

Behold, the Lamb of God!

John 1:29

Thought for the Day. Jesus Christ is God's perfect provision for the sins of the entire world! We experience His forgiveness and cleansing from sin when we put our faith in Him as our substitutionary sacrifice for our sins.

In the Gospel of John, the Apostle John is making the case that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ—the prophesied Messiah of the Old Testament, and the Son of God—God in human flesh, who came to reveal God to man and to give His life as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. In John 1:19-34, he calls his first witness—John the Baptist. In verses 29-34, John has the privilege of introducing the Messiah to the world.

29 The next day...

- The day after the events recorded in verses 19-28, when John was questioned by the religious leaders.
- The events recorded from 1:19-2:11 cover the first week of Jesus' public ministry.
- Prior to these events, Jesus had been baptized by John in the Jordan River (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-23), and had spent 40 days in the Judean wilderness where He was tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13).
- Verses 29-34 is the Formal Introduction of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who is the Son of God; and verses 35-42 constitute the Official Launch of Jesus' public ministry.

...he saw Jesus coming toward him...

- This was not the first time that John had seen Jesus. Jesus and John were cousins and John probably knew Him quite well.
- John knew Jesus well enough to know that Jesus was much more righteous and godlier than he. (Matt. 3:14)
- It was not until immediately after Jesus' baptism that John realized He was the Messiah, the Son of God.
- After His baptism, Jesus disappeared into the Judean wilderness for some 40 days where He was tempted by the devil.

...and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

- John is the only biblical writer to use this expression, "the Lamb of God" (cp. vs. 36).
- However, the Jews would have immediately understood the significance of this title.
 - Lambs were used on a daily basis as a sacrifice for the sins of the people (Lev. 14:10-25) and on an annual basis for the celebration of Passover (Ex. 12).
 - "Every morning and evening a lamb was sacrificed in the temple for the sins of the people (Exodus 29:38-42)." (*Life Application Study Bible*, p. 2218)
- "Isaiah 53:7 prophesied that the Messiah, God's servant, would be led to the slaughter like a lamb. To pay the penalty for sin, a life had to be given — God chose to provide the sacrifice himself. When Jesus died as the perfect sacrifice, he [made provision for the removal of] the sin of the world and destroyed the power of sin itself. Thus God forgives our sin [when we accept Jesus as our Savior] (1 Corinthians 5:7).

"The 'sin of the world' means the sin of each individual. Jesus paid the price of our sin by his death. We claim the forgiveness he provided by first taking ownership of our sin. If we insist we have no sin, then we gain no forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness. If you don't think you need to repent, check your life again. The Ten Commandments can help you evaluate how you're doing by God's standards." (*The Life Application Commentary Series*)

- The people understood too, that the lamb was a substitute—it died in the place of the people the death which they deserved because of their sins. (1 John 2:2; 4:10; Romans 3:21-25)
- When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior by faith, we give Him our sins, and He gives us His righteousness. (1 Peter 2:24)
- Jesus "takes away the sin of the world."
 - Christ did not die, just for the sins of the people of Israel, but for the sins of the whole world!
 - "The blood of the lambs slain during the OT period did not put away (take away) sin. Those lambs were pictures or types, pointing forward to the fact that God would one day provide a [perfect] Lamb who would actually *take away* the sin. All down through the years, godly Jews had waited for the coming of this Lamb. Now at last the time had come, and John the Baptist triumphantly announced the arrival of the true Lamb of God."
 - *Illustration:* The Old Testament sacrifices provided a temporary covering for sin (like putting your garbage in the garbage can and covering it with a lid). Christ's sacrifice is a permanent removal of sin (like when the garbage can is emptied into the garbage truck and it is hauled away, never to be seen again).
 - "When [John] said that Jesus bears the sin of the world, he did not mean that everyone's sins are therefore forgiven. The death of Christ was great enough in value to pay for the sins of the whole world, but only those sinners who receive the Lord Jesus as Savior are forgiven." (*MacDonald, p. 1423*)
- Christ's sacrifice is *sufficient* to pay for the sins of the whole world, but it is *efficient* to pay for your sins only when you receive Him as your Savior.