

The Lamb of God



Titles of Jesus (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue to get our hearts in tune for the Christmas season with this week's special theme, "Titles of Jesus." Our purpose in studying this theme at this time is to focus our hearts and minds on the one without whom Christmas has no real meaning, Jesus Christ.

As we study the titles of Jesus used in scripture we find that each one reveals some important aspect of his wonderful, many sided nature. And in this way we come to know him and to love him that much better. So far this week we've studied three titles of Jesus. First, Wonderful Counselor. Second, Prince of Peace. Third, the Word of God. The title that we're going to study today is the Lamb of God.

John the Baptist was sent before Jesus as his forerunner to prepare the way before him. And when the time came for John to introduce Jesus publicly to Israel that was how he described him, the Lamb of God. Let's look at the account in John 1:29–31.

> "The next day John [that's John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and said, Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me. I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

So, John the Baptist came to prepare Israel an to reveal to them the Messiah. And when he gave them this revelation the phrase he used was "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" What does this title, this particular title, "the Lamb of God" tell us about Jesus? I suggest to you that there are three main associations in scripture of a lamb. And remember that Israel were very familiar with that particular creature, the lamb. It has played an absolutely unique part in their history from the time of their exodus from Egypt onward. So, there was not a single Israelite there listening to John to whom that word lamb did not have a very special meaning. Here are the three associations that I see in the lamb. First of all, the lamb is a picture of meekness. The lamb is not an animal that fights. It doesn't have talons or claws or fangs. It's a meek animal. Secondly, it's a picture of

purity. You go out in the fields at springtime and look at the newborn lambs and they look so white and clean and fluffy. There's something about them that makes you want to just pick them up and cuddle them. You just love that pure white. And then, the lamb—and this is the most important of all—in the history of Israel was God's appointed sacrifice to provide redemption and protection. For the Jewish people the lamb was particularly associated with one of their most solemn and important religious commemorations, one that is still celebrated all over the world today by Jewish people, the Passover, Pessi.

Here's the original account of how God intended Israel to celebrate the Passover, as given to Israel through Moses. It's recorded in Exodus 12:21–23. And you'll see that the whole Passover as originally ordained by God centers around a lamb. Without a lamb there can be no Passover as it was originally ordained by God through Moses.

> "Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover Lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the door frame. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the door frame and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down."

So, the entire deliverance of Israel from judgment and wrath depended on the lamb and its blood. And they had to apply the blood upon the outside of the house where they lived. That word Passover is interesting. In Hebrew it's Pessi. Just recently I was studying Hebrew in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. While we were there we read the account of a hurricane that was approaching our home in southeast Florida and, of course, we really were praying earnestly and God did a marvelous thing. Just at the last moment when the hurricane was about one hour away, without any obvious reason it changed its course and passed by our home city without doing any damage. Well interestingly enough, in our class we were studying a Hebrew newspaper which was reporting this incident and when it spoke about the hurricane passing by it used the word frumpessi, the same root word. And the other students in the class said, "What does that mean?" And I said, "You ought to know what that means. That's the word for Passover." And they said, "Oh, I see." So, it was such a vivid illustration to me what the Passover means. It means that the hurricane of God's wrath and judgment which should have descended was deflected and passed by because of the blood of the Passover Lamb.

Well, this picture of the lamb was fulfilled in Jesus. First of all, we have a prophetic picture in Isaiah 53:7:

> "He was oppressed and afflicted, and yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, [here's the picture of meekness] and as a sheep before the shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."

A good many years ago I worked on a farm with sheep. And I noticed how amazingly accurate that is. When you take a sheep to be shorn it will bleat loudly all the way until you actually take the shears and start ripping off the wool. And, at that moment the sheep becomes absolutely silent. So, how accurate the scripture is, "The sheep before her shearers is silent, so he [Jesus] did not open his mouth." And this is recorded in the gospel, just to see it's fulfillment, in Mark 14:55–56 and 60–61, the account of Jesus before the Sanhedrin.

> "The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men bring against you? But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer."

There he was, the sheep before the shearers. And then again, the same before Pilate, the Roman governor. Mark 15:3–5:

> "The chief priests accused him of many things. So again Pilate asked him, Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of. But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed."

That's the Lamb of God.

The blood of the Passover lamb redeemed Israel out of Egypt but the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, provides eternal redemption for all who believe. This is clearly stated many times in the New Testament. For instance, in Hebrews 9:11–12.

> "When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and

> more perfect tabernacle that is not man made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves, but he entered the most holy place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption."

You see, the blood of Jesus obtained eternal redemption for every believer. And then again in 1 Peter 1:18–19:

> "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."

It took the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, God's sinless eternal Son to provide eternal redemption. The blood of the Passover lamb was a type, a figure. It provided temporary redemption. It had to be renewed every year. But when Jesus shed his blood and entered into the holiest, that was once and for all. It never had to be repeated. He had obtained eternal redemption.

And finally, let's see that the nature of Jesus as the Lamb of God sets us an example and a pattern that we need to learn to follow in our lives. 1 Peter 2:21–23:

> "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats."

There he is, the spotless, meek, Lamb of God standing before his accusers, offering no defense, no retaliation. That's the lamb nature in the Son of God. And God makes it very clear that we who are believers and followers of Jesus have got to reproduce that lamb nature. He set us an example that we should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him he did not retaliate. When he suffered he made no threats. That's part of the nature of Jesus that God wants to work in each one of us.

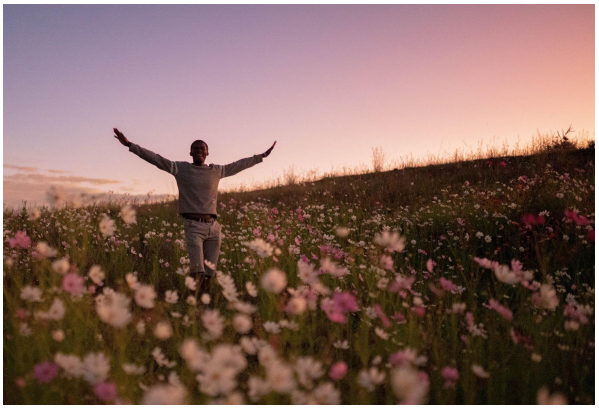
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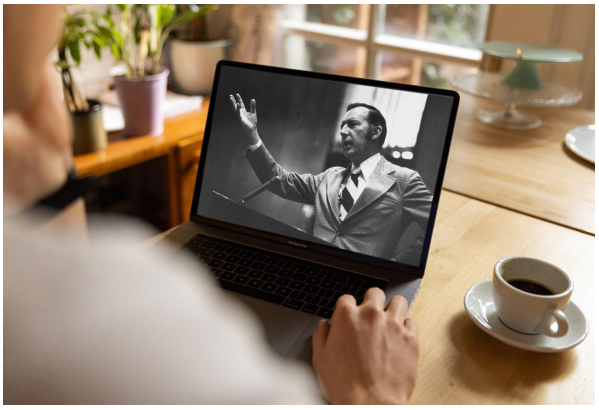
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