

Theme: Jesus Revealed: The Lamb of God

Text: John 1:29-34

29 The next day John 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 is preferred before me, for He was before me.' **31** "I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." **32** And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. **33** "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.' **34** "And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

Every once in a while you will see a program advertised on TV or perhaps see a book or magazine that proposes to investigate and reveal the quote-unquote "Real Jesus." (In fact, I just saw some of these types of magazines in the grocery store checkout lines this Christmas.) What you all too often find when you watch these programs or read through these books or magazines is that they really don't reveal the "Real Jesus" at all because the researchers and so-called experts often don't turn to (or at least they don't put much stock in) the place where Jesus is *truly* revealed: the Bible. Right now we are in a season of the church year that celebrates Jesus being "revealed" to all people. The season is Epiphany. Epiphany is a word that means to "reveal" or "make known." And so during this season of Epiphany we are going to look at some of the ways the Bible *reveals* Jesus—the real Jesus—to us. We pray that God's Holy Spirit, who is the revealer of all truth, would bless our study this morning and in the coming weeks.

In our text for this morning we see Jesus Revealed as The Lamb of God. This might seem like a rather ironic description of Jesus since later on in this same Gospel of John He also calls Himself "**the Good Shepherd**" (**John 10:11**). However, the Bible's description of Jesus as "**the Lamb**" is a very fitting picture which reveals to us much about who Jesus is and what He came to do.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus and exclaimed to those around him, "**Behold! The Lamb of God**" (**v. 29**) the people probably had a pretty good idea of the picture John was painting for them. For the Jews a lamb was a very important part of their worship and history.

- † Several thousand years earlier when the LORD was freeing the Children of Israel from their slavery in Egypt with the last of His 10 plagues it was a lamb, one "**without blemish**" (**Exodus 12:5**), which God commanded each household to kill, roast, and eat and to spread some of it's blood on the top and the sides of the doorframe. This was the first Passover. The LORD had told His people, '**For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. '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'**" (**Exodus 12:12-13**).
- † A little later on in Israel's history the LORD also commanded that lambs be used for the daily offering, one in the morning and one in the evening (**Exodus 29:38-41**).
- † A lamb, "**a male without blemish**" (**Leviticus 1:10**), was to be used for the burnt offering.
- † A lamb was to be sacrificed as a sin offering as well (**Leviticus 4:32-35**).

You can see the picture of Jesus in that Passover lamb and the sacrificial lambs, can't you? On that first Passover those who were covered by the blood of the lamb were saved from the plague of the death of their firstborn. Those who are covered by the blood of Jesus, the "**Lamb of God**," are saved from an even worse fate: We are saved from sin, death, and even hell itself! The apostle Peter writes, "**For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed...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.**" (1 Peter 1:18-20 NIV). Jesus and the salvation He won for us by His sacrifice as the "**Lamb of God**" has been "**revealed in these last times for you**" through the Word of God!

Christ's sacrifice as the "**Lamb of God**" also put to an end the need for any more animal sacrifices. The Old Testament lamb sacrifices that were made for the people's sins pointed ahead and found their fulfillment at the cross in the sacrifice of Jesus, "**The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**" (v. 29). The writer of Hebrews states, "**Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He [Jesus] entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**" (Hebrews 9:12-14).

This "**Lamb**," Jesus, did not need to be sacrificed day after day, but once for all time. This "**Lamb**," Jesus, did not just bear the sins of an individual, but rather "**the sin of the whole world!**" (v. 29). This "**Lamb**," Jesus, has taken them all away!

Are you plagued by some sin this morning? Are you burdened by guilt over things you've done, or perhaps by things you haven't done? Lay those sins on Jesus, the spotless "**Lamb of God!**" He has already borne them for you; paid for them and taken them away on the cross! Martin Luther once wrote about this verse, "*[The Son of God] says to me: 'You are no longer a sinner, but I am Your substitute...All your sins are to rest on Me and not on you.'*" [Luther's Works 22:167]

Let's not get the wrong impression about this "**Lamb of God.**" Let's not think that He is weak and helpless just because, as Isaiah prophesied, "**He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth**" (Isaiah 53:7). No, that's simply what Jesus came to do. He came to die. He came to be the sacrifice for sin. He came to be the Savior. But our text also reveals something else about this "**Lamb of God:**" He is also, as John the Baptist testified in our text, the "**Son of God**" (v. 34)! He is the "**Lamb who was slain**" (Revelation 5:12a), but now lives again and rules all things! This **Lamb** is "**Lord of lords and King of kings**" (Revelation 17:14). With His almighty power He can help us in our weakness and rescue us in all our troubles. He is the one who is worthy "**To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!**" (Revelation 5:12b).

Look and see the *real* **Jesus Revealed** here in the Bible. Look here and "**Behold! The Lamb of God**"—who takes away your sin and my sin—"who takes away the sin of the world!" (v. 29). Amen.