

Title: **“BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!”**

Text: John 1:29-37

Subject: *Christ the Lamb of God*

Date: Sunday Morning — March 2, 2008

Tape: John #9

Reading: *Leviticus 9:1-24*

Introduction:

If God the Holy Spirit will enable me, I want to preach the same message the first Baptist preacher preached to those who heard him. — *“Behold the lamb of God!”* Oh, may God give you eyes of faith and cause you this day to — *“Behold the lamb of God!”* I want show you just one thing in this message...

Proposition: The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is the Lamb of God, who *“taketh away the sin of the world.”*

My text is John 1:29-37. Let's look at it together. John has been preaching the gospel in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, and baptizing those who believed. Then, in verse 29, we read. —

(John 1:29-37) “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. (30) This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. (31) And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. (32) And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. (33) And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. (34) And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. (35) Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; (36) And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! (37) And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”

There is much in these verses; but I have only one object this morning. I want you to *“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”*

CHRIST THE LAMB

The Lord Jesus Christ is “the Lamb.” He is the only sin-atonement sacrifice, the only Lamb by whose death atonement could be made, the only Lamb by whose blood we have access unto the Father, the only Lamb whose blood being sprinkled upon the mercy-seat has obtained eternal redemption for us. Christ is not *a* lamb, but *the* Lamb. He is not a way, but the Way. He is not a door, but the Door. He is not a Savior, but the Savior. — “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12).

Christ is “the Lamb of God.” He is the Lamb who is of God, who came from God and who is God. He could not be our Savior if he is not our God. Only one who is God could offer infinite satisfaction for the sins of his people. This Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, “taketh away the sin of the world.”

- He is the only sacrifice for sin. It is he and he alone who “*taketh away*” sin by the sacrifice of himself. It is the blood of this Lamb, God’s dear Son, that “*cleanseth us from all sin.*”
- He is an effectual sacrifice for sin. He does not try to take away sin. He does not offer to take away sin. He does not make it possible for sin to be taken away. He “*taketh away sin!*”
- The Lamb of God is a sacrifice of perpetual efficacy.

John 1:29 does not say, “He took away sin,” though that is true. By his one sacrifice he put away sin! John the Baptist said, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!*” Oh, how I love those words, “*taketh away!*” Quite literally, John was saying, “Behold the Lamb of God that continually bears away the sin of the world.” Christ is the sin-bearer; and he continually bears away our sin. Notice the word “*sin*” is singular, not “*sins*,” plural. The Lord Jesus Christ continually bears away both our sins and the curse that sins bring.

This is our Savior’s continual work. Though our salvation was finished, in all its details from eternity, though our redemption was fully accomplished at Calvary, the Lord God continually performs it in us and continually assures us that he is doing so by using present tense verbs as simple statements of fact, declaring the reality of every believer’s experience of grace. What he did in eternity and what he did at Calvary are things

utterly insignificant to me until he performs them in me! — He “redeemeth thy life from destruction” (Psalm 103:4). — He “is near that justifieth me” (Isaiah 50:8). He “justifieth the ungodly” (Romans 4:5). “It is God that justifieth” (Romans 8:33). — It is Christ the Lamb “who forgiveth all thine iniquities” (Psalm 103:3), who “cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7), and “taketh away the sin of the world.” — What sweet terms of grace these are to our souls!

- The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is the universally effectual sacrifice for sin. He “taketh away the sin of the world.”

Obviously, John does not intend for us to understand that Christ bears away the sin of all who are in the world. We know that is not the case because there are many who bear the curse of God upon them forever in hell, multitudes whose sins shall never be taken away. But Christ is the only sin-bearer there is in all the world, and he takes away sin, all manner of sin from all manner of men, throughout the world.

THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK

“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!” — Behold him in the Book of God. I want you to see and see clearly that the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God is the subject of Holy Scripture. The theme of this Book is redemption, atonement, access to and acceptance with God by a sacrificial Lamb, and that Lamb is the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is referred to as the Lamb of God in the Book of Revelation alone twenty-seven times! This blessed Book is all about the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God (Luke 24:27, 44-47).

He is the great antitype of all the Old Testament types. He is the One of whom they all speak. He is the One who fulfills them all. As we read through and study the Old Testament, we see the Lord Jesus Christ set forth not only in promise and prophecy, but also in the types and shadows of the Mosaic economy. All of those Old Testament types and pictures speak of Christ as our great and glorious Savior. The Lord God instituted the whole legal system of the Old Testament to show us the gospel of his grace in Christ. But the most outstanding, the most significant of the instituted types of the Old Testament was the paschal lamb sacrificed every year on the Day of Atonement (Exodus 12; Leviticus 16; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

Nothing more beautifully, more clearly, or more accurately represented the glorious person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament than the lamb sacrificed, slain and offered to God on the day of atonement. Everyone even slightly familiar with the Old Testament knew that when Messiah came he would appear as the Lamb of God. Therefore, when John saw him, he cried, “*Behold the Lamb of God!*” And everyone who heard him knew exactly what he was saying: “Behold the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God has come to redeem and save his people from their sins!”

The Scriptures universally declare that Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, is the Lamb Of God. We have been redeemed from our sins by the gory but glorious, bloody but beautiful sacrifice of the Son of God as a Lamb slaughtered in our place (Isaiah 53:7-8; 1 Peter 1:18-20).

(Isaiah 53:7-8) “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. (8) He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”

(1 Peter 1:18-20) “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; (19) But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: (20) Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”

The Son of God was foreordained and slain for us as the Lamb of God before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). And he was manifested and revealed in the fulness of time to put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 9:26). **Throughout the Scriptures we see Christ set before us under the figure of the sacrificial Lamb of God.**

1. In Genesis 3 and 4 he is **the Lamb typified**. Abel brought the blood of a lamb to make atonement for his sins and to worship God, because his father Adam told him how the Lord God slew a lamb for him and his wife Eve in the Garden and clothed them with its skins. This shows us the way of grace and redemption through the blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7).

(Ephesians 1:7) “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;”

2. In Genesis 22 we see our Lord Jesus presented as **the Lamb prophesied**. Isaac knew that in order to come to God and worship him a lamb had to be slain. So he asked his father, “*Where is the Lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering*” (vv. 7-8). And so he did. God provided *for* himself that day a lamb to be sacrificed in Isaac’s place. But he provided himself as the Lamb to be sacrificed in our place in the person of his dear Son (2 Corinthians 5:21).

3. In Isaiah 53 we see Christ set forth as **the Lamb personified**. Isaiah told us that the Lamb of God was to be a man, a real man like us, the Servant of the Lord, identified with us...

- **Assuming Our Flesh!** — “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; (15) And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (16) For verily he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. (17) Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:14-17).
- **Assuming Our Sin!** — “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6)
- **Dying In Our Place!** — “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18).

4. In our text, John 1:29, John the Baptist said, “*Behold, the Lamb of God,*” and **the Lamb is identified**. John knew all about those sacrificial lambs of the Old Testament. His father was a priest! When Christ came, he was identified by God’s messenger. He said, “There he is boys. That is the One I have been telling you about. That man is the Lamb of God that has come to put away sin!”

5. In John 19 the Lord of glory as **the Lamb crucified** (vv. 17-19, 28-30).

(John 19:17-18) “And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: (18) Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.”

(John 19:28-30) “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. (29) Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth. (30) When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

Whenever you look upon the crucifixion of Christ, ever remember that his death was no accident. The Lamb of God died by the hand of God, according to the purpose of God, at the time appointed by God, and effectually redeemed all the people of God by satisfying the justice of God (Galatians 3:13; 4:4).

6. In the Book of Revelation the Apostle John saw the Lord Jesus Christ sitting upon the throne as **the lamb glorified!** In heaven’s glory Jesus Christ is worshipped in his sacrificial character as the Lamb of God who has effectually redeemed his people out of every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue, by his blood! **The Lamb’s everlasting glory is the result of his accomplishments in his death as our Substitute** (Isaiah 53:10-12; Revelation 5:6-14; 7:9-17; 14:1; 15:3; 21:22-23; 22:1-3).

(Isaiah 53:10-12) “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. (12) Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

(Revelation 5:6-14) “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a

Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. (7) And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. (8) And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. (9) And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; (10) And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (11) And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; (12) Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. (13) And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. (14) And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.”

(Revelation 7:9-17) “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; (10) And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. (11) And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, (12) Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. (13) And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? (14) And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (15) Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and

night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. (16) They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. (17) For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

(Revelation 14:1) “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.”

(Revelation 15:3) “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.”

(Revelation 21:22-23) “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. (23) And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.”

(Revelation 22:1-3) “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. (2) In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. (3) And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.”

THE PREACHER’S MESSAGE

If the Lamb of God is the singular message of this Book, let him be the singular message of this pulpit. Would to God these words were sounded out and proclaimed from every pulpit in the world incessantly! I say this without reservation. — **The Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God is the gospel preacher’s message.**

I did not say that Christ as the Lamb of God ought to be the gospel preacher’s message. I said that if a man is God’s servant, if he is God’s

messenger, if he is a man sent of God, if a man is a gospel preacher, Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God is his message. **John the Baptist** was the first Gospel preacher in this dispensation. He is the example to all who follow him. His message was “*Behold the Lamb of God!*” The Apostle **Peter** was the chief spokesman to the early church and to the Jewish world. His message was the same. Even **the deacons** who preached preached the Lamb of God! The Apostle **Paul** was the first Gospel preacher to the Gentiles. His message was the same. In fact, as you read the Book of Acts you find **the whole church** going about everywhere talking to sinners about the Lamb of God! They went everywhere preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified as the Lamb of God! Though few these days have any understanding of this fact, I want you to understand that **God’s servants and God’s people still go everywhere talking about the Lamb of God!** Look at the example of John the Baptist in our text and learn something about what a Gospel preacher is.

A gospel preacher is a man with one purpose, one business, one object in life. — **His only business is to cry, “Behold the Lamb of God!”** John was born and sent out into the world for this purpose. Indeed, every man called and sent of God into the world has been born for that work and is sent forth of God to proclaim Jesus Christ as the sin-atoning Lamb of God. We are sent to bear witness of him. Those who turn aside to other things and do not incessantly declare Christ as the Lamb of God to eternity bound sinners make a mockery of the ministry and of the poor souls who hear them. Like John, we must denounce the religions of the age, denounce the sins of men and call sinners to repentance; but our message is and always must be “*Behold the Lamb of God!*”

That preacher who fails to point sinners to Christ as the Lamb of God is a traitor to the souls of his hearers. He will in the last day have his portion with the damned (Ezekiel 33:8; 1 Corinthians 9:16).

(Ezekiel 33:8) “When I say unto the wicked, O wicked *man*, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”

(1 Corinthians 9:16) “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”

I cannot imagine a doom more terrible than that which awaits the man who claims to be God’s servant but does not faithfully preach the gospel to his hearers. Sermons that do not point sinners to Christ, sermons that are not full of Christ, sermons that leave men looking to anyone other than Christ will be hard to answer for in the Day of Judgment. It is cruel beyond description for a preacher to amuse eternity bound sinners with the trifles of religious speculation, theological niceties, denominational dogma and prophetic mysteries. **Playing with men’s souls is murderous work!** And if the Lamb of God is not preached, the man who pretends to be preaching is doing nothing but playing with men’s souls! **Sermons without Christ are damning to those who preach them and damning to those who hear them!** If I am God’s servant, I will, I must, God helping me I shall, like John have nothing to do when I open my mouth to preach except to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, saying, “*Behold the Lamb of God!*”

John also shows us by example that gospel preachers are men whose eyes are fixed on Christ the Lamb of God. Notice how our text reads (John 1:35-36): — “*Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!*” The preacher’s eye must be upon Christ if he is going to point sinners to Christ. They preach him best who see him best. And they see him best whose eyes are fixed upon him. **John seems to have had no eye for anyone but Christ. He looked upon him adoringly as one astonished by him, lovingly as one ravished by him and constantly as one who had no interest but him.** Therefore, when he spoke of the Lamb his words had meaning and power.

Illustration: A man looking upward on a crowded street will soon attract a crowd around him.

Notice this too: John looked to the Lord Jesus when he seemed to be passing him by (v. 36) as well as when he was manifestly coming to him (v. 29). And his message was the same in either case.

I am not here to preach an unknown God or an untried Savior to you. I have come here to make known to you him whom having not seen I love, believe and look to for everything. I want so very much for you to see what I see in him: — Wisdom — Righteousness — Sanctification — Redemption!

You will notice, if you read the chapter carefully, that **John’s message did not change**. When he preached to a crowd of unbelievers and when he was quietly instructing just two of his disciples, he preached the same message (cf vv. 29 & 36). He kept to one point. Like Paul, he knew nothing among his hearers save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

I know that I am looked upon as a simpleton by some. But I know what God has sent me to do. Most preachers know too much. They need to learn to be know-nothings, knowing nothing except Jesus Christ crucified! No subject is more needful to sinners, more sweet to the saints, more hopeful to the guilty, more sanctifying to the righteous, more convicting to the fallen, more refreshing to the ransomed, or more inspiring to both saints and sinners than this: — “*Behold the Lamb of God!*”

I fully agree with C. H. Spurgeon, who declared, “To harp upon the name of Jesus is the blessed monotony of a true ministry, a monotony more full of variety than all other subjects besides. When Jesus is the first, the midst, and the last, yea, all in all, then do we make full proof of our ministry.”

THE GOSPEL’S REVELATION

Let me wrap this message up by showing you that the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Lamb of God, is the Gospel’s revelation. This is what the gospel reveals, proclaims and teaches. Jesus **Christ is THE Lamb** of God. All those typical lambs were only types. They did nothing. They accomplished nothing. They did not put away sin. They did not appease God’s wrath. They did not satisfy his justice. And they did not purge the conscience of guilt. They only pointed to Christ the Lamb of God who put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 10:1-10).

This must be understood. — Sin could never be put away without satisfaction. God almighty, in his infinite wisdom found a way for us to escape his wrath; but that way does not violate his justice. The Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God has born every stroke of justice that God’s elect should have born. And **he alone could do it because...**

- Christ alone is the Lamb that **God appointed** (Hebrews 10:5-7).
- Christ alone is the Lamb that **God provided** (1 John 4:9-10).
- Christ alone is the Lamb that **God himself sacrificed and offered** (Isaiah 53:10).

- Christ alone is the Lamb that **God accepted** (Hebrews. 1:1-3; 9:12; 10:11-14 — “A Sweet smelling savor!” Ephesians 5:1).
- Christ alone is the Lamb that **God has set forth**.

(Romans 3:24-26) “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (25) Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (26) To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

God has set him forth...

- In The Covenant.
- In The Law.
- In The Gospel.

Application:

What I have preached to you this morning is substitution and satisfaction by the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. This is the gospel. Be thankful you have heard it. There is forgiveness with God because Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God. Now, sinners may approach God without being plunged into hell, without bringing any works of their own, without bringing any sacrifice of their own. O sinner, “*Behold the Lamb of God!*” Come to God, laying your hand of faith upon the head of his sacrificial Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ! Just as the Old Testament Jew laid his hand upon the head of his lamb and that lamb died in his place, if you now by faith lay your trembling hand of faith upon the head of Christ, where God laid the sins of his people, I am telling you that Jesus Christ died as the Lamb of God for you and put away your sins by his death. Will you do it? Will you now trust Christ the Lamb of God. God help you to trust him. He is a great Savior, tried and proved by many here. Trust him, and you will never be confounded or put to shame.

Amen.