

John the Baptist (2)

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[0 : 00] If you have a Bible in front of you, you might like to turn to John chapter 1 again.

We're going to continue looking at John the Baptist this evening as we thought about him this morning and what he did and what we can learn from him. We saw that he was a man sent from God, with a message from God, that he was called himself and he was a voice in the desert, gone to prepare, there to prepare the way for somebody greater than himself.

Now this evening, I want to think about the fact that he was a signpost to Jesus and a role model for us.

A signpost to Jesus and a role model for us. When Jesus came in the crowd with the people listening to John, John saw him and he immediately pointed out who he was.

If you look at 29 in John chapter 1, we see that the next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and he said, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[1 : 44] We're out there in the wilderness. Crowds of people are there listening to John. John, he's baptizing them and Jesus comes along.

John sees him and he recognizes him and he identifies him to all those who are around. This is the man that I was talking about, he said.

This is the man who is greater than I. This is the man who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. In verse 33 he says that.

And he was so effective in pointing to Jesus that some of his own disciples, almost immediately it seems, on verse 35 there, some of his own disciples left John and started to follow Jesus, walked up to follow Jesus.

Now, John looked at Jesus and he said, the Lamb of God, the Lamb of God.

[2 : 55] What did he mean? What did he mean? John's hearers were all Jews at that stage. They knew the Old Testament, at least something of most of it.

And they'll have known that story that we just read together. How God had told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22.

Sacrifice Isaac, his only son, whom he had waited for for many years. The son who was a promised son. God had said, you'll have a son.

Sarah will become mother. He was a miracle baby. He was, all the promises were based on Isaac. God had said, in Isaac will your seed be called. But then this command, go and sacrifice Isaac. How could it be?

[3 : 56] How could it be? And yet, the way the story is written in Genesis 22 there, it sounds as if Abraham obeyed God promptly.

You know, the next morning, as it were. The next morning, he got up and he set out. He took his donkey, he took the wood, he took the fire, and he obeyed God promptly.

we need to try thinking to know God he was surrounded by pagan people who worshipped false gods and child sacrifice might well have been common among the pagan people around him and Abraham really might have thought well maybe my God's the same maybe my God wants him my son too and so he had because he was being obedient because he was a man of faith he was going to do what he had been commanded to do without question but oh if you imagine that long walk if you're a father or a mother that long walk over two days it was the third day when he arrived there and you think what was Abraham thinking about how did he feel all that time he must have felt really really heavy in his heart imagine that walk up the mountain when Isaac says

I see the wood here's the fire where's the lamb and Abraham's reply God will provide for himself a lamb and then Abraham ties Isaac to the altar and he lifts up his knife to kill him and God stopped him I remember we used to tell this story to the children when they were small and I used to

imagine there was an angel there and he got his hand in between the knife and Isaac and he wasn't going to let that knife come down God said don't touch the boy don't touch the boy and God provided a substitute a ram caught in the thicket they knew the story they knew the story God had provided what was a ram in this case to replace Isaac they knew of the Passover lambs when the angel of death had gone through Egypt on that first Passover on the tenth day of the month and these lambs were sacrificed that first Passover night to save the firstborn sons of Israel when in every household in Egypt where a lamb had not been sacrificed the firstborn sons died but in Hebrew homes the lambs replaced the firstborn sons there were substitutes for those sons and every year every year the Passover lambs were still sacrificed in the temple of Jerusalem the people were well aware of sacrificial lambs the new of the lamb of Isaiah 53 where we read that he is led like a lamb to the slaughter and like a sheep before his shearers is done for nearly 2,000 years lambs have been the principal sacrifices for the people of Israel innocent victims who died in the place of guilty people and now here is a new lamb in fact verse 31 it tells us that that was the reason John came he said I myself did not know him but for this purpose I came baptizing with water that he might be revealed to Israel he had come to introduce the people of Israel to Jesus the lamb of God but there's a difference this time isn't there up until now the sinner had to bring his own lamb it came from the flock there were nearly all shepherds and farmers it came from his own flock had to be perfect and without defect and that was the lamb that was a substitute for its owner but now

John says here is the lamb of God God had provided a lamb this is surely the ultimate fulfillment of what Abraham had said in Genesis 22 where is the lamb God will provide for himself a lamb here we see it is ultimately fulfilled we have God reaching down in mercy to us and providing a lamb for our atonement the forgiveness of our sins you see if ever if ever we were to become children of God God had to provide a way of salvation for we are incapable of dealing with our own sin all the sacrifices of the Old Testament couldn't do it Hebrews 10 verse 4 tells us it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins impossible they couldn't do it all those lambs were models models of Jesus the true lamb of God what would this lamb do he would take away the sins of the world it is important that we remember that it is what

[10:10] Jesus did that saves us you know sometimes we fear that maybe we aren't true Christians maybe somebody here he feels that way but because the devil comes along and he says oh you haven't repented well or you haven't felt sorry enough and what we do what happens here is we're trusting in our repentance rather than what Jesus has done now my repentance is probably always less than perfect but Jesus sacrifice is perfect what he has done is perfect and we need to be careful because the devil can run us round in circles causing us to have doubts and fears by making us think of our repentance hasn't been perfect we don't trust in our own repentance we trust in Jesus and his death for us the hymn writer wrote tis not by tears of repentance or prayers but the blood that atones for the soul on him then who shed it thou mayst on him who shed it thou mayst at once thy weight of iniquities roll then doubt not thy welcome since

God has declared there remaineth no more to be done but once in the end of the world he appeared and completed the work he began once in the end of the world Jesus appeared the Lamb of God and he took away the sin of the world he paid the price for it all John was introducing people to Jesus he also testified to Jesus divinity here in verse 30 he said this is he of whom I said after me comes a man who ranks before me because he was before me Jesus he was before me now as a man Jesus was slightly younger than John and he was later beginning his ministry yet John says he was before me because John is testifying here to the fact that Jesus was in the beginning with God he wasn't an ordinary man he said I have borne witness that this is the son of God remember again John the apostle his desire in writing this book was that we might believe that Jesus is the Messiah the son of God and John the Baptist was the first witness to that God now the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world there was another sacrifice another ceremony in the Hebrew year which really illustrates what Jesus was to do and did it was the annual ceremony of the scapegoat and the great day of atonement we can read about it in Leviticus 16 and in it the priest chose choose in it the priest chose two goats and here they were they were both the same there was nothing to choose between them but they selected one of those two goats to die and one to be the scapegoat and the sacrificial goat it was sacrificed for the sins of the people like so many animals and then the high priest it was a high priest that day he laid his hands on the other goat and he symbolically confessed and placed on its head the sins of the whole nation let me read you what

it says in

Leviticus 16 Leviticus 16 verses 21 and 22 and Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel and all their transgressions all their sins he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness the goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness that's a lovely picture of the taking away of sins isn't it this goat bears all the sins of the nation of Israel into the wilderness and is lost there left to wander in the wilderness and those sins are dealt with all the people's sins carried into the desert again my friends how many of us sometimes struggle with guilt struggle with feelings of doubt about our fitness for heaven

God gave these models to the people of Israel so they would strengthen their faith and to help us to understand what Jesus was doing Christ the Lamb of God really has borne our sins on the cross he really has taken that for our iniquities that we might go free he says to each one who trusts in him today son daughter your sins are forgiven you bear them no more Jesus was and he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world Jesus was and is the scapegoat who has carried our sins into the wilderness and we bear them no more never to be remembered against us anymore now Jesus is not your saviour perhaps you think I don't need a saviour I'm not a sinner the Bible tells us that we are sinners that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God all have sinned in the [17:12] Christianity explored course Rico has a saying that we're greater sinners than we ever imagined and God's love for us is greater than we ever dreamed greater than we ever dreamed the Lamb of God has died for your sin if you do not know him as a saviour and he wants you to come he invites you to come to him for salvation behold the Lamb of God Jesus was a signpost to Jesus John was a signpost to Jesus and also John is a model for us all look at what he did first of all he was a clear witness to God's message he was not afraid to point out sin show people the need of salvation he warned people that judgment was coming now this wasn't a popular message even then sometimes imagine it maybe it wasn't less people were more ready to listen then than they are now but it wasn't a popular message

John the Baptist warned King Herod that his lifestyle was wrong and paid for it with his life he was executed people have never liked to be told about sin never liked being warned that judgment is coming but this is the truth this is the truth this is God's message to a rebellious world and we must be willing to make it known God's assessment of us all is that we all like sheep have gone astray we have all turned to our own way there is none righteous no not one when we understand that we need a saviour then we know that a saviour has come and has died but how do we raise that subject of sin with people nowadays passion for life videos that's a good thing here watching them on wednesday nights helping us to realise how to bring the gospel into conversations how to make contact with people how to raise the need of salvation with people who feel they're pretty good really most of our neighbours think they're alright not too bad if anybody is going to get to heaven well they will do the best they can what are we to say how do we point them to Jesus well one thing to say to them is

I needed a saviour I needed a saviour and I'm glad that Jesus died for me I'm glad that he died for me we all need a saviour so let's keep watching the Passion for Life videos let's think about how to get bring the gospel into conversations let's think how to make the kind of contacts with our neighbours that will lead us to be able to tell them about Jesus so John was not afraid to point people to remind people of sin to tell them about their sin and he was a signpost to Jesus to explain who Jesus was and that he was the lamb of God and that's our job too to be signpost to show people the way to Jesus to urge them to follow him to urge them to come to him now John had a huge crowd around him and we may not be as successful as John was in fact he probably won't in today's world but God doesn't ask for success he does ask that we be faithful witnesses and signposts are we are we are we looking out for ways to witness for Jesus remember Andrew in verse 40 we didn't read it but verse 40 of John 1 sorry I think I've got the verse 40 yes one of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew Simon Peter's brother he first found his own brother Simon and said to him we have found the Christ the Messiah which means Christ and he brought him to Jesus Andrew first thing he did was to find his own brother and brought him to Jesus may God help us to be those who are open and willing to find others and to bring them to Jesus to bring them to Jesus and remember as we saw this morning if we're going to be useful in Christ's kingdom he must become greater and we must become less

Jesus must become greater and we must become less are we willing for that too so John was a signpost to Jesus the Lamb of God and he's a great role model for us in his courage and in the fact that he appointed people to Jesus may God bless his word to all our hearts tonight let's pray Father thank you again for your word thank you for Jesus the Lamb of God the one who took our place who paid our debt who took on himself our sins and our iniquities that we might go free oh Father we thank you for him and we thank you today that he is here he's ready to forgive he's ready to make any of us who do not know you if we come to you he will make us new men and new women in Christ and we thank you for that

[24 : 01] Lord we pray bless your word to us that you will help us who know you to be signposts to Jesus where we are and we are willing to speak for you help us we pray Lord in Jesus name Amen we're going to see we're going to see we're going to see