

Behold the Lamb of God!
John 1:29

²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Introduction:

A. John the Baptist

1. John the Baptist was a man who was born to speak one sentence, and that sentence was the introduction of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to the world.
2. That sentence was, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world!"
3. Whatever else John the Baptist may have done, or said, or thought, this was the greatest thing he ever did, said, or thought.

I. The Sin of the World

A. A Universal Issue

1. First, there is mentioned here *a burden that is universal* among men - "the sin of the world."
 - a) The Holy Spirit points out the problem of all people.
 - b) God says that what is the matter with this world is not its poverty, disease, suffering, death, or greed.
 - c) God says that what is the matter with the world is the sin that lies behind of all the other problems.
2. John does not speak of "the sins of the world," but he uses the singular word, "sin."
 - a) This word presents sin in its deep root and its profound unity in human nature.
 - b) It is the sins of all the sinners of the world.
3. How many individual sins do you suppose you have committed in your lifetime?
 - a) How many sins do you suppose have been committed by all living people over the entire global planet earth during the last 24 hours?
 - b) Then project it all the way back to the first sin — that of Adam in the Garden, and all the way forward to the last sin (and, thank God, there will be a last one!).
 - c) How many sins would be involved?
 - d) That incredible mass of sin is bundled into one phrase here, "the sin of the world."

B. Sin is in you — deadly, deceitful, damnable sin.

1. An old African Christian told of a dream which helped to bring him to Christ and eternal life.
 - a) In the vision, he saw himself climbing a hill, and he heard steps behind him.
 - b) He turned and saw a man carrying a very heavy load up the hill on his back.
 - c) The African was full of sympathy for him, drew close to him, and spoke to him.
 - d) Then he noticed that his hands were scarred, so he stooped to look under the load and into his face.
 - e) He then recognized the man as Jesus.
 - f) He said to Him, "Lord, are you carrying the world's sin up the hill?"
 - g) "No," said the Lord Jesus, "not the world's sin, *just yours!*"
2. If God dismissed Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden because of one sin, what chance do you think you will have to get into heaven with your many sins — unless you are redeemed and your sins forgiven?
3. We have absolutely no chance for Heaven unless we are saved and cleansed by the blood of this Lamb.
4. All of us carry the burden of sin.

II. The Lamb of God

A. The Unique Lamb

1. Second, there is identified here *a bearer of sin who is unique* among men.
2. John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God."
3. As far as we know, John's entire audience that day was comprised of Jews.
4. There is likely no term in the entire Bible that could better describe the purpose and work of Christ to the Jews than "the Lamb of God."
5. Note the definite article in the phrase.
6. It is "THE Lamb of God."
7. The definite article conveys the meaning of the expected Lamb of God, as if to say, Here at last is the One we have been looking for!

8. Obviously, some Lamb well known to John's hearers was meant.

B. Old Testament Lambs

1. The minds of the people in John's audience must have hurried back to several Old Testament passages.
2. Some may have thought of Genesis four, where Abel offered a lamb as a sacrifice of atonement unto God.
3. Others may have returned mentally to Genesis 22, where Isaac the son said to Abraham the father, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"
 - a) Abraham answered, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering."
4. Or their minds might have gone back to the occasion of the Passover recorded in Exodus 12.
 - a) "Let every man take a lamb and slay it, and sprinkle its blood on the doorpost of his house.
 - b) A death angel will pass through the land of Egypt tonight, and the firstborn son will be slain in every house where the blood does not appear on the doorpost."
5. Or perhaps their minds went back to the greatest Messianic doctrinal passage in the entire Old Testament, Isaiah 53.
 - a) "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb.
 - b) He bears our iniquities; He carries our sins.
 - c) He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.
 - d) The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.
 - e) For all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one unto his own way, and the Lord Almighty has laid upon Him the iniquities of us all."

C. The Lamb

1. So their minds would have turned back to many stopping places in the Old Testament.
2. But note the difference.
3. In the Old Testament, it is "*a* lamb"; here, it is "*the* Lamb."
4. In the Old Testament, each person brings *his own* lamb; here, it is "*the Lamb of God.*"
5. God Himself provides the lamb now.
6. And this is the difference between world religions and Christianity.
7. *In religion, man brings a sacrifice to his god, but in Christianity, God provides the sacrifice for man.*

D. The Lamb Over Me

1. Chinese words are pictures or characters combined for their meaning.
 - a) The Chinese word for "righteousness" forms a perfect illustration of the way a person becomes "righteous" before God.
 - b) It shows the arrangement that has to take place between a person and God when that person is saved.
2. The Chinese word "righteousness" is an amazing combination of two other words.
 - a) The word "lamb" is placed over the word "me."
 - b) What a picture!
 - c) Righteousness is the Lamb over me!
 - d) Righteousness is the Lamb covering me with Himself!

III. The Sin Bearing Lamb

A. The Blessing

1. Third, there is revealed here *a blessing that is almost unbelievable.*
2. "The Lamb of God ... takes away the sin of the world."
3. The word "taketh away" is the exact word that is used for what the angel did with the stone at Jesus' tomb in John 20.
4. The angel actually picked the stone out of its niche and removed it, laying it aside.

B. The Scapegoat

1. Jesus reached down, took up, bore, and carried away our sins.
 - a) This word is used also in the Greek version of the Old Testament in Leviticus 16 with regard to the Day of Atonement.
 - b) The high priest of Israel placed his hands on the head of an innocent goat, a "scapegoat," and confessed the sins of the entire nation.