

BEHOLD! THE LAMB OF GOD

John 1:29-34

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INTRODUCTION

No prophetic messages for well over 400 years. Spiritual darkness.

Israel's bondage in captivity; released but still subservient to world empires.

Maccabean revolt successful for brief period of about 100 years—then subordination to Rome.

Various attempts by false messianic leaders to overthrow Rome.

Messianic speculation “in the air”; yet, no one could help them.

Suddenly, in the desert, a new prophetic voice appears—John the Baptist.

His strange clothes; his habitat; his diet; his message? Could this be the Messiah? John put that idea to rest (1:19-28). But, he is sent to prepare the way for One much greater than him.

The delegation from Jerusalem disappears from the scene; it is the next day. Suddenly John looks out over the crowd of followers attending to his every word and sees Someone coming toward him. He has seen this One before, but He has been absent now for some 40 days. The crowd was unprepared for John's next statement:

BEHOLD! THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!

I. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE LAMB (29-30)

What Lamb?

Passover, Lamb of continual burnt offerings morning and evening, the Suffering Servant who was as a lamb led to the slaughter—innocent and submissive (Is. 53:7), the God-provided lamb of Gen. 22:8?

Likely John's reference is broad enough to include all of these.

“Of God”—Provided by God, and belonging to God

“Takes away sin”—Removes (after having taken upon oneself—cf. again Isaiah 53:4-5, 10.)

“Of the World”—Not merely Israel; provision made for people of every kindred, tribe, and tongue from every nation. Atonement is sufficient for all! Efficient for the elect. The Bible nowhere teaches universal salvation.

Christ is the Only Way. Are you Saved?

Point People to the Lamb of God.

II. THE PURPOSE OF OUR MINISTRIES (30-31)

A. Our *inferior* status compared with His (30—cf. v. 15)

- B. The *introductory* ministry of baptism in water (31)
 - a. John's lack of recognition of Him (as Messiah; likely knew him from his childhood especially—cf. Mt. 3—“I should be baptized by You.”)
We don't know Him until we meet Him through His Word!
 - b. His baptism was introductory of Him—to Israel
The baptism of repentance prepares men to meet Him;
Identification of Him enables men to follow Him.

III. THE POWERFUL HEAVENLY ATTESTATION (32-33)

- A. John Witnessed to what he saw (Perfect tense—calm, steady, thoughtful gaze)
 - 1. God sent him to baptize in water (33)
 - 2. God revealed to him the signs of the Messiah (33)
 - 3. God specified the more powerful ministry Messiah would have—
Baptize in the Spirit (33)—Abundance, spiritual cleaning, introduction to and union with the family of God.
- B. God Identified His Son (32)
 - 1. The Spirit descended as a dove (in actual dove form—Luke 3:22)
Gentleness, innocence, tenderness, representation of Israel in the OT.
 - 2. He came out of Heaven from the Father.
 - 3. He remained upon Jesus for His entire earthly ministry.

God has witnessed so that we can witness!

IV. THE PERCEPTIVE WITNESS (34)

- A. He has seen.
- B. He has borne witness: “**This is the Son of God.**” (cf. 20:31).

CONCLUSION

- 1. Will you “Behold the Lamb of God” Today?
Has he taken away your sins? Is He your Savior?
- 2. Once He saves us we become His sheep.

Is he your Shepherd? (Memorial service for Susan Cox on Monday—the Shepherd Psalm)
Are you obediently following Him? [emphasis of the next passage]
- 3. Our ministry is to introduce Him! **WE ARE HIS WITNESSES!**