

“Behold the Lamb”
John 1:28-30
(Preached at Trinity, November 2, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After the lengthy prologue which introduces the eternal Christ who has come down beginning with **Verse 19** we find the testimony of John the Baptist regarding Christ. John declared that his work and ministry was preparing the way for the coming Savior. **John 1:23 NAS** - "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."
2. John recognized that there is none greater than Christ. He was fully prepared to humble himself before the King of kings. **John 1:27 NAU** - "*It is* He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."
3. As we stand come to **Verses 28-29** the Gospel gives us a point of reference for time and place.
 - It was taking place in Bethany beyond the Jordan. John is baptizing and calling for the multitudes to repent in preparation for the Christ.
 - The ministry of Christ is beginning. He arrives at Bethany beyond the Jordan where John is baptizing. It is here that He will be baptized by John. Following this He will be led into the wilderness to be tempted.
4. As Jesus arrives John announces, **John 1:29 NAU** - "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
There are several things we can learn from John's words.
 - I. First of all, he declares that Jesus is the Lamb of God
 - A. In Genesis 22 God told Abraham to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice
Genesis 22:1-2 NAU - "Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."
 1. On the way to Mount Moriah Abraham and his son Isaac had a wonderful dialogue:
Genesis 22:7-8 NAU - "Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together."
 2. Abraham called that place Jehovah-Jireh – God will provide

3. But the ultimate Lamb did not come that day. Almost 2000 years later a prophet enters the scene proclaiming the coming of God's Lamb.
John 1:29 NAU - "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
- B. The NT is the fulfillment of the Old
1. John the Baptist was the son of a priest. He knew all about offerings for the sins of the people. In the OT sacrifices an animal was offered by a priest upon the altar
Leviticus 1:5 NAU - "He shall slay the young bull before the LORD; and Aaron's sons the priests shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the doorway of the tent of meeting."
 2. It had to be a perfect animal - free from all blemish
Deuteronomy 17:1 NAU - "You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep which has a blemish *or* any defect, for that is a detestable thing to the LORD your God."
 3. The priest laid his hands upon the head symbolizing transfer of sins
 4. The animal was then killed and the blood placed in bowl and poured on and before the Ark of the Covenant.
 In particular it was poured upon the Mercy Seat, the place where God's wrath was turned away. We call this propitiation
 The lid of the Ark was called the Mercy Seat. The Hebrew word was כַּפֹּרֶת (kapporeth) which means "the place of propitiation."
 5. The animal was then placed upon an altar in the outer court & burned - the smell rising up to the presence of God
Leviticus 1:9 NAU - "And the priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD."
 6. The smell of the sacrifice was a sweet aroma to God
- C. There was also the Jewish Passover. Every year the Jews celebrated a commemoration of their deliverance from Egypt
1. When God killed all the first-born in Egypt he told Israel to kill a lamb and paint the doorpost of their home with the blood of the lamb.
 When God saw the blood He would "passover" that home
 2. Each year they would take a lamb into their home and kill it and pour out its blood as a remembrance of God passing over Israel in judgment
- D. This is what happened to Christ on Calvary. Jesus is the sacrificial Lamb
1. Jesus is our Passover Lamb
1 Corinthians 5:7 NAU - "Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed."
 2. The Lamb of God was perfect and without blemish. He was born without the sin of Adam. He kept the Law perfectly. We read of Him in the Book of Hebrews
Hebrews 7:26 NAU - "For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;"

3. His sacrifice was a sweet-smelling savor - one of God's own choosing
It pleased God - more importantly, it satisfied Him
4. Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for us
Ephesians 5:2 NAU - "Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."

II. Second, John declares that this Lamb takes away the sins of the world

- A. This verse is troubling for some – What does it mean that Jesus takes away the sins of the world.
 1. There are two basic views
 - a. That Jesus died for all men universally – this is a huge problem as we consider the nature of a substitutionary atonement. If Jesus died as a substitute for every person why are there people in hell?
 - b. Jesus died for His people, chosen by the Father in the eternal Covenant of Redemption. Jesus came to die for a particular people. Some see this as inconsistent with God’s offer of grace to all. Can it be a genuine offer of grace if Jesus didn’t die for all?
 2. The Bible points to a particular atonement
Ephesians 5:25-27 NAU - "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory"
 3. God has a particular people He has chosen to bestow His love upon. For example in Paul’s letter to the Church of Rome he declares that that there are particular people in Rome who are beloved of God.
Romans 1:7 NAU - "to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."
 4. Jesus came with regard for a perfect plan – to save His people
Matthew 1:21 NAU - "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
 5. Jesus came not to simply make salvation possible but to actually accomplish the salvation of His people.
 6. God can genuinely offer salvation to all who turn from their sin and trust Christ without having purposed that all would actually turn. This in no way diminishes the responsibility of all to obey the Gospel.
- B. So what does it mean that Jesus “takes away the sin of the world.”
 1. John recognizes that the universal problem of the world is sin. Jesus came to deal with our sin problem.
 2. We find this again in 1 John
1 John 2:2 NAU - " and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world.*"

- C. It is important to understand John's use of the word **κόσμος**.
John uses it in several different and distinct ways.
1. In **Verses 9-10** John uses the word to describe the earth and the inhabitants on the earth
John 1:9-10 NAU - "here was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."
 2. In **Chapter 12** John used it as hyperbole
John 12:19 NAU - "So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."
 3. In **Chapter 14** John uses the word to describe the disciples as distinct from the rest of the world.
John 14:22 NAU - "Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"
 4. In **Chapter 7** John uses it in a negative sense to describe the wicked of this world.
John 7:7 NAU - "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil."
- D. Here John is referring to all types of people
"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
1. There is a universal problem of sin in the world. Jesus is the only Savior. The Gospel isn't for Jews alone
John 1:11-12 NAU - "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name"
 2. The Gospel is for all men throughout the whole world
Romans 1:16 NAU - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."
 3. We'll see this again in **Chapters 4 and 5**
John 4:42 NAU - "and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."
(He's the only Savior this world will ever know)
John 6:33 NAU - "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."
(If you insist this includes every single person then you're a universalist. Scripture will not allow this interpretation.)
 4. John is teaching the same doctrine as **Verses 11-12**
John 1:11-12 NAU - "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name"
The Gospel is efficient for "as many as receive Him."

III. Finally, we learn from John that it all finds its source in eternity

Verse 30 - "for He existed before me"

A. John has already established the eternity of Christ

John 1:1-2 NAU - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God."

1. In the beginning when all things "became" Jesus Christ "was"
2. Jesus Christ was with the Father when the Covenant of Redemption was made.

B. God has an eternal plan. It involves the action of the entire Godhead

Universal atonement is actually anti-trinitarian because it destroys the harmony of the godhead. The atoning work of the Lamb of God had a particular design.

1. The Father chose or elected a particular people - Eph. 1:3-4
Ephesians 1:3-4 NAU - "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.
2. The Holy Spirit applies the work of redemption breathing new life into the sinner dead in trespasses and sins and calling him through the Gospel
2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 NAU - "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. ¹⁴ It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
3. Jesus Christ came to redeem His own – these particular people given to Him by the Father before the word began
John 6:38-39 NAU - "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."
John 17:2 NAU - "even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life."

Conclusion:

1. God has a particular work for His particular people.
2. In **Rev. 13** we read that their names were written in the Book of Life before the world began.
Revelation 13:8 NAU - "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain."
3. The same Verse in the KJV gives a different dimension
Revelation 13:8 KJV - "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
 Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, ordained as the Savior of His people before the world began.
4. But does this mean the Gospel isn't a genuine offer of grace? God's promise is sure:
John 1:12 NAU - "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name"
5. There is a story of a miraculous pool in **Chapter 5**
John 5:2-8 NAU - "Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep *gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. ³ In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, *waiting for the moving of the waters*; ⁴ for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted . ⁵ A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying *there*, and knew that he had already been a long time *in that condition*, He said to him, "Do you wish to get well?" ⁷ The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me." ⁸ Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk."
Is it not a genuine offer of healing to all even if some are paralyzed and unable to move?