

The Work and Worthiness of the Lamb of God

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the significance of the Lamb of God, who has taken away the sin of the world and is worthy of worship and praise.

Topics: "Atonement", "Redemption"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the significance of the Lamb of God mentioned in Genesis and Revelation, highlighting the transition from sacrifice to throne, emphasizing the Lamb's perfection and redemptive work. He explains the deep meaning of Christ as the Lamb of God, who deals with the root of sin sacrificially and judicially, bringing divine satisfaction and joy. Vine urges listeners to accept Jesus as their personal Savior, emphasizing the importance of knowing Christ Himself and His atoning sacrifice.

Transcript

Notes of an Address given in Edinburgh 1922 on John 1:29, 35-37 and Revelation 5:9-14

The first time, dear friends, we have the Lamb mentioned in the Scriptures is in the 22nd of Genesis, when Isaac asked the question "Where is the lamb?"; and the last time is in the closing chapter of the Bible, in the Book of Revelation. In the first the altar is in view, the sacrifice, but in the last the Lamb is upon the throne. The first has in view the offering up of Christ, but in the last we find the throne of God has become the throne of God and of the Lamb, and that throne is in the city, the metropolis of the universe, which is called the Bride, the Lamb's wife, from which radiates the glory of God that lights up the nations of the earth with order, and beauty, and blessing. First there is the sacrifice, and finally there is the throne; while the Book of Exodus gives us a type of what is taking place between the sacrifice of the cross and the glory which is yet to shine from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the 12th of Exodus, you remember, they were instructed to take a lamb; the blood was to be shed and to be sprinkled on the upper door posts and two side posts of the houses in which they were, for God was to execute judgment that night, but the blood of the Passover lamb was to shelter them, and within those blood-sprinkled door posts they were to find their food--they were to feed upon the roasted lamb. The lamb, however, is not called God's Lamb there, for it is spoken of as "Your lamb." Our lamb, but that lamb in type is the same Lamb, the same Person who is God's Lamb, and it has, we are told, to be "without blemish."

Today, when God is calling men and women out from the world and bringing them to Himself, we need to see to it that we have a perfect Saviour who is inwardly without blemish--in whom was no sin! Peter adds another thing--Those who believe, he says, are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb, not only "without blemish" inwardly, but also "without spot" outwardly. Notwithstanding that He himself has lived and passed through this sin-defiled world, our Lord Jesus Christ was unspotted. Inwardly and outwardly--in every way He was perfect! and at the present time all who believe on Him can be spoken of as "redeemed." Not only redeemed from the hand of the enemy (as Israel was from the power of Pharaoh in Egypt) but, thank God, "redeemed to God," set in His presence in all the value of the work and perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures before us first of all speak of the work of Christ for God Himself, and then of the worthiness of the One who does the work, and finally of the worship that flows to the One who is so worthy.

As far as I know, this is the only place in the Gospels where the Lord Jesus is spoken of as the Lamb of God! I was surprised when I first observed that; one might have expected to find this distinctive glory of Christ shining in almost every page of the Gospels; but here, and here only, have we Him so spoken of. The apostle Paul, who unfolds the truth of the church, never once speaks of Christ as the Lamb, although he presents Him in a way that indicates it, for instance, as "Christ our Passover who was slain for us," and yet when you pass on to the last book of the Bible, where the results of God's ways and Christ's work are shown in all their magnificence and glory in universal perfection, you find the Lamb spoken of no less than twenty-eight times! Peter, notwithstanding Rome's great fallacy in founding the church upon him, was never sent as an apostle to the Gentiles; he was the apostle to the Jews, and he speaks of the Lamb. He was the apostle that above all others was allowed to show exceptional failure! Still Rome claims him as the first infallible pope. The whole position is absurd.

John the Baptist came as His forerunner, and bore witness to Him. When he saw Jesus coming to him his heart was full! His stupendous work rose before his mind, and he said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The question in the 22nd of Genesis raised first by Isaac was, "Where is the Lamb?"; the answer given being "God will provide Himself a Lamb." Here He is! the One who had come to take up the work for God's satisfaction, and for God's glory. You say, yes! and that is the One who came to do the work for me! to put my sins away! That is perfectly true, but mark, it does not say "sins" here, it speaks of something deeper, not simply the putting away of sins, the fruit, but of sin the root. He is not spoken of as the Lamb who takes away the sins (in the plural) but as the One who for God's satisfaction and glory deals with the root matter of "SIN." He deals with lawlessness sacrificially, judicially and governmentally, and so removes it that God--the blessed God--might rest in Divine satisfaction and joy undisturbed for ever. That is why He is called God's Lamb, and as Jesus approached, John said, There He is!--"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!"

The translation in 1 John 3:4 is a mistaken one. There we read, "Sin is the transgression of the law." That would teach there was no sin in the world till there was a law to transgress. We may be thankful that mistake has been corrected. The right reading is this, "Sin is lawlessness," that is, of course, lawlessness as to God. Christ the Lamb of God came to take that away so that the universe should be filled with beauty, and order, and blessing, and that God should rest in eternal blessedness. Don't think you will lose anything by coming to see that first and foremost the precious Saviour procured for God Himself infinite satisfaction and delight by the same work that set you free and brought you into everlasting blessing!

It is often pointed out, however, that the sin of the world is not taken away. We see it all around, lawlessness in social circles, in political circles, in commercial circles, and even in religious circles, as well as in ourselves personally. Ah, but dear friends, it is. Judicially and sacrificially it is removed. Sin has been dealt with in the death of Christ, where "our old man" was put away by the cross, by means of crucifixion: he was "crucified with Christ," and there in that death sin was put away judicially by the sacrifice of Christ before God. Christ came in the likeness of flesh of sin, and, as a sacrifice for sin, received its condemnation as He hung upon the cross. We are told He has "put away sin," not only borne our sins away, nor simply taken away sins--every sin in the minutest detail--but sin itself, the root principle has been judged at the cross where the work was done. It is done, and, mark you, what has been done sacrificially and judicially at the cross will presently be done by Christ governmentally from the throne!

In the Book of Revelation we see the One who sets all the judgments in motion by the opening of the seals is the Lamb. After the church has left the earth--when those who love our Lord Jesus Christ and have the Holy Spirit disappear--men will tremble, and they will say a most extraordinary thing, "Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb"! What a contradiction in terms! Personally I cannot conceive of any wrath connected with Christ as the Lamb--but that is what the princes and leaders of this world will say when they see everything going wrong and that great cataclysm coming upon the nations, and when they see that dread time of the great tribulation foretold in Scripture at hand, before its climax is reached--they will cry, "Hide us from the wrath of the Lamb"! Why, you can hardly imagine anything more simple and gentle than a little lamb! Yet the world-leaders dread His wrath, for they are ignorant of His atoning sacrifice. In the first of John it is the ordinary word for lamb, *amnos*; but when He is seen upon the throne in Revelation it is *arnion*, a diminutive term--a "little Lamb"! He is seen in the midst of that throne with seven horns, for perfection of power is connected with Him; and seven eyes, for perfection in intelligence is His also, and He is the One who opens the seven seals when governmental judgments upon the lawless will begin to fall.

Someone prayed this evening that we might have grace not to hide anything that is good and necessary for men to know. Well, it is enough to make those who can discern the development of things around us, and who read the Bible in communion with God in regard to these things, to tremble as they see at this time men denying the atoning work of the Lamb and the glory of His Person--it is enough to make the strongest fear for the judgments that must come; but, thank God, before they come the assembly (which is not appointed to wrath) will be translated from earth to heaven; nevertheless, when we see what is coming on the earth it moves us to plead with any man or woman present, who has not yet fled from the wrath to come, to flee to Christ! If you are to be put right for time and for eternity, you must accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour!

One of the greatest scholars--probably the greatest Hebraist of his day, an expert in his profession, many of whose books were published in this city--used his remarkable abilities to undermine the Bible's inspiration, and to further modernism. His writings are still read far and wide, yet he came to die like every other sinner! There was the learned man dying, and I have in my pocket now a trustworthy account of that death-bed written by one of his admirers. His wife read to him some of the church's hymns. He stopped her, saying, "Don't read to me any more of these hymns, they are for the saints, read to me that hymn which says 'Just as I am, O Lamb of God, I come.'" Over and over again she read as he bade her,

"Just as I am, without one plea,

But that Thy blood was shed for me,

And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,

O, Lamb of God, I come."

Think of the mercy of God in allowing such peace-giving words to be read to that dying scholar who had attacked His Book, the Book of inspiration, as he had done! "Ask them to sing it," he said, "at my funeral."

I trust that it wasn't just all sentimentalism, but that through God's mercy the scholar really came to the atoning Lamb of God in faith. I am, however, far more concerned at this moment that you should come to Him! that you should trust Him here and now! and then you will be able to rejoice not only that He is God's Lamb who puts everything right for God sacrificially and governmentally, but that He is yours tonight--your Lamb! and that His precious blood cleanses you from all sin, removes every sin from before the eye of a holy God and shelters you from the judgment that your sins called for!

John not only beheld Him as the One who was going to do the work of putting away sin, he saw Him walking again, and his heart was moved as he looked upon that meek and lowly Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, the One whom he said came after him, but at the same time took the place of dignity above him. He owned, "He was before me," whereas he had just said He came "after me." You will see that John had some inkling as to who this Person was--of the Deity of Jesus! As he gazed upon Him he knew He was not only a Man that came after him, and rightly took a place of dignity and glory above him, but he said "He was before me"! He was not only David's Son, sprung from him, He was David's Root, from whom David sprang! It was not only His work but it was Himself who filled his heart with adoration; and so he said the second time, as he stood with two of his disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God!" He said nothing about His work this time, but just about Himself. Oh, when you are put at rest about His work you will be able to look quietly at Himself. He will fill your heart and mind. That expression from the heart of John lost for him two of his best followers! Do you think he was sorry? Not a bit! As he expressed his heart about that Person, off went Andrew and John to follow Jesus, and Jesus invited them to come with Him. He asked, "What seek ye?" and then they inquired of Him where He dwelt, and He said, "Come and see." My dear friends, you may depend upon it Jesus does not only want us to be saved; He does not only want us to know His work; but He wants us to know Himself, to dwell in His presence, to enjoy even now the company of the Father and the Son.

Later He told His disciples He was going away, but added, "I will come again." He will come for His bride, the assembly, when He will raise the dead in Christ, and catch up the living to be with Himself for ever--"for ever with the Lord." We are told in Revelation 4 and 5 that we shall surround the throne, the throne of God and the Lamb. The living creatures and the angels, too, will all be seen in relation to that same throne. All will rejoice in and celebrate the worthiness of the Lamb. The vast concourse in heaven, upon the earth, and under the earth, will ascribe glory to Him! The new song will laud the worthiness and redeeming work of our Lord Jesus and ascribe glory to Him! The angels take up the praise! It will echo and re-echo through the universe--Worthy is the Lamb that was slain! Blessing, honour, glory and might are ascribed to Him, and the living creatures say, Amen! while the glorified saints fall down and worship before Him!

The throne of God becomes "the throne of God and of the Lamb" for ever. We shall see there the One who once was slain; the One who has redeemed to God by His blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, the One who has put everything into order for God's satisfaction and God's glory, the Lamb of God--God's Lamb!--the One who has brought to the immutable throne of Divine majesty a new

distinction, a new splendour, a new glory, as it is called now not only the throne of God, but also of the Lamb. How glorious! For ever the sacrifice of eternal love will be remembered and give its beauty to the throne above.

It is a serious matter to oppose the Lamb and His work. We read in Revelation 17:14 of those who make war with the Lamb, but it is added, He overcame them, for He is none less than the Lord of lords and King of kings Himself. He must take away all sin, all lawlessness, governmentally as well as sacrificially, from the throne as well as on the altar.

It is a high privilege, a high honour, to be of the faith of Christ, the Son of God. That same verse tells us that those who are with Him are "called and chosen and faithful!" They shall see His face. They shall reign with Him and serve Him with rejoicing and worshipping hearts for ever and ever where no sin can ever come.

"All taint of sin shall be removed,

All done away,

And we shall dwell with God's Beloved

Through God's eternal day."

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