

“Behold! The Lamb!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Story:** A **tourist** visited *a church in Germany* and was surprised to see the **carved figure of a lamb** near the top of the church’s tower. He asked why it was there and was told that when the church was being built, a workman fell from a high scaffold. His co-workers rushed down, expecting to find him dead. But to their surprise and joy, he was alive and only slightly injured. **How did he survive?** A flock of sheep was passing beneath the tower at the time, and he landed on top of a lamb. **The lamb broke his fall and was crushed to death, but the man was saved.** To commemorate that miraculous escape, someone carved a lamb on the tower at the exact height from which the workman fell.
1. This morning we will be introduced to, I think the **most important metaphor** of Jesus...as **the Lamb of God!**
- B. **Last week** we were introduced to Jesus as **the Word**.
1. We know words are to express ourselves. *“Jesus is God expressing Himself!”*
- C. We were **also** introduced to Jesus as **the Light**.
1. Jesus offers Himself to **everyone** w/o exception, **though** His light is shunned by many(9,10).
 2. **Illustration:** If you come out of a **dark theater** into the **bright sunlight** you have **2 choices:** (1) Shrink back into the darkness (2) Stand in the light till your eyes adjust to the light!
 - a) Many refuse to step into the light of Christ! **See** 3:19.
- D. **Outline:** Jesus, **Revealing the Father!** & **Giving the Spirit!**

II. **REVEALING THE FATHER! (14-18)**

- A. (14) **The Word became flesh & tabernacled among us** - Jesus’ flesh, the new localization of **God’s presence** on earth; the replacement of the old tabernacle.
1. **Read** Rev. 21:3 - *“to pitch one’s tent”* [**Tabernacle** & **dwell** are the same word]
- B. **Incarnation:** deity funneled itself into humanity!
1. Like taking the **finest of wines** & pouring it into an ordinary earthenware vessel
 - a) (Swindoll) *“Jesus traveled through the country as a common, unglazed earthenware bottle, corked until those special occasions when His glory was manifested & the fragrant beauty of deity filled the air with its aromatic presence.”*
 - b) For a few years, the worlds **parched lips** tasted of the kingdom of God.

- C. He came with **grace & truth** not law & judgment.
1. **Q: Does that reflect your Christianity?**
- D. **Full of grace and truth**, that is, it was a **gracious** and **truthful** revelation.
- E. (16) **And of His fullness we have all received** - I picture the children in Haiti, coming to the well, & didn't leave till each & every one of their containers were full.
1. **So Jesus fills us** from His *bottomless reservoir* of **grace & truth**, until our cup overflows!
- F. **Grace for grace** - "*grace in place of grace*" comes to Christians as **waves** continue to come to the shore.
1. The Christian's **total life** is the **constant reception** of one evidence of God's grace replacing another!
- G. (17) **Moses gave the Law that reveals sin & condemns; Christ reveals the truth that redeems!**
- H. (18) He ends his **prologue** on this climatic note *the Divine sculpture became human clay!*
1. **He has declared Him** - Jesus explained God(NASB), made Him known(NIV).
 - a) Literally *exegeted* Him, "*to draw out, to expound, to explain.*"
 2. He carefully presented Jesus to be **none other than: Eternal**(1,2); the **Creator** (3); the **source of life** (4-13); **God's manifested glory** (14-17); & the **unique expression of God** (18).
 3. Think how rapidly human ideas of God deteriorated into ruinous perversions.
 - a) Golden calf; brass serpent (*nehushtan*); fish god;
 - b) **We needed a corrective to fallen man's distortion of who God was/is.**
- I. **Things to ponder so far:** Can you define grace? Why is grace better than law? Did the law have limits? Does grace have limits? Who has best described God?

III. **GIVING THE SPIRIT! (19-34)**

- A. **John's Testimony of Jesus!** (19-28)
- B. We see a **3-fold purpose** for John's Testimony:
1. To fulfill the **prophecy** of **Is.40:3**.
 2. To call people to **repentance**.
 3. To draw people's attention toward **Jesus**.

- C. John earlier explained: **He was the lamp but not the light, a wick but not the flame!**
1. **He was simply a beggar telling other beggars where to find bread!**
 2. **Illustration:** We all have different **lamps** in our home, desk lamps, chandeliers; some fancy, some pretty, some plain(white porcelain, *keyless*).
 - a) **The important thing though is the light not the lamp.**
 - b) It's the **glow of the bulb** that lights the room, **not** the **shine of the brass.**
 - c) **Q: Are you exhibiting Jesus in your life, or do people only see you, the lamp?**
 - d) **Q: Is light radiating from your life, or is it blocked by a bulky lampshade of sin?**
- D. (23) John was **a voice** not **the Word!**
1. Like the difference between the **singer's voice** & the **song's lyrics.**
- E. Why did John have to **make straight the way?**
1. **Imagery was taken from the days (Isaiah, 700 yrs earlier) when there were no paved roads, only tracks across the fields. If the king were to travel, the road must be built & smoothed out that the royal chariot might not find the traveling unduly rough, nor swamped in the mire.¹**
 - a) John was paving the path for the Messiah.
- F. **Wilderness?** Isaiah chose this metaphor to describe "*Israel's spiritual condition*".
1. i.e. desolate, dry, & barren.
 2. **The highway to heaven is paved over prepared hearts.**
 - a) **Repentant hearts; soft hearts; fertile hearts.**
 3. Rough terrain in our hearts needs to be smoothed before the Lord can come near. **Read Is.40:3,4.**
- G. When you **read your bible & pray**, first clear the way for the Lord.
- H. When you **worship**, first smooth the desert path for God.
- I. When **God seems distant**, do a little roadwork of repentance in order to prepare the way for Him.
- J. (24-28) John's **humility** summed up in vs.27. (3 times: vs.15,27,30)
1. John probably had in mind a *rabbinical* saying, "**Every service which a slave performs for his master shall a disciple do for his teacher except the loosing of his sandlethong.**"²
 - a) John was willing to stoop to the lowest level of servanthood to defer to his Messiah

¹ Merrill Tenney; John: The Gospel of Belief; pg.79

² Leon Morris; Commentary on the Gospel of John; pg.141

- K. **Giving of the Spirit!** (29-34)
- L. (29) **The Lamb of God** - the message of the Bible can be summed up in **this title**.
1. The question in the Old Testament is, *“Where is the lamb?”*
 - a) *Isaac* said, “Look, the **fire** and the **wood**, but where is the **lamb** for a burnt offering?” (Gen. 22:7)
 2. In the 4 Gospels, the emphasis is **“Behold the Lamb of God!”** - Here He is!
- M. Whatever other offices belong to Jesus He is first & foremost *the lamb of God*.
1. We don't forget, He is the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*; He is the *Star of David* (if you will); the *True Vine*; the *Wonderful Counselor*, & many others, but before everything else He is the *the lamb of God!*
 2. He is **Prophet Priest & King**: *Prophet* to teach; *Priest* to pray; *King* to rule. But before all else He became incarnate as the *the Lamb* to **save us!**
 3. **Jesus is the Savior**. So we, like John, need to point to Him as our **substitutionary guilt-bearer**. He took **our place**. He bore **our sentence**. He was offered for **our sakes**.
- N. The blood of **lambs covered** the sins of **the Jews**:
1. Ps.32:1 **Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.**
- O. The blood of **Jesus takes away** the sins of **the world** (see also 4:42).
1. Heb.10:4 **it is not possible that the blood of bulls & goats could take away sin.**
- P. Speaking of the Messiah, **Isaiah** uses the terms of a **sacrificial lamb** in Is.53, **“he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, & as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.”**
1. John is declaring then, **Jesus is the true sacrificial lamb** for the Passover.
 2. 1 Cor. 5:7 **For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.**
- Q. **Sacrifice examples**:
1. **First sacrifice was for the Individual** (Adam/Eve; “Tunics of skin”; Gen.3:21).
 2. **Second was for a Family** (Passover Lamb; Ex.12).
 3. **Third was for the Nation** (Day of Atonement; an offering made by fire; Lev.23:27).
 4. **Fourth is for the World** (Jesus for the world; Jn.1:29).

- R. Jesus didn't go to Calvary because it was the only way to show the **love of God**. No, it was because God **hates sin!** (Alan Redpath)
1. It **didn't** say, *Behold the Lamb of God who shows the Love of God!* (it did)
 - a) No, our sin has a cost to it. Sin always **takes you farther** than you wanted to go; **Keeps you longer** than you wanted to stay; & **costs you more** than you wanted to pay!
 2. Our prayer: *Lord, give me a holy hatred of what brought Jesus to the cross!*
- S. How startled was this crowd, when John pointed to Jesus & shouted from the edge of the Jordan river, "*Behold the Lamb of God!*"
1. The Jews standing their must have immediately thought of: **Abel** & his propitiatory lamb; of **Abraham** & his memorable word, "*God will provide Himself a Lamb*"; of the **Passover** Lamb in Egypt; of the **Levitical** Lamb & the Tabernacle; & of the **great prophecy in Isaiah**, "*He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.*"
 - a) Yes, they would have immediately thought of these things, & then **gaped** that John was identifying **Jesus** as the *type & fulfillment!!!*
- T. (33) **John** would not have known **Jesus**, except by the **Spirit**.
1. We cannot truly see Christ today, unless **the Spirit** opens our **spiritual eyes**.
- U. End: "**Blessing and honor and glory and power** be to Him who sits on the throne(Father), and to **the Lamb**, forever and ever!" Rev. 5:13b
- V. I know a **Lamb** that broke *man's fall*(sin) and in the process was **crushed to death**, **but** the man was saved...that Lamb's name was **Jesus Christ!**
1. **Worthy** is the **Lamb** who was slain. Rev. 5:12