

The Savior of All

John 1:29-42a

Introduction

“Behold, the Lamb of God!” before Jesus was baptized, all John could say was, *“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3:11-12)*. He pointed forward to “Someone who was coming.” God had told John that He would reveal to him who the **Messiah** was at His Baptism. Now, he can say, “Here He is!” this must have been an exciting time for John the Baptist. He had come to prepare the way for the **Messiah**. Now, his job was just about over. He had completed his task and God had vindicated his work. The One he was foretelling was here! Notice, however, John didn’t introduce Jesus as the **Messiah**. He called Him the *Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world*. Today, we want to unpack that title of Jesus.

Lamb of God

First, he identifies Jesus with the Old Testament sacrificial system. He’s saying that Jesus is a **Sacrifice**. But not just any sacrifice. He’s the **Lamb of God**. In other words, the lambs sacrificed in ancient times did not offer forgiveness of sins. They only pointed forward to the **Lamb of God**. He is the One who will take away sins.

Takes Away Sin

How does the Lamb take away sins? By being a **Sacrifice**. Here are some differences between Old Testament lambs and the Lamb of God.

- The Old Testament lambs were sacrificed on the **altar** by a **priest**.
 - The Lamb of God was sacrificed on the **cross** and although He was killed by others, according to Jesus, He **laid down His own life**, sacrificing Himself. Speaking of His life, He said, *“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father” (John 10:18)*.
- The Old Testament lambs were **chosen** from the flock.
 - The Lamb of God **went to the cross willingly**.
- Old Testament lambs **didn’t take away sin**.
 - The Lamb of God **takes away sin because He is God**. Because He is fully divine and fully human, He is our **Substitute** and **Sacrifice**.

Of the World

The **Lamb of God** didn’t come just for the Jews, either. He is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the **world**. Jesus died for all mankind. **John 3:16** says, *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life*. This is what we mean

when we talk about **unlimited atonement**. Jesus died for everyone. Salvation is open to all people. Of course, that doesn't mean that everyone's saved. Notice the last part of the verse says that only those who believe in Him are saved and have eternal life. Jesus has paid the price for our sins. All we must do is "cash the check" by believing in Him.

Redeemer

Since He paid the price for our sins, this makes Him our **Redeemer**. What does it mean that He is our Redeemer? According to the **Small Catechism**: *He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.* This is what the **Lamb of God** has done for everyone.

"It Is Finished"

There are no more powerful or meaningful words ever said than these last words of Jesus from the cross, *"It is finished."* His life was over, the mission was completed, and the sacrifice was fulfilled. Nothing more needed to be done to pay the price. Everything was finished, complete, perfect. The *Lamb of God takes away all sins from all people of all time*. That's the load He bore on Calvary. Jesus died once, for all and lives today never to die again. The Lamb of God lives!

Means of Grace

Because He lives, we access this grace and forgiveness through **Word** and **Sacrament**. This is how He can forgive sins and strengthen our faith when we receive His body and blood. He has already taken our sins away in His death on the cross. When you come to the rail today, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! He takes away your sin, too.

*May the peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
