

John's Testimony About a Lamb

John 1:19-34 ¹⁹ And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." ²² So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³ He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." ²⁴ (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵ They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶ John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷ even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸ These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. **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."

❖ Intro

- There is so much in these verses that I will not be able to cover.
- But... I do want you to feel free to write down notes with questions on anything that is not covered
- There may be an area of interest to you, that I do not go into great detail about...
 - You will understand why I am saying this soon

❖ Recap – We have been trying to learn better who Jesus is

❖ Where they were

- They were in an area in the north of Israel.
- By this time John the Baptist had already baptized Jesus...
- Jesus left immediately from being baptized to being tempted in the Wilderness...
 - You can find all this in Luke 3 and 4 and Mark 1 and Matt 3 and 4

❖ Who John Was (Just briefly)

➤ A Witness with a Testimony

- ¹⁹ And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

➤ An OT prophet – A Bridge from OT to NT

- **John was the Son of a Priest.**
 - Luke 1 tells the promise of his birth
 - He would be filled with Spirit of God even in the Womb...
 - His Father was a priest... Zechariah... God caused him to lose his voice from unbelief
 - So John grew up the son of a priest... (Remember this)
- **There had been no Prophet in Israel in over 400 years...**
 - And the people were **eager** to hear from God.
- **Prophets would come along and God would speak through them to the people**
 - He would reveal His plan to them, or let them know He is not pleased with something
 - Or that He is pleased with something... Ex: Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah
 - ◆ Much in the same way as Jesus used John to write His message to the 7 churches.
- **John enters the scene as a Prophet...**
 - And He identified himself in lifestyle... like the poor people... and like the prophets of old
 - He dressed in poor clothes...
 - And ate poor people food...
 - But thousands were coming to hear him preach
- **People were flocking to him...**
 - And He was preaching to them... Preaching a message of Repentance of Sins...

- Telling people to turn their hearts to God
- **They asked him who he was...**
 - ²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." ²² So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"
 - A lot of questions here... and you can ask them later if you wish...like... why these questions
 - **But we see they are waiting for the Christ...**
 - The people of Israel have been waiting for their Messiah to come...
 - And all of these questions were related to their expectation of a King to come for them...
- **His Answer : A Voice**
 - ²³ He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."
 - There is a whole sermon here: And we briefly touched on this a couple weeks ago...
 - On knowing that Jesus is the Main Attraction...
 - Remembering that it is Jesus who is God... and we are simply His Servants...
 - **A Voice in the Wilderness....**
 - A quote from **Isaiah 40:3** A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
 - **I'm only a Voice John says...**
 - Think of the humility here.... I am not even a man... I am only a voice...
 - John knew this...
 - **Application:**
 - Do not forget who you are... Most divisions within the church and among friends and family rise because of this...
 - Remember Paul saying...**Rom 12.3** do not think of himself more highly than He ought to think"
 - **Philippians 2:3** ³ Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

❖ John's Purpose Was to Point the World to Jesus

I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

- **Make the way straight for God**
 - **An Analogy, or Parable I guess....**
 - The wilderness was a tough terrain to navigate...
 - And travelers often found themselves following twists and turns...
 - and working to get through the terrain...
 - **From a spiritual aspect.... John the Baptist came along to begin to turn people's hearts to God.**
 - The first prophet in 400 years came declaring a message of Repentance and Preparation
 - The Spiritual ruin of the people was great...
 - And the message of Jesus would prove to be a difficult one to hear...
 - **The Way of the Lord –**
 - If you notice... in Isaiah 40... LORD may be in all caps there...
 - Meaning the writer is using the proper name for God... Yahweh...
 - In Isaiah 40 the prophecy is concerning making a way for Yahweh...
 - And in John 1... we see the Baptist making the way for Jesus, and He refers to Him as Yahweh
 - **He Came Baptizing....**
 - And His baptism was a baptism of repentance...
 - As people would repent of their sins... John would baptize them...
 - And there were many people in need of Repentance...
 - **John is asked about his Baptism**

- ²⁵ They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” ²⁶ John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷ even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”
 - ◆ **He points to Jesus... I am unworthy of the one who is coming after me**
 - After me in regards to ministry... and in earthly age
 - The people’s need....was a Spiritual washing... a renewal... John points to Jesus
 - ◆ **John was an Amazing guy...**
 - And people flocked to see him...
 - But He said of Jesus... I am unworthy to untie his dirt covered sandal
 - WOW... Do you feel like that about anyone around you...
 - If I asked you to untie me shoe... would you feel unworthy to do so...
 - Or would you feel too Worthy to untie my shoe....

▪ **The Lamb of God**

- **The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**
 - ◆ Points to Jesus as a Lamb that comes to take away the sin of the world
 - ◆ Our Main point today

▪ **Jesus Ranks above John**

- ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’
 - ◆ John simply says, although He is coming after me... He was before me
 - ◆ Because He is the LORD... He is God

▪ **John Baptized to Reveal Jesus**

- ³¹ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.”
 - ◆ So, He says that His mission from God was to Reveal Jesus as the Son of God

▪ **God told John who the Messiah would be**

- ³² And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 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.’
- John knew Jesus... They were cousins... They probably knew each other well...
- **But He did not know He was the Messiah... although I am sure He wondered... but waited for God**
- He is saying... God told me how to recognize His Son...
- So, God gave John a sign... saying when you saw the heavens open and the Holy Spirit descend
- Then, He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit was among you...
 - ◆ Luke 3:22 ... and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

▪ **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

- This is what occurs when anyone is saved by Jesus...
- The Holy Spirit comes to live within them.
- We baptize with water as a sign of that baptism by Jesus...

▪ **John’s Testimony that Jesus is the Son of God**

- ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”
- John says to them... I am telling you... I am a prophet.. this is my testimony...

▪ **John decreased:**

- Just to drive home the point that John was on mission for God
- Not long after Jesus came on the scene... John left the scene...
- As in... His head got cut off by the king because of His testimony... (but John did his job)

➤ **The Question: Will You Trust His Testimony?**

▪ **Application:**

- Whose child is Emily?
- John the Baptist is not alone in testifying of who Jesus is...
 - The 12 disciples... the countless others who knew Him

- His mother and Brothers...

➤ A Choice

- **Just like in those days... those listening to John the Baptist, had to make a choice...**
 - And those reading the words of John the Apostle...
 - Will I believe the things these men are telling me about Jesus... ?
- **Many had come claiming to be the Messiah before...**
 - And when they died... so did their testimony... But not with Jesus..
- **Your choice... Will you believe John the Baptist's Testimony of Jesus?**

➤ TRANSITION: The Main Thrust of his message is the main thing for you today...

- Oh... I can not begin to plead with you enough to tell you how important what John said is...
- I want us to focus on John's declaration that :

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

❖ Jesus “The Lamb of God”

➤ The Scene

- People coming to hear the prophet preach.
- People coming in need of Renewal...
- And John's message was to point to Jesus Christ... as the Lamb of God....

➤ Could have chosen anything to call Jesus...

- Eternal, Amazing, Creator, Wonderful, Mighty, Wise....
- He chose to say...

❖ Behold the Lamb of God

➤ The Meaning Behind this:

- There was so much meaning packed in that one line,
- And John knew exactly what He was saying...
- And He was not speaking of a fluffy little zoo animal
- There was a Depth of Meaning for these people when He said this.... And for you too...

➤ The O.T. Sacrificial System (to understand... you need to know this)

- For the People of Israel to stay in continued fellowship with God... they needed sin offerings...
 - A the son of a priest... John the Baptist was well acquainted with the sacrificial system
- **To have sins forgiven an atonement needed to be made**
 - **Leviticus 4:32-35** ³²“If he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish ³³and 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. ³⁴Then 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. ³⁵And all its fat he shall remove as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on top of the LORD's food offerings. And the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven.
 - ◆ He wasn't calling Jesus a pet... or a nice guy, or an amazing guy...
 - ◆ This isn't a nice set of verses is it?....It is gruesome...
- **The Lamb Atonement**
 - Perfect lamb without blemish....The Priest would lay his hand on it and kill it...
 - Took some of the blood and put on the alter.... Poured the rest out at the alter
 - He then burned it... then that guy would be forgiven...
 - So... that is what they did for forgiveness... to continue on fellowship with a Holy God...
- **These animal sacrifices Continued Perpetually**
 - **Exodus 29:38-39** “Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs a year old day by day regularly. ³⁹One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight.
 - **Exodus 29:42** ⁴²It 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.

- **Charles Spurgeon – Known as the prince of Preachers... preached in London**
 - “There had been slain before the Lord a lamb every morning, and a lamb every evening, all the year round throughout the centuries of Israel’s history. Always and ever the continual sacrifice of the lamb was the symbol of Jehovah’s dwelling with his people. But John puts his finger down upon a single sacrifice, and says, “This is *the* Lamb.” All the other daily lambs had been but prefigurations of this. “Behold the Lamb.”
- **John the Baptist had this in mind.... So he was not saying this HAPHAZARDLY**
 - He knew of the countless animals slain since the days of Abraham
 - Through the time of King David
 - During the night before Israel left Egypt... those lambs saved the life of all first born...
 - All but **Prefigures** of the Lamb to come... They **pointed** to
 - They were living **Parables**...
- **The Problem: The Death of the Lamb was not enough to bear our sins**
 - It could never take away the sin...
 - Hebrews 10:1 ¹ For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it **can never**, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, **make perfect** those who draw near.
 - Hebrews 10:11 ¹¹ And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which **can never take away sins**.

If you do not understand the terms: Sin Bearer, Substitute, Propitiation... LISTEN...!

❖ Jesus, The Lamb of Isaiah 53

- **This is who John had in mind....**
 - The prophet Isaiah 750 years earlier prophesied of His coming...
 - Isaiah 53:7 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.
 - And you can picture in your mind what you know of His beating and death on the cross
- **In Acts 8 – This is the passage the Ethiopian Eunuch was reading when Philip began to explain**
 - That it was Jesus... Jesus is that Lamb slain.... The Ethiopian was saved

❖ Only Jesus could be this Lamb...

- In OT System... they needed a spotless lamb from the flock...
- **Jesus is Holy - God brought His Son into this world without an earthly Father...**
 - Therefore the sin of Adam did not pass to the earthly body of Jesus...
 - He was born of the virgin Mary
 - Luke 1:35 ³⁵ And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born **will be called holy**—the Son of God.
- **Only Jesus walked this earth without Sin...**
 - Heb 4.15 “he was without sin”
 - 1 Peter 1:19 ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

❖ Jesus is The Lamb OF God

- **Jesus was God’s Lamb...**
 - When men sinned... they had to go and get their own lamb from their flock to take for sacrifice
 - Or buy one from their neighbors...
- **Man was in a Great Predicament...**
 - We could find no suitable sacrifice for our sins... The animals were not enough
 - Our sin was offensive to a Holy God...
 - We were without hope... We could not bear our own sins...
 - Nor could we carry each other’s sins...
 - He could not pay for them with a lifetime of work or suffering...
 - If justice were to be done... It would be our demise...

- **You Must Understand –**
 - **God’s wrath toward sin MUST be satisfied... It must...**
 - Fact #1 – He is Holy.....Fact #2 – Sin is the opposite of Holy
 - Fact #3 – God Hates Sin.....Fact #4 – God is a Just Judge
 - ◆ When wrong is done... A penalty must be paid....
 - ◆ This is true even in our own day...
 - Fact #5 – We had nothing to offer
- **God provides the Lamb**
 - **As He looked for Justice to be done for our sins.... His wrath Unsatisfied**
 - He looked to His Co-equal Son....
 - With whom He’d had fellowship for eternity
 - His One and Only Son
 - Last wk we learned the Son was in the Bosom of the Father... In the chest, the heart, the center
 - ◆ **John 3:16 ¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,**
- **The Father officiated the Sacrifice**
 - **This truth is given from: Gen**
 - **God foretold of it in the life of Abraham**
 - God told Abraham to sacrifice his only Son...
 - ◆ Now God has never condoned human sacrifices... they are a sin to him...
 - ◆ In this one instance He told Abraham to do it as a test...
 - Abraham was very old when He had Isaac, and it was a miracle to ever have him...
 - And He loved Him deeply.... But He was obedient to God...
 - And Isaac carried His own wood onto the top of that mount, and Abraham tied him up
 - ◆ Oh... can you imagine the anguish inside of him...
 - ◆ The only thing holding him together was knowing that God had given him Isaac
 - ◆ And He knew that God could give him back....
 - **He held that knife to the sky... ready to thrust it deep into the heart of Isaac**
 - ◆ And to take His life...
 - ◆ And God stopped him... much to His relief I assume...
 - ◆ And in the bushes there was a young ram caught
 - ◆ And as Isaac had already wondered about where the sacrifice would come from....
 - **Abraham prophetically said before:**
 - ◆ **Genesis 22:8 ⁸ Abraham said, “God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.**
- **God Provided His Son as the Sacrifice**
 - As Abraham said hundreds of years earlier... “God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering”
 - And when the knife of divine judgment was held high... no one stopped the Father
 - He allowed it to be plunged into His Son....
 - **Isaiah 53:10 (ESV) ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin**
 - It was His Will.... It pleased Him...
- **Jesus Did this with Joy**
 - As Abraham said hundreds of years earlier... “God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering”
 - **Hebrews 12:2 ...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,**
 - **Why was it joyous for Him?**
 - **Is 53.11b “...(He will) make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.”**
- **Application : God Provides the Lamb...**
 - You only need to receive the lamb

❖ **Jesus The Lamb Must Die**

- **When John the Baptist calls him the Lamb.... He says so speaking of His death...**
 - Lambs were slaughtered... every morning and evening they were slaughtered...

- So this is the imagery John is giving here...
- **We see this Truth in Rev**
 - Revelation 5:9b “.....worthy are you..... for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,
 - Slain – Slaughtered
- ❖ **Jesus The Lamb of God is the Sin Bearer**
 - 1 Peter 2:24 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.
 - Our Sins were placed on Jesus
 - He took them from us... He carried them away...
 - **Sin is Heavy –**
 - Men are crushed under the weight of it...
 - Jesus had it placed on Him... and He carried it... He carried them away
- ❖ **Jesus The Lamb of God is a Propitiation**
 - **Propitiation is what happens when God’s wrath is satisfied and removed from you**
 - 1 John 2:2 ² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
 - **As long as your sins are on you, God’s wrath is on you,**
 - If you die in sin... you will get God’s wrath
 - In yours sins God MUST oppose you and condemn you
 - **If your sins are taken from you**
 - God is propitiated and His wrath is removed from that person...
 - **Jesus’ death did this...**
- ❖ **Jesus the Lamb of God was The Substitute**
 - **Meaning... He died in your place, and was punished in your place**
 - 2 Cor. 5:21, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."
 - Made to be sin for us
 - Rom. 4:25, "He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."
 - Delivered up because of us
 - **The Wrath of God toward sinful man, was placed upon Jesus**
- ❖ **Jesus the Lamb of God Takes Away Sin**
 - **He takes them Away.... Continually**
 - **John Speaks in the present tense here... Besides this we see...**
 - Hebrews 10:12 ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,
 - Hebrews 10:14 ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.
 - ◆ Took One Sacrifice by Him... to remove all of them (if a person believe)
 - ◆ It lasts forever... stretches into the past, and into the future...
 - ◆ His death, done one time... is the payment for all sins...
 - **Blots them Out/ Doesn’t Remember them**
 - Isaiah 43:25 ²⁵ “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.
 - **Cast them far away**
 - Psalm 103:12 ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
 - **Out of Sight**
 - Micah 7:19b. “....You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.”
 - **All other sacrifices**
 - Just held off the wrath of God...

- Jesus' sacrifice takes away our sins...

➤ **God's Wrath can be Removed or Not**

- **John 3:36³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.**
- **Look at this verse.... To the one who believes... he has eternal life... (His sins taken from him)**
 - These people have had God's wrath removed from them....
 - Sin removed – wrath removed
- **Those who do not obey... who do not have their sins taken away**
 - **"the wrath of God remains on Him"**
 - Nothing has removed it... they may have thought it would be removed,
 - But it never was

❖ **What will You do?**

➤ **Who will bear your sins?**

➤ **Everyone deserves wrath... and there is One Remedy**

- Believe on Him and have your sins taken away!

➤ **No Matter the Sin**

- The Sacrifice is sufficient for all of them
 - Murder, adultery, thievery, perversion, etc

➤ **Jesus is the Lamb that God accepts.... He glories to except... He loves to accept ... he must accept**

- Bring Jesus with you to the judgment... and you will be accepted
- Because your sins will have been taken from You!

➤ **Bring Anything else you want... and it will not be enough**

- Bring your good works... they will be rejected...
- Expect to suffer in Purgatory... that will be rejected... your suffering will not take away your sins
- Bring your own Philosophy and ways of thinking...
- Bring your ability to talk your way into or out of anything....
- It will all be rejected
- Even asking forgiveness does not take away your sins....
 - Belief on Jesus does... Because the taking away of sins is by Jesus... Not by our words...
 - Our coming to Him... and asking... makes the sacrifice APPLY to us...

➤ **Bring Jesus... Faith in Jesus...**

- And you will not be rejected, but rather BELOVED as the Son is Beloved...