

Christ, as of a Lamb – First Peter 1:18-21

I. Introduction:

- A. Peter reminds us that God's saints have been purchased out of sin's market place by the blood of Christ, "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 1. We often refer to the Jesus with the words of John the Baptist: "*the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*"
 2. As an introduction to this message, I'd like to compare Peter's statement with that of the Baptist.
 3. They similar but quite different.
- B. Some people believe that **John 1** takes place in the spring of the year, and many of the people John addresses in that chapter were travelers going up to Jerusalem.
 1. I have read, but cannot verify, that large flocks of young sheep were also being taken up to Jerusalem for the observance of the Passover.
 2. With that, potentially, in the minds of many, John then spotted the Lord Jesus approaching.
 3. "*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (**John 1:29**). Then six verses later, "*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!*"
- C. What makes John's statement different from that of Peter here in our text?
 1. **John** is the only person in the Bible to use the words "*Lamb of God.*"
 2. And therefore, he is the only person to point to Jesus and say, "**Behold the Lamb of God.**"
 3. What **Peter** says is, "*The sacrifice of Christ, and the shedding of His precious blood, are LIKE that of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*"
 4. "*Ye know that ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ, AS of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*"
- D. It seems to me that there are three kinds of statements which speak of Jesus as the lamb.
 1. There are the **two DIRECT statements** of John: "*Behold, the Lamb of God.*"
 2. Then there are several scriptures in **Revelation** which **DESCRIBE Christ** Jesus as **a lamb**.
 - a. For example, there is **Revelation 5:6** – "*And I beheld, and, lo in the midst of the throne and of the four beats, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain...*"
 - b. The wicked will say to the mountains during the Tribulation, "*fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come...*"
 - c. God's saints are described as having overcome Satan, "*by the blood of the Lamb*" (**Revelation 12:11**).
 3. So we have **John's direct statement**, and then we have **simple descriptions** of Christ as the Lamb.
- E. And finally there is the statement of Peter here in our scripture.
 1. "*Ye know that ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ, AS of a lamb...*"
 2. At the end of his sentence, Peter points, not to Christ Himself, but to a certain lamb, as **picture** of Christ.
 3. And Peter is not alone in using a lamb as an illustration of the Lord Jesus and the sacrifice He made.
 4. You are familiar with the words of **Isaiah 53**: "*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*" (**Isaiah 53:7**).
- F. I believe that the thousands of lambs and rams which were properly sacrificed to the Lord by Israel's priests were all types, or pictures, of the sacrifice of Christ.
 1. I will continue to call Him "*the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*"
 2. But at this juncture, I'll point out that was **not exactly** what **Peter** was **saying** here.
 3. He tells us that Jesus died **as** our sacrifice for sin, just like "**as**" a flawless lamb.
 4. And **Isaiah** prophesied that when Christ would come to give His life a ransom for many He would display characteristics like that of a lamb.

G. Using Peter and Isaiah as our cue, I'd like to skim through our Bibles to see...

II. Other characteristics of Christ which can be seen in Lambs.

- A. Were lambs or sheep the first sacrifices ever made for sinners?
 - 1. God clothed **Adam** and **Eve** in coats of skins, obviously taken from some kind of animal.
 - 2. Were those of sheep? Probably they were, but I don't have proof enough to say for sure.
 - 3. But then we come to the sacrifices of **Cain** and **Abel**.
 - 4. Abel was a keeper of sheep, and at the proper time he brought a sacrifice from the firstlings of his flock.
 - 5. In other words he brought a slain lamb to the Lord, and Jehovah had "*respect unto Abel and his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering (of grain or vegetables) he had not respect.*"
 - 6. I believe, but can't prove, that God had respect for Abel's offering, because it was what God had required.
 - a. I think the sons of Adam had been taught what to give to the Lord, and Abel obeyed, but Cain did not.
 - b. And perhaps more importantly, Abel's offering automatically included the shedding of blood.
 - c. "*Without the shedding of blood there is no remission*" of sin.
 - 7. Abel's offering, like the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, was very bloody.

- B. The first time we read the word "*lamb*" in the Bible is in **Genesis 22** where we read of Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac. I am assuming you are familiar with the history.
 - 1. Isaac asked, "*My Father... Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*"
 - 2. The reply was, "*My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.*" And of course, He did.
 - 3. The Lamb of God was provided by the Lord Himself, not by any human shepherd.
 - 4. The context tells us that it was a male, and if I had to guess, it was probably relatively young.
 - 5. Did it miraculously appear, or had it been there all the time, meekly and quietly awaiting God's orders?
 - 6. Probably the latter, just like our Saviour waited for the "*fulness of time*" before He appeared to make his offering for sin.
 - 7. And obviously, that male lamb, became a substitute for the sinner Isaac.

- C. Now let's jump forward about 450 years to the beginnings of the nation of Israel.
 - 1. **Exodus 29:38** says, "*Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually.*"
 - a. *The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even.*
 - b. *This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations.*"
 - 2. 720 lambs were to be sacrificed in this aspect of Israel's worship every year.
 - 3. In roughly the 850 years of Israel's history before their captivity, her priests slaughtered well over half a million lambs.
 - 4. I believe that every one of them pointed to "*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*"
 - 5. And when put together, what do they tell us about the Lord Jesus?
 - a. They tell us that salvation from the penalty of our sin is not a single event of a moment.
 - b. They don't say: "*Ask Jesus into your heart so you'll be saved, and after that you will never need Him again*"
 - 6. The daily morning and evening sacrifices teach us that we need to awake every morning to our need and dependence on the Saviour.
 - 7. They teach us that every day has been tainted by sin, and we need atonement before we pillow our heads.
 - 8. **Numbers 28** speaks of the daily sacrifice as "*a continual burnt offering. Which was ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord.*"
 - 9. That should remind us that it is through the blood of the Lamb that the Lord is pleased, and only through Christ may the believer have fellowship with the Lord.

- D. I smiled at myself, when I found that the word "*lamb*" is found exactly 100 times in the Bible.
 - 1. Not that it means anything, because the plural "*lambs*" adds another 81 references.
 - 2. Obviously, we don't have time, and there is no need, to look at everyone of those 181 scriptures.

- E. But **Numbers 28** also describes what Israel was to do on their sabbath. Please turn to **Numbers 28**.
1. **Verse 9:** *"And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and their drink offering thereof; This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering."*
 2. Israel's sabbath was the special day of the week, when all secular labor was to cease, giving everyone the opportunity to worship and fellowship with the Lord.
 3. But on that day, the priests were to double up the regular daily sacrifice. Why?
 4. Was it to remind us that even as saints, our worship and fellowship with the Lord is still rooted in Christ?
 5. Our best intentions, and our desire to serve and worship, are polluted with corruption.
 6. But in Christ Jesus have access to God's throne of grace; we can enter behind the veil.
- F. And then we come to Israel's great feast days: **Trumpets**, **Tabernacles**, and **Pentecost**.
1. Israel also recognized the arrival of each month; they called it **the New Moon**.
 - a. How did they celebrate these events?
 - b. There were differences between them all, but there were also some similarities.
 2. **Numbers 28:11** – *"And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot."*
 - a. Notice the importance of the spotless lambs.
 - b. There were 75,000 lambs sacrificed on the first day of the month, throughout Israel's history.
 3. **Numbers 29:1** speaks of the **Feast of Trumpets**.
 - a. **Verse 2** – *"And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the Lord; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish."*
 4. **Verse 12** takes us to the **Feast of Tabernacles**.
 - a. *"And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year with blemish."*
 5. In **Leviticus 23** we learn about the **Day of Pentecost**.
 - a. **Verse 18** says, *"And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year..."*
- G. On these feasts; days of recognizing God's special blessings, and days of great rejoicing, even more than usual, Israel was to look upon the Lamb of God who was the source of these blessings.
1. When Peter speaks of Christ's death and the shedding of His precious blood, in another context he might have said that every joy, earthly or eternal, come from God through Jesus' blood.
 2. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*
 3. But remember, our access to those blessings is through the sacrificial blood of Christ.
- H. Peter might have said, *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of the Passover lamb, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*
1. Since we have already pointed to this special sacrifice recently, for the sake of time, I'm going to skip over the Passover. I hope that you are familiar with it.
 2. Suffice it to say, I have no doubt that when John said, *"Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of world,"* he was thinking about the Passover and the Passover Lamb.
 3. And Peter might have said, *"Ye know that ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of the Passover Lamb, as of the lamb with the ability to turn away the death angel."*
 4. Paul tells us in **I Corinthians 5:7** – *"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."*
 5. *"Ye know that ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of the Passover Lamb, as of the lamb with the strength and authority to bear our burden and to carry away the penalty for our sin."*

- I. Skipping over dozens of other Old Testament references to lambs and the Lamb of God, turn to ***Isaiah 53***.
 - 1. *"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 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. 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."*
 - 2. As I tried to point out a month ago when we considered some of the prophecies about Christ, every detail of this scripture teach us something about the Lord Jesus.
 - 3. And this was the scripture to which ***the Ethiopian Eunuch*** referred when talking to Philip.

- J. While ***verse 6*** reminds us that sinners are somewhat like sheep, the next verse speaks of one of the lamb-like qualities of the Lord Jesus.
 - 1. Because He came into the world to do the will of His Father, He acquiesced to it without a whimper.
 - a. When He was falsely accused He didn't verbally retaliate.
 - b. When He was beaten, He didn't call on the angels to protect Him or to punish His abusers.
 - c. He didn't even prophesy what terrible things were going to befall Annas, Caiaphas and Pilate.
 - 2. No guile fell from His mouth. I don't imagine that He even clinched His jaw or His fists.
 - a. Did He scowl at anyone that crucifixion morning? He did nothing to negate the purity of His sacrifice.
 - b. He even asked the Father to forgive some of His oppressors.
 - 3. And that raises an interesting question: Were any of Christ's prayers ever denied?
 - a. I'll let the philosophers and theologians among us consider and answer that question.
 - b. But if we assume that the Father did forgive, who was it that was forgiven?
 - c. Wasn't it the soldiers who, under orders, crucified Him and took away His garments?
 - d. It didn't include the priests or the coward Pilate.
 - e. Does this mean that eventually those soldiers were saved? I don't know, but I wouldn't be surprised.
 - 4. *"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."*

III. Conclusion

- A. Peter wrote reminding us, *"Ye know that ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ, AS of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*
 - 1. He might also have written, *"Ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ, AS the thousands of morning and evening sacrifices."*
 - 2. *"Ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ, AS were the sacrifices of the feast days, which recognized the blessings of the Lord."*
 - 3. *"Ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ, AS the meek and quiet ram who was caught in the thicket where Isaac was redeemed and which was so close to where the cross was eventually placed."*
 - 4. *"Ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ, AS the Passover Lamb which forbade the death angel of his approach."*

- B. Peter didn't say those things.
 - 1. What he did write was *"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; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."*
 - 2. The death of Christ Jesus should be the key to our faith in God.