

The Lamb of God - the Firstborn

by G.W. North

The Lamb of God's sacrifice is primarily about redemption, not just sin, and is necessary for spiritual rebirth and eternal life.

Scripture: Exodus 12:13, John 1:29, John 6:35, John 14:6, Romans 3:24, 1 Corinthians 5:7, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:13-14, Hebrews 9:12, 1 Peter 1:18-19

Topics: "Redemption", "The Lamb of God"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of Jesus as the Lamb of God and the Firstborn, illustrating how God redeemed His people from Egypt without initially addressing sin, as the Law had not yet been given. He explains that redemption makes believers God's own, while atonement maintains that relationship, as seen in Jesus' teachings about being the bread of life. North draws parallels between the Passover lamb and Christ, asserting that true life comes from partaking in Him, the ultimate sacrifice. He highlights that many disciples struggled with this profound truth, yet those who remained recognized the eternal life found in His words. Ultimately, North underscores that while sin is present, the primary focus of redemption is the sacrificial love of Christ, which encompasses justification, sanctification, and reconciliation.

Transcript

As has been pointed out, when God brought His people out of Egypt by the blood of the lamb He did not mention sin. Sin was there of course, but as He says, because the Law had not yet been given He did not impute sin to the people. The scriptures say He went to redeem a people for Himself, it was no part of His purpose then to define or particularise sin; He did that later. He was not ready at that time to inaugurate His system of atonements for sin. He had already planned it, but Egypt was not the place for it, so He did not introduce it there.

First He redeemed His people from Egypt utterly, then He taught them the truth of atonement. By this He was saying 'redemption makes you mine, atonement keeps you mine': John writes in this vein. First he presents the Lamb of God in chapter one, and then in chapter fourteen tells us what Jesus said about His Father's house and that He is the way, the truth and the life by which all must come to the Father. This was nothing new in substance really, for He said as much in another way in His discourse recorded in chapter six, when speaking as the Lamb in view of the approaching Passover.

The people are gathered unto Him in great numbers, He is seated on a mountain. He feeds them with a view to teaching them and us some vital lessons. 'I am the bread of life', He says, 'the bread of God the

true bread from heaven not as your fathers did eat bread (manna), and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever'. He points them back to the Passover; 'eat my flesh', He says, 'drink my blood; except you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you' - in a word, dead. It was as though He was saying, 'you think you are the firstborn nation, the premier people of the world; the nation that has life; the redeemed people, Israel, the house of God. You think you are alive just like the firstborn son in every blood-sprinkled house in Egypt, but you are dead. I am the Lamb; as your fathers had to eat the flesh of their lambs in Egypt in order to live, so must you eat my flesh and drink my blood in order to live. I am the firstborn; each of your fathers ate of the lamb to become part of the firstborn nation and the house of God. If you do not eat the first-born you are not one of the firstborn and part of the house of God'.

Many of His disciples left Him then, they could not take what He said. He was seeking to build the spiritual house of God - the spiritual house of Israel - they could not accept it. Only those stayed with Him who believed He was speaking words of eternal life. They fed on the truth of His soul as they listened to the words of His mouth. He uttered from His Spirit and life, and they ate Him and drank Him. He was their Lamb, their unleavened bread, their bitter herbs, although they never understood all He was saying. No one could listen to Him without realising premonitions of an impending tragedy in His words; truly the bitter herbs of a terrible death were mingled with His flesh and blood. No leaven of sin was mixed with and baked in the bread, neither sin nor its sting were in Him; but the bitterness of being made sin was with Him on the cross, so that was in the diet too.

In keeping with the type sin is not mentioned, it was there of course creating need in every man, but it is not the main point of emphasis in redemption, nor the chief reason for it. Redemption is the first great reason why the Lamb of God was slain for man. That man needed to be justified, sanctified, reconciled, regenerated, forgiven, cleansed is also true, and all was accomplished in the one great sacrifice of Christ; these things are inseparable. But because the sacrifice is so great and accomplishes so many things, it has to be analysed and the various works classified. This is done for us in scripture by the Holy Ghost in the course of His ministries, using the words above listed. Analysis is not to be mistaken for division; its purpose is definition with a view to emphasis without confusion.

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