



God's Eternal Purpose: Redeemed by the Lamb

Like a beautiful piece of crimson thread woven through a tapestry is the theme of the Lamb of God in the Bible.

The message of redemption begins in the heart of a loving God even before the first couple was created. The cross was there in the heart of God before human history began. The cross of Christ was no afterthought in God's plan of redemption.

The Prospect of a Lamb for Redemption begins as an incipient idea in Genesis 4:3-7 and grows through the remainder of the Bible. The concept of a required lamb is planted in the account of the first act of worship. Abel evidently brought a lamb because of previously given divine instruction.

"So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Genesis 4:3-7, NASB 1995).

The New Testament commentary on Abel is found in Hebrews 11:4. "By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks" (Hebrews 11:4). True Cain had an attitude problem, but it may have included his ideas on worship and way of approaching God apart from His revelation. When we worship God, we always come by the Lamb of God slain as propitiation. Clearly after Abel's sacrifice, man is always seen bringing the animal as a sacrifice. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22).

The Provision of the Lamb for Redemption is clearly seen in Genesis 22:6 – 8. God provided a substitute lamb for Isaac.

"Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, My father! And he said, Here I am, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering? " Abraham said, God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son. So the two of them walked on together." (Genesis 22:6-8).

22:6-8).

The dominant idea in the whole experience is summed up in the words, "God will provide Himself the lamb." After seeing God provide the required lamb Abraham named the place *Yahweh jireh*, "Yahweh will provide." The LORD God did just that at a Calvary.

"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). The ram was a type of the substitutionary death of Christ who was offered as a burnt offering in our stead (Heb. 10:5-10; John 1:29, 36; Acts 2:23-24; Rev. 13:8).

The Protection Provided by the Redeeming Lamb is evident in the Passover lamb. The lamb had to be appropriated by faith. It had to be slain and the blood applied to each home. The father of each household was required to take an unblemished one-year-old lamb and kill it. "Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it" (Exodus 12:7). Moses explains the reason for the sacrifice. "For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments —I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt" (vv. 12-13). With the application of the blood of the lamb to the lintel and doorposts, the household was protected. "For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite *you*" (v. 23). In order to receive the protection the lamb had to be slain and appropriated by faith.

Christ is our Passover slain (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:6-7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; John 12:24; Heb. 9:22). Jesus was without blemish (Luke 11:53-54; John 8:46; 18:38). God still comes our way and says in effect, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (v. 13). The lamb had to be slain, and man had to trust in God's provision of that lamb. The Passover sacrifice must be applied by faith (Ex. 12:7; John 3:36). Christ is our perfect protection from the wrath of God (Heb. 10:10, 14; 1 John 1:7). He is also the Bread of Life provided for us to feast upon daily (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

The Perfect Lamb for Redemption is emphasized throughout the book of Leviticus. The lamb must always be a lamb "without blemish." It must be perfect in its character to remove sin and guilt. The priestly handbook made it clear, "it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it" (Leviticus 22:21b).

Every sacrifice in the Old Testament anticipated the true and perfect sacrifice which the Lamb of God would one day offer. They were shadows of the coming perfect sacrifice for sin. Christ is the end of all these sacrifices. These sacrifices were a witness to the people that they were sinners and could be saved only by substitutionary death offered in their behalf. The worshipper testified that he lived only by virtue of the slain victim in his stead. The continual sacrifice of animals testified that the blood of animals could not take away sin. It was a promise, prophecy and pledge that God would accomplish it with His own Lamb. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Hebrews 9:22) is a commentary on Leviticus 17:11. "For the

shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Hebrews 9:22) is a commentary on Leviticus 17:11. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."

All sacrifices were mere shadows and types of the sacrifice of Christ and looked forward to it. These Old Testament sacrifices were worthless in their own right, but were accepted for the time as tokens of the future sacrifice of the Lamb of God (Hebrews 10:10-14). All pointed to Christ and were fulfilled by His all sufficient sacrifice. Once the sacrifice of Christ was offered all other sacrifices lost their meaning, and ceased to be. The infinite value of the savior's death was enough to pay the penalty for the sins of all men for all time. Hebrews 10:19-20, "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh . . ."

The Perfect Redeeming Lamb God will Provide is a Person who was "wounded for our transgressions . . . Yahweh has laid on Him the iniquity of us all . . . He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 tells us the lamb will be a person of God's choosing who will die a substitutionary death for our sins. You can find almost all of Isaiah 53 quoted somewhere in the New Testament.

The sacrifice of Christ is vicarious (Isa. 53:4-6, 7-9) and victorious (vv. 10-12). Christ bore our sins on the cross (Isa. 53:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:24-25). His death was a substitutionary, atoning sacrifice (Rom. 3:25-26).

The Lamb of God is Identified as the Person Jesus Christ by John the Baptist. All of the Old Testament lambs typified the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. John saw Jesus and declared, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). The next day John saw Him again and declared, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (v. 36). Our sins are removed only by the sacrifice of this Lamb (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4; Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5; 1 Pet. 1:18; Heb. 9:5, 11-15).

The Proof of the Precious Redeeming Lamb of God is seen in His resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 6:14; Acts 2:31-36; 3:15; 5:31; Phil. 2:9-11; Rom. 10:9; 14:9). The apostle Peter sums up the whole message of the Lamb with these words: "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" (1 Peter 1:18-21).

The Lamb of God is Proclaimed as our Redeemer in Acts 8. An Ethiopian government official was speeding his way home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. In his lap was a copy of the book of Isaiah. As he rode along, he pondered "He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearers is silent, so He does not open His mouth. In humiliation His judgment was taken away; who shall relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth" (Acts 8:32-33, quoting Isaiah 53:7, 8). God sent Philip the evangelist to interpret and expound the passage for him. "And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him" (v. 35). The Ethiopian man appropriated the provision of the Lamb of God by believing on Christ. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" was his response.

The Preeminence of the Lamb of God as our Redeemer is the message of the book of Revelation. He will receive everlasting worship. The Lamb of God is the Lion of the tribe of Judah who reigns as the sovereign King of Kings and Lord of Lords for all eternity. The whole book focuses our attention on the "Lamb standing, as if slain" at the throne of God. The elders fell down before the Lamb and worshipped Him singing a new song, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth . . . saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is

kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth . . . saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.' And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever'" (Rev. 5:9-10, 12-13). Talk about worship! The book ends in the presence of the throne of God and the Lamb. The Lamb is the *Shekinah* glory of God that illuminates heaven. Please don't miss the message. It is clearly taught "only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" are present in heaven worshipping Him (Rev. 21:22; 22:16; 19:1-20:6; cf. Luke 1:32-33).

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