

Sin Sought for and Not Found

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[0 : 00] Let's turn to our Bibles once more to the Gospel of John chapter 1 and we'll read from verse 19 to verse 34.

The Gospel of John chapter 1 verses 19 to 34.

And this is the record of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ.

And they asked him, What then? Are you Elias? And he said, I am not. Are you that prophet? And he answered, No.

Then they said to him, Who art thou? That we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

[1 : 23] He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah.

And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked them and said unto him, Why baptisest thou then, if thou be not that Christ?

Nor Elias, neither that prophet. John answered them, saying, I baptise with water. But there standeth one among you whom you know not.

He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoes latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

These things were done in Beth-Abera beyond Jordan, where John was baptising. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and he then saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

[2 : 46] This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for he was before me.

And I knew him not, but that he should be made manifest to Israel. Therefore am I come baptising with water.

And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

And I knew him not. But that he sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptises with the Holy Ghost.

And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God. And may God the Holy Spirit make his word effectual to us.

[4 : 06] We'll sing once more to God's praise. Again, Psalm 89. But this time we sing verses 13 to 17. Five stanzas.

Psalm 89 at verse 13. Thou hast an arm that's full of power. Thy hand is great in might.

And thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height. And we'll go down to verse 17. Because the glory of their strength doth only stand in thee, And in thy favour shall our horn and power exalted be.

Psalm 89, verses 13 to 17. Psalm 89, verses 13 to 17.

The first alarm that's full of power, Thy hand is great in mind.

[5 : 16] And thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height.

Just is the Lord. Just is the Lord. Just is the Lord. Just is the Lord. And all thy Lord. Our name is the dwelling place.

And all thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height.

And all thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height. O pretty blessed be the Lamb, the trifles of the Lord.

In brightness of life is so long, the ever of shadow.

[6 : 37] In thy name shall all the earth rejoice in heaven.

And in thy righteousness shall we exalted beyond high.

It was the glory of the strength, the Lord which came in me.

And in thy faith shall ever come, and the grace of the Lord be.

Well, let's turn in our Bibles to the passage of God's Word which we read in the Gospel of John, chapter 1.

[8 : 16] And as God would help me, I would like to concentrate on verse 29. Gospel of John, chapter 1, verse 29.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. The world has always believed, sought a supreme being.

And the history of the human race, we can say, shows that human beings are much more prone to polytheism rather than atheism.

Atheism is a relatively new ideology, only a few hundred years old. History shows we're far more prone to having many gods rather than having no god.

[9 : 41] Now, history also would tell us that the Eastern world has sought that one supreme being through mysticism.

While the Western world has sought that one supreme being through rationalism. John, who wrote this Gospel, is at great pains to emphasize, there is only one way you can find that supreme being, and that is through Jesus Christ.

He is the only way to God the Father. That's the message of the Gospel of John.

Why is there such a thing as religion in the world? Why is there such a thing as religion?

It's because there's death in the world. Is that right? It's because there's suffering in the world. It's because there's disease.

[11 : 05] There's trouble in the world. There's war. There's hatred. There's earthquakes. And we need some sort of explanation for that.

And therefore, the world, society, has invented religions to explain it. But why is there death in the world?

Why has suffering come into the world? Why are there earthquakes? Answer. Because there is sin.

Because sin exists in the world. Therefore, all these troubles exist. Suffering, death, earthquake, war, disease.

What is the answer to that? The answer is we need forgiveness of sin.

[12 : 13] We need deliverance from sin. Not religion. Christianity, I suppose, must be catalogued under religion.

But it's not really a religion. It's a solution to the problem of sin. Sin must be atoned for.

Sin must be forgiven. We must be delivered from the power of sin. And that's why we've Christ. And that's why we have Christ in the world.

We're told categorically here in the Bible that we're to behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.

Now, just one quick question first. What is sin? Sin, I'm just going to define it this way tonight, is excluding God from your life.

[13 : 26] You might be a perfect parent. Or indeed a perfect child. You might be a perfect employer or employee.

You might not think you do anything wrong in life. But if you exclude God from your life, that is sin.

And that needs to be forgiven. And that needs to be atoned for. Or you cannot enter heaven.

Here we are told, Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. As God would help me, I'd like to ask three questions.

Or let's try to answer three questions. Why are we told to behold him? Secondly, why is Jesus here called the Lamb of God?

[14 : 42] And thirdly, what does it mean to behold him? But first of all, why are we to behold Christ, the Lamb of the world?

The Lamb of God, sorry. The Lamb of God. Answer, because he can take away the sin of the world. But not the sin of the world.

He can take away the sin of human beings. But not of devils. The sin of the world, I'm proposing, is greater than the sin of devils.

The greatest sin, if you're a Christian or not, our greatest sin is that we sin against grace, which we tried to speak on this morning.

God has given the human race a second chance through Jesus. And we say, not interested. It's not my line.

[16 : 02] It's not my cup of tea. That's sinning against grace. And let me tell you, no devil has committed that. Because no devil ever got the opportunity.

There's no grace offered to devils. And that's why the angels desire to look into this gospel. When God passed by the fallen angels, who fell and became devils, and said, no mercy for them.

How did God show mercy to these small beasts called human beings that brought the curse into the universe? Why?

How? How? That's what they desire to look into. And we just dismiss it and say, not my line. I'm not into religion. How solemn.

How sad. How desperately serious. The world, you see, is plagued with sin.

[17 : 10] As we've explained, it's the cause of disease. It's the cause of death. It's the explanation why things deteriorate.

Things deteriorate. Due to sin. Due to sin. Why is there aging? Because of sin. Why does your car rust?

Because of sin. Sin. You see, sin didn't just affect human beings. Sin affected animals. They die. They've got disease.

Because we, human beings, sinned. It's Spurgeon who says, no wonder the lion roars when he sees a man. Yeah, he says, no wonder the dog barks at man.

We're the species which brought sin into the universe, which affected the earth, bringing forth weeds, which affected the animals.

[18 : 17] Which brought forth earthquake and floods. The earth, the world is plagued with sin.

But even worse than that, the world is perverted through sin. We're perverted through sin.

We do not see things in their true light until God opens our eyes. Till the grace of God comes into our hearts and shows us the real situation.

Our real position. Our real danger. We're plagued with sin. And we're perverted through sin. And we need spiritual discernment.

As the Bible says elsewhere, the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God.

[19 : 18] Because we're perverted. Sin has corrupted us. Our minds, our thoughts, our sight. Sin has corrupted us.

Sin has corrupted us. Sin has corrupted us. Plagued with sin. Perverted through sin. Paralysed by sin. Paralysed by sin.

That's the damage it's done us. We're dead. Spiritually dead. Spiritually dead. We can't do anything to help ourselves.

Even when we realise our plight. We don't even. We don't even. We don't even. Accept our plight. We don't see our plight.

Until the Spirit works in us. And when we begin to see it. We realise. Not only. Have we not known it. But we can do nothing about it. We're powerless.

[20 : 15] We're powerless. Plagued with sin. Perverted through sin. Paralysed by sin. And we're punished for sin.

The soul that sins shall die. The Bible is very clear about that basic principle. The wages of sin is death.

My friend we need to get rid of sin. But you and I cannot. But Christ can. That's the gospel. That's what we're reading.

Behold the Lamb of God. Who takes away. The sin of the world. Christ can take sin away.

Do you know that? He can take sin itself away. Not merely the punishment. Oh he can take the punishment away. Blessed be his name.

[21 : 23] But isn't the prophet. Don't we read in the book of Daniel. He will finish transgression. He will make an end of sin.

Here he is. He can take it away. And he can take it away. To a place. Where it cannot be found. Even by God.

Will you grasp that? Even by God. Jeremiah. Jeremiah. Chapter 50.

Verse 20. In those days. What are those days? Those days are gospel days. The days we're living in. In those days.

This prophetic word. Thus saith the Lord. The iniquity. Of Israel. Shall be sought for. And there shall be.

- [22 : 24] None. None. There shall be none. It was predicted. It was promised. It was prophesied. It was not just predicted.
- And prophesied. It was actually illustrated. Or dramatized. You might say. On the day of atonement. Leviticus. Chapter 16. Verse 21.
- And 22. Tells us. What happened on the day of atonement. The high priest. On that day. Was presented with two goats. Two live goats.
- And they cast lots for the goats. And the lot. On which. There was. There was. The live goat.
- Which was called. The scape goat. And there was the goat. That was to be slaughtered. Well that. Live goat. Was called. The scape goat. And.
- [23 : 21] I would have to confess. It's only recently. I discovered. The word. Scape. Is actually. A shortened word. Of the word. Escape. The goat.
- Which. Escaped. The death. What happened. That scape goat. On the day of atonement. Well. He was brought. To. The high priest.
- And the high priest. On that day. Put his two hands. On the head. Of the live goat. And he confessed. Over it. All the sins. Of Israel. During the past. Year.
- Only once a year. Did this. Act take place. And he confessed. The sins. Of Israel. Over. As it were. Transferring. Sin.
- To the head. Of the live goat. And then. They appointed. A man. A strong. Fit man. In the congregation. And they put. A kind of tether. Around the goat. With a rope. And that strong man.
- [24 : 18] Led away. The goat. Into. It's interesting. The way the bible. Puts it. He will lead him. Away.
- Into. A land. Not. Inhabited. A land. Where there's no. Human beings. Now.
- Now. They tell me. That goat. Was never. Ever. Seen. Again. You see the picture. Picture. Of Christ. Taking our sin. Upon himself. And then. Taking it away. To a place. Where it will never. Be seen.
- Again. Don't you sing. Psalm. A hundred. And three. At the communion time.
- [25 : 11] Very well. We do. In our denomination. And I'm sure you do. As far. As east. Is distant. From the west. So far.
- Has he. Removed. From us. All. Our. Iniquity. As far. As east. Is distant.
- From the west. And again. This is why I believe. In the verbal. And plenary. Inspiration. Of scripture. Every word. It doesn't say. As far as north. Is from the south.
- But as far as east. Is from the west. You see. If you stood. If I stand. At the north pole. And someone. Takes my sins. As far. Away. As he can.
- In the world. To the south pole. That's as far away. In the world. That you can get. But it can be found. It can be found. At the south pole.
- [26 : 06] But when we talk about. East and west. Put your finger. On a globe. Move west. Now. Where's the west? Oh. It's round there.
- Oh. I say. Well. Where's the west now? Oh. It's round there. Where's the west? You see. You go round. And round. And round. And you never arrive. There's no west pole. There's no east pole.
- And the bible is teaching us there. Christ. Can take. Away. Our sin. To a place. Where it will never be found. Even by himself.

Because he's pardoned it. He's forgiven it. Christ has paid for it. And he's taken it away. He's made an end of sin. And he's finishing transgression.

So our second question. Why is Jesus called the Lamb of God? Well. In bible times.

[27 : 09] In bible times. A lamb was a symbol. For three things. First of all. It was a symbol. Of purity. Purity.

Christ. Christ. Christ. Christ. Is pure. Pure. Holiness. Pure. Godliness. Pure. Goodness.

And our bible tells us elsewhere. There's only one power. One entity. That can overcome evil. And it's not more evil. It's good.

Overcome evil. With good. You see. Good and evil. Evil. Evil. Evil. Are not. Equals. They are.

Direct opposites. But they're not. Equals. Our bible tells us. Good. Exceleth. Evil. As far as.

[28 : 09] Light. Exceleth. Darkness. Light. Penetrates. Darkness. Darkness. Darkness. Darkness. Doesn't penetrate light.

What's the technical definition. Of darkness. Do you know what it is? The absence. Of light. Technical definition.

Of darkness. The absence. Of light. Good. Exceleth. Evil. As far as light. Exceleth.

Darkness. You see. Some people say. Christ. Would have nothing to do with me. I'm so unclean. I'm so impure. I would only. I would only.

Dirty him. As it were. Oh. How wrong. How wrong. Christ. Christ. Will purify you. Christ. Will purge away sin.

[29 : 04] Christ. Will take away. All your dirt. Your filthiness. Of heart. And mind. And soul. And body. Christ. Purifies. Christ.

Cleanses. Away sin. And if you want. To be cleansed. Of sin. What a good sign. What a good sign. That's the root.

Of the matter. I want cleansing. I don't just want. To escape hell. Oh yes I do. But I want. To be cleansed. I want. To be pure. Only Christ. Can make you pure.

And he's called. The lamb of God. Because a lamb. Was a symbol. Of purity. But a lamb. Also. Was a symbol. Of innocence. And Christ.

Being the lamb. Of God. Not just the pure. Of God. The innocent. Holy. Holy. Harmless. Undefined. Quite separate.

[30 : 03] From sinners. You see. If someone else. Stood in our place. That someone else. Being a sinner.

Could only atone. For his own sins. But Christ. Being pure. Being innocent. His death. His death.

Could atone. For an innumerable number. Of sins. Of an innumerable number. Of people. He's infinite.

Eternal. Therefore. His death. Is far more valuable. Than the death. Of any human being. Only. Christ.

Can pay. For an innumerable. Number of souls. An innumerable number. Of sins. They've committed. They're only innumerable.

[30 : 58] By us. Of course. Christ knows everyone. Because he's paid for it. If you're a Christian. He's paid for it. Any substitute.

Must. Be sinless. Otherwise. He cannot atone. For other people. You see. It was never Christ's. Duty. To die.

It's your duty. To die. It's my duty. To die. Christ. Chose. To die. He chose.

To die. He chose. To be our substitute. He chose. To take. The punishment. Of everyone. Who will be in heaven.

A lamb. Was a symbol. Of innocence. A symbol. Of purity. A symbol. Of innocence. But thirdly.

[31 : 58] A symbol. Of sacrifice. Now. To be accepted. To be accepted. You see.

A sacrifice. Has to be. Accepted. By the person. You're sacrificing. To. When we were in the.

Holy land. We went to. The spot. Caesarea. Philippi. Where Jesus. Asked. Jesus. Asked. Peter. Who do men. Say. That I am. Which was a very.

Suitable. Spot. To ask that question. Because. It was a place. Where there were. Where pagan. Where there were pagan. Temples. Pagan.

Shrines. The. The. The. Emperor. Cult. Gods. Were there. The whole place. Was surrounded. By pagan. Religion. And Christ said. Who do men.

[32 : 53] Say that I am. Who am I. You are Christ. The son of the living. God. These gods. Weren't living. Well our guide. Took us to a cave. And in the cave.

It was a cave. Which was supposed to be. The home. Of the pagan. God. Pan. And in the cave. There was a. A loch. And we're told.

That the worshippers. Of Pan. Came along. With their. Sacrifices. And they threw it. Into the water. And they said. If the sacrifice.

Sank. The sacrifice. Was not accepted. If the sacrifice. Floated. Then. The sacrifice.

Was accepted. By their. Pagan God. And he said. Of course. Most of them. Sank. But you see. The point is. They didn't know.

[33 : 51] What their God. They didn't know. They didn't know. What pleased them. They didn't know. What was acceptable. Christ. Sacrifice. Was acceptable.

To God. The Father. As a. Substitutionary. Atonement. For the sins. Of all. Who will be in heaven. But you see. As I said. For it to be.

Accepted. It had to be. It had to be. Voluntary. It's your duty. To die. It's my duty. To die. Because we've sinned. It was never.

Christ's. Duty. To die. Except that he promised. He would. He volunteered. Himself. To be our.

Substitute. How wonderful. God's. Acceptable. Sacrifice. What was it?

[34 : 46] His only. He only had one son. And he adopts. Us. As his children. Now people who adopt. Very often. They usually don't have any children.

But God chose to. Increase his family. Was there something wrong. With the one son he had? No. Holy. Harmless. Undeified.

Separate from sinners. Perfectly holy. There was no need to adopt more. What's the cost to adopt more? For God to increase.

His children. What's the cost? That. One. Perfect. Son. He has. Already. How's that for love?

Never question. Does God love you? He gave his well beloved only son.

[35 : 44] That we might be forgiven. Don't say you're not interested. How wrong. How evil.

How sinful. Not your line. Not your interest. He gave his well beloved son. And Christ gave his back to the smiters.

His cheeks to them that plucked off the air. He hid not his face from shame and spitting. But was determined to go to the place called Calvary. Because he was determined to pay for his people's sins.

So. Third question. What does it mean. To behold Christ. You see.

It must obviously mean. Much more. Than physical sight. There's a verse in the Bible. Matthew. It's in Matthew I think.

[36 : 47] And sitting down. They watched him there. At Christ's crucifixion. The crowd that they were. Sat down. And watched him there.

Oh you see. They're beholding Christ. No, no, no, no, no, no. That's not what this means. That's not what beholding. The Lamb of God means. Much more.

Than physical sight. Do you remember the woman. With the issue of blood. She came to Christ. And touched the hem of his garment.

And she was instantly made clean. And Christ said. Who touched me? Do you remember what the disciples said? Lord. They're all touching you. They're all pressing up against you.

What do you mean who touched you? There's a whole lot touching you. But Christ meant. Who touched me? In a special way. With faith. It's looking at Christ.

[37 : 47] In a special way. It's looking at Christ. With exercising faith in him. Believing he can't take away your sin.

Because he's paid the punishment of it. That's what beholding. Beholding simply means. We are to behold him. In our present condition.

We think by nature. Oh I'll have to. Sort things out first. Before I think of coming to Jesus. My friend. How can you sort things out?

Tell me. How can you improve yourself before God. As long as you're saying. I don't need him yet. Look at him.

Behold him. In your present condition. Where you are. And look at him. Beholding. Expecting. Salvation. Because he's purchased the gospel.

[38 : 56] And the gospel is of any person. Anywhere. Look to me. And depend on me. For taking them to heaven. They have eternal life.

That's the gospel. I close. By borrowing from. Charles Spurgeon. He was preaching one day.

On Isaiah 45.22. Look unto me. And be ye saved. All you ends of the earth. I almost thought he was speaking to Israel then.

But the text says no. He was speaking to all the ends of the earth. Look to me. You pagan heathens. Look to me.

And Spurgeon says wonderfully. A blind man can look. He may not be able to see. But he can look.

[40 : 02] He can turn towards. He can hear a voice. Over there. He can peer. Look. Turn toward. And there's life.

For a look. At the crucified one. That's the gospel. And that's what John. Is trying to emphasize to us.

Behold. The lamb of God. Which taketh away. The sin of the world. I plead with you. Let him take away.

Your sin. And why not. Tonight. Look. And be saved. All. The ends. Of the earth.

May God. The Holy Spirit. Make his word. Effectual. To every one of us. Let's pray. Our father.