

RELIABLE TESTIMONY / Sunday, March 1, 2015

Unifying Topic: THE LAMB OF GOD

Lesson Text

- I. John Identifies Jesus As The Lamb (John 1:29)
- II. John Reveals Jesus To Israel (John 1:30-31)
- III. Seeing Is Believing (John 1:32-34)

The Main Thought: And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. (John 1:34, KJV).

Unifying Principle: In a world of competing religious and political values, people are not always clear that one system is of any greater value than another. How can Christians know which set of beliefs carries more weight than all others do? John testifies that the baptism of the Holy Spirit surpasses water baptism and that the Spirit bears witness that Jesus is God's Son.

Lesson Aim: To explore John's account of Jesus' baptism.

Life Aim: To assess how Christians are to live out their baptismal covenant.

HISTORY:

¹The Sanhedrin is alarmed at the ministry of John the Baptist, so they send a delegation of theologians to question him. Their first question was, "Who art thou?" (v.19). His answer was short and simple; "I am not the Christ" (v.20). Then they asked him; "Art thou Elias (Elijah)?" (v.21). The Prophet Elijah was expected because of Deuteronomy 18:15. John stated that he was not any of the expected prophetic figures. He explained, however that his ministry was described in the Old Testament, (Isaiah 40:3) and that he was a fulfillment of that prophecy.

The Pharisees then asked, "Who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself" (v.22)? John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, Clear the way for the Lord's coming" (v.23)! (NLT)

It is evident that this investigating committee is also very concerned about all the people John is baptizing so they ask "Why baptizest thou then?" (vv.24-25). John explains that his baptism was in water, but Jesus would come and baptize with a Spiritual baptism. What he was doing is only a sign of what Christ will do with the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8). John told them, "There is someone in our presence that I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal" (vv.26-27). This took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River near where John was baptizing (v.28).

LESSON:

John 1:29 John Identifies Jesus As The Lamb

1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. The day after the committee investigates John, Jesus Himself appears on the scene. They are at the River Jordan when John makes the now familiar statement, "Behold the Lamb of God." Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament lamb.

1. The Lamb is a picture of Christ our Passover who was sacrificed for us.
 - The Passover refers back to the time when God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage. God had pronounced judgment: the taking of the firstborn upon the people of Egypt for their injustices. Those who believed God were instructed to slay a pure lamb and sprinkle its blood over the door posts of their homes. The blood of the innocent lamb would then serve as a sign. When seeing the blood, God would pass over that house. Those who applied the blood to their homes were saved, but those who did not believe and did not apply the blood to their homes, their first born were destroyed.
 - The Passover pictured the coming of Jesus Christ as the Savior. The "lamb without blemish" pictured His sinless life. The "blood of the innocent lamb" had been substituted for the firstborn. The "eating of the lamb" pictured the need for spiritual nourishment gained by feeding on Christ, the Bread of life. The "unleavened bread" (bread without yeast) pictured the need for putting evil out of one's life and one's household.
2. The Lamb is a picture of the precious blood of Christ which redeems us.
3. The idea is that the Lamb belonged to God, that is, God gave, supplied, and provided the Lamb for sacrifice. Just as in Gen.22:8 where God provided the lamb for Abraham as a substitute for Isaac.

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/john-was-asked-why-baptize/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwmsundayschool.html>

4. The Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world.

- The phrase "takes away" means to lift away, to carry off. It means to bear in behalf of one, as one's substitute. Jesus lifted our sins off of us and bore and carried them away. Hallelujah!
- Christ bore the sins of the whole world, not the sins of just some men. No matter the depth and ugliness of a man's sin, it was for the whole world. The world is looked at as a whole.

John is the one who identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God. And he identifies why Jesus came—to take away the sin of the world.

John 1:30-31 John Reveals Jesus To Israel

1:30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me:— John speaks out and says the is the One; this is He of whom I've been speaking about! It's so ironic that John didn't know who Christ the Messiah would be until God revealed Him! But they were cousins and John was 6 months older, but their paths never intertwined until now; each had their proper assignments. John only knew that a man will come after him to fulfill God's plan. John would be the forerunner to prepare the way. John only knew that this man would be preferred before him. This meant Jesus was the chosen One. He *existed before John was born*; He was the Preexistent One; the Preeminent One eternally without spot or blemish! Yes, this man was and still is Christ the Messiah that cometh!

1:31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

John didn't know Jesus was the One. He only knew he had to do what God instructed. He had to make Jesus known to Israel. He prepared them to meet their Messiah as He baptized them with water; cleansing them from their sins. ²When a Christian is baptized, it is not for the remission of sin, but an outward expression of being dead, buried (in water), and resurrected with Jesus Christ our Lord. The Jews had the law and had not kept it. They had to repent for breaking Moses' law.

John 1:32-34 Seeing Is Believing

1:32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. John gives testimony that he was a witness of seeing the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, landing and resting upon Jesus. This was a sign of Jesus' divine anointing. He is Christ, the Anointed One!

1:33 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. John reiterates again that he didn't know who the Messiah would be. But, the One who sent him to baptize with water did. The sign that John was to see was the Spirit descending and coming upon (Jesus), and resting and remaining upon (Jesus). The Spirit never came and remained upon men in the Old Testament. The Spirit only came for special occasions by God. The value of John's testimony revealed that he went out of his way to point out that the Spirit entered the life of Christ once-for-all, permanently and powerfully. God showed John that the Messiah will baptize with the Holy Ghost! The word "*baptism*" (*baptizein*) means to dip, to immerse, to submerge, to place into.

"*Water baptism*" and "*Holy Spirit baptism*" are both for believers, not non-believers, and both are an immersion. The Holy Spirit baptism does not necessarily happen at the time of water baptism. As we see, Jesus commanded His disciples to wait for the Promise of the Holy Spirit; wait in Jerusalem for this promise, so they can be empowered for service. However, for Jesus, it happened all at the same time—"*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:*" Matt.3:16. Jesus identified with righteousness in obedience to the Mosaic Law, to fulfill all righteousness.

- **John's "Water baptism"** expresses your "*Identification*" with Christ; His new creations. This means as we go down into the water, the old man is dead to sin and buried by faith in Christ (Rom.6:3-4). As we are raised from the water, the new man is raised by the Spirit and made alive by faith in Christ (Colo.2:12)! This physical event occurs as we are immersed into water. By faith we have died with Christ on the cross; we have been buried with Him, and we have been resurrected to new life in Christ. It's our way of giving an outward testimony to an inward work of God. The world sees our outward demonstration, while Jesus does the inward cleansing. Water baptism is an act of

² <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/john/03.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwmsundayschool.html>

obedience. ³When a person was baptized by John, he was identifying with the coming Messiah and His Kingdom. The new believer was "identified" with John's message of repentance that then became part of the believing remnant. John pointed the people to Christ! They looked forward to Christ, the Messiah whom they would receive.

- **Jesus' "Holy Spirit baptism"** expresses "Placement"; our baptism into Christ. "*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" Gal.3:27. When a person accepts Christ as Saviour, he is placed into the Body of Christ by God, and the Spirit of God is placed in him. The Holy Spirit supernaturally enters the life of the believer and becomes the permanent presence in the believer; without measure. Jesus would send the Holy Spirit upon all believers, empowering them to live in and teach the message of Salvation. This began after Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven (Jh.20:22; Acts 2). John 7:39b says "...for the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified". Not only is the Spirit of God placed in us, but He surrounds and envelops us till we are immersed in Him.

John immersed one in water and Jesus was to immerse one in the Spirit; one physical and the other spiritual. It is not water baptism that "saved us" or brought spiritual "rebirth and renewal," but the drenching, washing, and indwelling "baptism" of the Holy Spirit.

1:34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. John saw this and he bore witness that Jesus was the Son of God!

- The only Son
- the only begotten Son
- the only begotten Son who came from the very bosom of God, that is from the deepest part, from the most intimate place, from the most honorable fellowship of God!

SUMMARY:

⁴The baptism of Jesus is not recorded in John's Gospel, but John testifies *that he had been told by God the Father that when the sign of the dove would occur, the person so marked would be "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (v.29).*

John goes on to explain that a man is coming after him who is far greater than he is, for He existed long before him (v.30). He says, "I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel" (v.31).

Perhaps John was not sure that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, but the Father made it clear to him who Jesus was by sending the Spirit like a dove to light on Him (vv.32-33). This was certainly a beautiful picture of the Trinity. John saw this happen to Jesus so he testified that He was the chosen one of God (v.34).

³ http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/Believer's%20Corner/Doctrines/baptisms_of_the_bible.htm

⁴ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/jesus-the-lamb-of-god/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwmsundayschool.html>