

The Lamb of God

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[0 : 01] For a few moments together, seeking God's blessing upon us, let us turn to that chapter that we were reading from, chapter 1 of John's Gospel, and we will look together at two verses, verse 29 and also at verse 36, 29 and 36, chapter 1 of John's Gospel.

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

Verse 36, and looking at Jesus as he walked, he said, Behold the Lamb of God. These famous words of John the Baptist, Behold the Lamb of God.

As you know, John the Baptist was raised up by God to be the forerunner of the Saviour Jesus Christ. And in the short time that he lived in this world, he was mightily used by God in his hand to bring men and women to repentance for their sins.

And he was preparing the way for the ministry of Jesus, who was his cousin and who was six months younger than him.

[1 : 37] He was saying, He is an example to us in the church, and he is a challenge to us. His life still challenges us as we read about him in the Bible.

Now in these words, Behold the Lamb of God, I suggest that there are at least three things that we can see in this part of the verse.

There is, first of all, the duty of every preacher brought before us in those words, Behold the Lamb of God. And then there is the description of Jesus Christ, the Saviour in those words as well.

And there is also, I believe, the demand that the Gospel makes upon us when we hear it being proclaimed and preached.

Behold, look, see the Lamb of God for yourselves. So there is the duty of the preacher, the description of the Saviour and the demand of the Gospel in these verses.

[2 : 48] First of all, let's look at the duty of the preacher. It is always the duty and the privilege of every God-sent preacher of the Gospel to point his fellow sinners to Jesus Christ and to say, Behold the Lamb of God.

This was the very reason where John the Baptist came into this world. This was his calling in life, to point sinners to Jesus.

Now supposing John the Baptist had been an eloquent preacher and spoken fearlessly, as he did, against the sins of his day. If he had failed to point sinners to Christ, he would have failed in his calling as a preacher.

He would have missed his life work if he had neglected to cry out to the people, Behold the Lamb of God.

It's good that he baptized repenting sinners. It was good that he challenged the Pharisees. You remember how he spoke to them?

[4 : 05] Ye generation of vipers, he said, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? It took real courage to challenge Herod about his promiscuous lifestyle and his moral, immoral living.

But important as all these things were, John's main task was to herald the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and point the people to Jesus.

And that is still the duty and the great, great privilege of the preacher of the gospel. Whatever else he does, if he fails to point sinners to Jesus Christ, then he has failed in his calling.

And what a calling the preacher of the gospel has. He has the privilege of going to the pulpit and proclaiming Christ and him crucified.

And that's what should be preached in every pulpit throughout our land. Not the other things that seems to creep into the preaching, but to proclaim Christ crucified as the only saviour for sinners.

[5 : 37] And that is what people need.

As a young Christian, we were often found in the open air, preaching on the Lord's Day at Glasgow Cross and at other places.

And the person who would be leading the open air would ask, anybody got a favourite that they want to hear being sung?

And an old tramp, I remember, with his bottle of meth and mixture of meth and brasso.

He put up his hand and he said, Mister, could you sing us the old rugged cross? And that deep down in the heart of that man was the desire to hear more about Jesus.

[7 : 02] And I don't think he was alone. There are others as well who want to hear about Christ and him crucified. Many years ago I came across a saying and I jotted it down.

And it goes like this. Life is short. Death is sure. Sin's the curse. Christ's the cure.

And how true that is. Sin is the curse. Sin is the curse. And life is very short. And death is coming to us. Every one of us. Sooner or later.

But the answer is Christ. Christ is the cure that we need for our souls. Now I want you to notice the attitude of John as he looks upon Jesus here.

Verse 36. And looking at Jesus as he walked. He said, Behold the Lamb of God. Now that word looking means to fix your gaze on and understand what it means.

[8 : 15] You can look at something here or there or wherever. And it's not the kind of looking that John is wanting here at all.

He wants us to look with an undivided attention at the Saviour Jesus Christ.

That's how the preacher should be. Looking at Jesus intently and believing and recognising that Jesus is the Saviour of the world.

The one who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Understanding that he is the only answer for the sins of the people.

There is no salvation in anybody else but in him. Now every preacher should be assured of that in their own soul first of all. That Jesus is what people need.

[9 : 15] Because if you are not very convinced about that in your own heart. You are not going to have much of an impact upon the congregation that is listening to you.

If you doubt that Jesus is the Saviour of the world then. People are not going to listen to you when you preach. Somebody said that they that preach Christ best are those who see him best.

And who are fully convinced that there is no other name under heaven whereby we may be saved. If the preacher is not very sure of that truth in his own heart.

There is little chance of those listening to him being convinced about it either. Because John looked at Jesus. It left his words having a greater power and a greater point to them.

Looking at Jesus. Looking at Jesus. Realising who he was. Why he came into the world. What he was going to do in the future. Gave John the Baptist the power and the point in his preaching.

[10 : 37] That went straight home to the hearts of those who were listening to him. This is one of the briefest sermons I'm sure that was ever preached.

Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And again behold the Lamb of God. Only a few words.

Maybe ten or so words. And yet look at the tremendous impact it had on those who heard it. This message bore fruit right away.

Because two of John's own disciples heard John say these words. And they left John and began to follow Jesus. And yet you find there's not a bit of jealousy to be found in John's heart.

Although these two disciples left him and followed Jesus. Because it did not make John become jealous of his first cousin.

[11 : 46] Later on you hear him say of Jesus. He must increase. But I must decrease. He must grow. I'm going to get smaller and smaller.

He is going to go on to higher heights. I'm sure you've heard the story of the two preachers who were called to preach in a vacant congregation.

The minister had left for another congregation and there was a vacancy. And the two preachers were going to be preaching that day for the vacancy. One of them preached in a sermon he preached.

It was so orderly and ironed to perfection. And when the elders were going home, two of them were walking side by side.

And somebody heard them saying to one another, What a preacher. What a preacher. The one who came for the evening service.

[12:57] He wasn't as eloquent. He wasn't as polished as the one in the morning. But the same two elders going home at night were here to say, What a God.

What a God. And that is what the true preacher of the gospel wants to hear at the end of every service. People going out.

People going home. And saying, What a God we have. What a saviour we have in Jesus Christ. That's the reward the true preacher wants above everything else.

That people would see Jesus in such a way that it would leave a mark upon them. So the duty of the preacher and the privilege of the preacher in every age is to lift up Jesus Christ and him crucified as the only saviour for sinners and point people to him.

And secondly, the description of the saviour Jesus Christ. Behold, the Lamb of God. Among all the names that we have in the Bible about Jesus, and he has called many names in the Bible, but perhaps the name the Lamb is one of the sweetest and most precious names to many of the people of God in every generation.

[14:31] I'm sure with regard to yourself that you love the name the Lamb of God. What can we learn from the words the Lamb of God?

Well, the Jews used to call things that were great and big and wonderful that they were belonging to God.

If there was something like the trees, the cedars, the great high cedars in Lebanon, they called them the trees of God because no other trees were as tall as they were.

When they heard thunder, they would say that that was the voice of God. And something of that has come into the culture of the highland people as well.

I remember so well as a young boy in youth, being frightened of the thunder and the lightning, and my parents would say to me, that's the voice of God speaking to you.

[15:40] They didn't explain to me what it was, what was happening in the atmosphere after the lightning flash that the atmosphere was coming together and all these weird and wonderful explanations that had given by those who studied the weather.

They said, that is the voice of God, they said. And they put the fear of God into us as children like that. And we had a know and a respect for God.

Something that has gone out of the generation in which we live today. Anything that was great, it was the voice of God.

A great sound, great tall trees. And therefore, the Lamb of God was the greatest of all the sacrifices that was ever offered to God.

Jesus was the greatest of them all. Because, you see, all the sacrifices of the Old Testament, all the lambs that were taken to be slaughtered and to be sacrificed on the altars down the years, they were only symbols.

[16:58] They were only pointing forward to the true Lamb of God who was going to come in the fullness of time and who was going to take away the sins of his people.

When Abel came in the beginning of the world, the beginning of human history, when he came with the Lamb and it was slain and put on the altar, you know, Abel didn't trust in that little lamb that he had put on the altar.

He didn't trust in the blood of that lamb. He was looking beyond the lamb that was on the altar. And if you would ask him and speak and say to him, Abel, what is your hope when you're doing this and sacrificing this lamb on the altar?

What is your hope? He would say, my hope is in the provision that God is going to make for sinners. I don't know when, I don't know where, but this is just a symbol pointing forward to the time when God will send provision for sinners.

And it is his sacrifice that I am trusting in for my salvation. It's the blood of that sacrifice that is to cleanse me from sin.

[18:29] Not that little lamb on the altar that you see there. No, not at all. That's only a symbol. He would say to you. And the same was true about the sacrifices of the faithful believers down through the years.

People like Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Moses, in the land of Egypt, the Passover lamb.

No, Moses would say that Passover lamb is not going to take away our sins. it's only pointing forward to the one God is going to provide in the fullness of time.

And they all looked forward to the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. We're looking back to Calvary. They were looking forward to Calvary with anticipation.

and they would be wondering and praying. Some of them, they would be saying, I wonder if we'll live to see it. I would love, they would say, to see it. God's provision for sinners.

[19 : 37] But many of them died without seeing it at all. In Christ alone is there atonement for sin.

Sin cannot be put away without punishment. We originally fell in Adam. He was our representative of our federal head.

And the wonder of God's great plan of salvation is that he has sin fit, that sinners should rise to newness of life in the second Adam.

We fell in the first Adam, but we rise to newness of life in the second Adam, Jesus Christ himself.

Because Jesus was one with his people and their federal head. It was righteous. It was just to allow him to suffer in their stead.

[20 : 38] And apart from this, every person must bear his own punishment for his sins. But that's the way that God has planned it for us to escape the punishment we deserve is when we look to Christ and look to him for salvation.

The only way a person's sins can be forgiven is for those sins to be punished in the legal representative that God has provided in Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ on the cross suffered the punishment his people deserved from the beginning of time until the end of time.

What a burden he had to carry in order to recompense the injury done by sin to the eternal justice of God and to the honour of the name of God.

that honour had to be repaired and only Jesus could do that. Lord Jesus is also the Lamb of God because it was God who appointed him.

[21 : 56] He is the appointed sacrifice, the appointed saviour before time began in the council chambers of eternity as it is put so often.

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit purposed and planned the way of salvation. How are we going to save the people that I have given to you the Father would say to the Son I have given you a gift of my heart and of my love.

How are we going to save them? And they sat down and they planned and they purposed the way of salvation. And this is what they came to.

They chose that the Son would go into time, into this world as a baby, grow up to be a man and then go to the cross of Calvary and there suffer for the sins of his people until he died on that cross.

And when the time was right God sent him into the world just as they had planned in past eternity.

He grew up to be a man he eventually died on the cross nailed to that cross on Calvary.

[23 : 22] Listen to Peter as he writes to the church about Christ. He says that he was a lamb without blemish and without spot. He was indeed foreordained before the foundation of the world that was manifest in these last times for you.

1 Peter 1 verses 19 and 20. Foreordained before the foundation of the world. When we rely on Christ to save us we trust in the one that God appointed to be the saviour of his people.

If I leave my sin and if you leave your sin on Jesus you are leaving it where God commanded you to leave it on Christ.

This is the appointed scapegoat of God he provided it and that is where we are going to find salvation by putting our faith and our trust in Jesus as our saviour.

So if you come to him tonight with your burden of sin you are guaranteed to find rest for your soul.

[24 : 45] It's as simple as that and yet so profound that the best mind cannot really grasp it in all its entirety. God's appointment is the guarantee that we are accepted if we believe in Jesus.

So what you have to do is to say to God in prayer God I believe that you sent Jesus into the world to die for your people and I am coming to you and I'm trusting Jesus to be my saviour and if I die and if I be lost God I'll be lost trusting in Jesus and I believe that cannot happen.

he was the one who provided the sacrifice of his son for sin. Not only is he the lamb of God by appointment but also by provision.

God provided him freely an unspeakable gift of his love. Thanks be to God said Paul for his unspeakable gift.

God gave him freely as the gift of his love. Later on John writes to the church in his first letter chapter 4 and verse 10 and he says here is love not that we love God but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.

[26 : 31] Behold he is the lamb of God as God provides and offers him up as a sacrifice for us. The lamb was not sacrificed by the hands of men or by the hands of priests or anything like that but in the deepest and most profound sense he was sacrificed by God himself.

God was the one who was sacrificing him on that cross. Listen to Isaiah chapter 53 verse 10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.

He has put him to grief. God has put him to grief. God has bruised him. Verse 6 The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us soul.

On Calvary God was both the high priest and the sacrifice at the same time. Is it not the father's voice that we hear in Zachariah chapter 13 verse 7 saying Awake O sword Waking up Awake against my shepherd against the man who is my companion smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

That's the father speaking there. Wake up sword. You've been in the sheath all these years down through the ages of the Old Testament.

[28 : 15] It's about time you woke up. Come on do your work. You've been sleeping in that scabbard long enough.

Wake up against against my shepherd and the man who was my companion from all eternity who was in my bosom from all eternity.

Here then is the Lamb of God an apt description of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Then there's the demand of the Gospel. The Gospel when we hear it being proclaimed demands of us some action or other.

We see that in the word behold. Behold the Lamb of God. We are commanded to look to Jesus Christ and the word is used for behold in verse 29 and again in verse 36 as a word which means to look and to believe.

[29 : 31] The same word is used in chapter 20 of this Gospel when John outran Peter as they made for the empty tomb and the grave clothes were there and it says of John and he saw and believed and this is the kind of seeing that John is wanting his people to exercise not just a glance but to look and to believe.

John looked into the grave and he believed yes the grave clothes are there he's arrived he is risen he is indeed the saviour that he said he was John the baptist wants us to do that kind of seeing as he points us to Christ behold see understand believe that this is the Messiah this is the saviour of the world the lamb of God and that kind of seeing is the seeing that every true preacher of the gospel wants of his congregation as well the old hymn writer said there is life for a look at the crucified one there is life at this moment for thee then look sinner look only look and be saved on him that was nailed to the tree have you looked like that on the cross of

Calvary you've heard a lot about it since you were young but have you looked believingly and just in the same way as the Jew in the Old Testament times put his hands on the head of the trembling victim that was to be his substitute the goat on the day of atonement in the same way you put your hand by faith on Christ believing that he is God's appointed substitute for your sins you shall be saved those Jews in the Old Testament put the priest put his hand on the head of the scapegoat and he confessed all the sins of Israel for that year on that poor animal there it was taken out to a place where nobody lived where there was no vegetation but sand and sand and more sand and was left there until it got hungry and thirsty and weak and eventually it would lie down in the heat of the sun dehydrated and then he would try to get up and it couldn't it was too weak and he eventually died and he died bearing the sins of Israel for that year and those sins died with the scapegoat and Jesus our saviour went as our scapegoat to Calvary and there he suffered and died he was on that cross for six hours from nine o'clock in the morning to three o'clock in the afternoon from twelve to three o'clock in the afternoon there was darkness over the whole of the earth and the call came out from the darkness my God my God why have you forsaken me and that was the scapegoat dying with the sins of his people weighing heavily upon him and he took them away forever us to a place uninhabited behold the Lamb of God precious words indeed for us do you find yourself being tempted to sin then behold the Lamb of God oh the devil is never far away from God's people at any time and he'll try to trip you up he'll try to make you sin but you look at the Lamb of God and temptation's power will fade away do you find yourself suffering from times of

depression people don't like telling others that they are depressed but I believe that there are more Christians in our islands and highlands depressed than they admit and very few people try to help them in any way they're too ashamed to go to the doctor feeling depressed and low in spirit affected by something or other that causes you to be down in the dumps you behold the

Lamb of God it'll make all the difference are you afflicted by physical pain has it been painful for you to come to church here tonight behold the Lamb of God he has walked this pathway ahead of us and he knows what we go through ask the Saviour to help you when you're finding the Christian life difficult to live comfort strengthen and keep you he's willing to aid you he'll carry you through he knows every pain that rends our hearts are you weary in the battle of life as a Christian becoming tired in your master's service then behold the Lamb of God and self sacrifice will not seem so hard after looking at him self denial will lose its power when you look at the

[36 : 31] Lamb of God I know it's difficult when you've tried your best and you're not appreciated and that happens to many of us no one understands or seems to care how you feel behold the Lamb of God and it'll be a great help for you are you mocked for being a Christian are you mocked for following Jesus are you mocked for the sake of the gospel at school or at work then behold the Lamb of God and the persecution will not seem so hard after that it'll be worthwhile to suffer for him because the Bible says if we suffer with him we shall reign with him as well we are called to make ourselves poor in order to make others rich he was rich and he became poor that we could be enriched one day soon every

Christian in this church tonight is going to behold the Lamb of God when he calls them home at the hour of their death or when he comes a second time himself and we shall spend all eternity beholding the Lamb of God what a glory that will be all eternity gazing upon the beauty and the loveliness of Jesus but for those who die and convert it and unsaved things will be different they are to meet with the wrath of the Lamb we may not think much of the wrath of the Lamb just now but it must be a fearful thing because those who will be left after Jesus appears and takes his church home will be crying to the rocks and to the hills and to the mountains to fall upon them we read that in

Revelation the book of Revelation it will be saying in chapter 6 and verse 16 of Revelation fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb you can't imagine a Lamb beautiful white little Lamb being angry that he is and it's a fearful thing when the Lamb of God is angry behold the Lamb of God there was an old elder in Berndra Harris and he was called Calum Calum Macroodhi he was called his father was roodhi and he was a good man a godly man but he had a wayward son Donald and Donald was hooked on a strong drink he was a sailor sailing all over the world would come home now and again he had not a penny to show for all the years he had been working his father never stopped praying for him came to the place of prayer and he would be praying oh lord save

Donald save his soul old Calum died Donald was out somewhere in New Zealand or Australia and he heard the news the news was conveyed to him that his father had died and that was a blow to him he went to sleep that night after he got the news of his father's death and he saw in a dream himself in a green pasture and this person coming towards him a distance away and he noticed that he was carrying something in his arms and he stopped and he waited till the man came up to him but as he came nearer to him he recognised him as his father who had just died a few days before when he came to him he noticed that he had a little white lamb in his arms and he stood before his son

Donald and he said Donald will you not accept the lamb and he handed it to him it was in Gaelic that he spoke and he got no sleep for the rest of the night he woke up and the dream was so vivid and he got very little rest after that for a few days but then as they were passing through the Panama Canal the great change came in his heart and in his life and he did what his father had urged him to do many at day at home and also in his dream Donald will you not accept the lamb and he came home to Berger a changed man strong drink was gone the whole life was finished forever and he was going to be living a new life with

[42 : 46] Christ as his saviour it can happen to you tonight in this place will you not accept the lamb it's God that's saying it the father in heaven it's not me but God that is saying to you will you not accept my son the lamb the lamb of God the duty of the preacher the description of the saviour and the demands of the gospel amen may God bless to us his own word let us bow in place