 and they have been thinking all night about what it means to be the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world when the baptizer says it again. So they did what we should do when we realize who Jesus is! They followed Him.

*Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"*<sup>7</sup> First let's look at what is happening. John and Andrew have truly figured out who Jesus is, so they follow Him. Jesus turns and asks, "What are you seeking?" Our minds see this and automatically perceive this as Jesus asking why are you following me? That is not what Jesus is saying though. We have to keep in mind that Jesus can see into our heart. He knows our true motivations<sup>8</sup>. This question was asked to make them stop and think. It was made to make them ask their selves, Why exactly am I following this man?

When we read this question we should stop and think, "What am I seeking?" Why do I call myself a Christian? Is it because I'm scared of Hell? Is it because my parents were? Is it because it sounds like something I would want to be called? Why do I call myself a Christian? Why do I say I follow Jesus? We must evaluate our hearts and make sure the answer is correct one. We must make sure it is because the Creator of the world sent His Son to be the Passover Lamb so

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<sup>7</sup> Jn 1:38 ESV

<sup>8</sup> John 2:25



## The Gospel of John Part 05: The Lamb

that we could live, so that we could be free of the course of sin, and that creates a response of awe and worship for Jesus.

Let's look at why John and Andrew are following Jesus. Verse 38 "*And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"*"<sup>9</sup> This seems strange to us as a answer to what are you seeking, but to a Jewish person then it answered the question perfectly. A teacher in those days would have disciples or students as we would refer to them. These students would stay with the teacher night and day. Their entire life would become devoted to learning from their teacher. John and Andrew just said, "Jesus we want to be students of the one God chose to send to be the Passover Lamb. We want to learn from the one that has come to die. We give our life to you. And that is a proper response to the knowledge of who Jesus is.

*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.*<sup>10</sup> It would be about 4 PM and Jesus invites them to come and learn a little more about Him. They spend the rest of the day with Him. This encounter is similar to how many of us come to meet Jesus. We hear about who He is and we want to know more. We go to a church or a Christian friend and ask them about Jesus. Finally Jesus shows up and invites us to become His follower just as He did with John and Andrew and we can accept the chance to learn from God's son the Passover Lamb that takes God's wrath away from us.

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<sup>9</sup> Jn 1:38..

<sup>10</sup> Jn 1:39.