

Behold! The Lamb of God

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INI – SDG

John 1:29 "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

It always takes me a while to pick out a Christmas tree. I want to find the perfect one. You may know how it goes. One is too high, one too short, another too thin, too fat, crooked, or lopsided. When you think you have found the perfect one you walk around and on the other side there is a bare patch.

If it is hard to pick out a Christmas tree, imagine how hard it would have been as an Israelite to pick out the perfect lamb for the Passover feast. God himself demanded that the Israelite find a lamb that was perfect, without spot or blemish. Such a task would have been impossible.

But now God himself chooses a lamb, and he indicates his choice to us through John the Baptist. On Palm Sunday he reveals this chosen perfect Lamb to us. This is what Palm Sunday is about. We are going out with the crowd to see this perfect Lamb whom God has chosen.

John 1:29 Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

The Lamb Whom God has Chosen

This is the lamb whom God has chosen and there is no other choice. There is no one else who can carry the weight of our sin. Jesus is the only one who can carry the weight of my sin.

When was the last time you had trouble sleeping at night because of something you did, or you failed to do? Guilt and sin is a heavy burden. It weighs on us. It keeps us up at night. Consequently, we are always tempted to find a way to push that burden off on someone else.

One way we do that is insisting that everybody else has to change. I can't change. They have to.

Remember Joseph's brothers who were so annoyed with Joseph that they sold him into slavery. Rather than admit their jealousy they insisted it was all Joseph's fault.

Another way is that when we commit a big sin, we focus on someone else's smaller sin. Perhaps you lie to your spouse, but you focus on their tone of voice rather than admit your own sin. The kids and I were talking about the Zaccheaus the other day. This is what the Pharisees did to Jesus. They focused on the fact that Jesus ate with Zaccheaus rather than admit their sin.

Another option is to blame our parents or society. I have issues but it's because of what my parents did, or it's because of the way I was treated in school, or it's because of what someone else did to me growing up. We can blame others all we want it doesn't solve the problem. It doesn't remove the guilt.

There is only one place where we can lay our sins and that is on this Lamb whom God has chosen.

As Jesus said, **"Come to me and I will give you rest."**

Humans have been attempting to pile their sin and guilt on someone else ever since Adam did it to Eve in the garden but of course it doesn't work.

We cannot get rid of the burden of our sins by piling them on someone else, but here is the Lamb whom God has chosen who willingly takes the weight of that guilt from us.

There is on one other than Christ upon whom we can lay the burden of our sin. And yet we are so foolish and proud that we keep trying to do it anyway.

There is one and only one way to get rid of the burden of our sins. That is to confess them to Christ and believe his promise that he has washed them away.

In the Old Testament the priest was given specific instructions. They were to take the scapegoat, put your hands over it and confess the sins of the people, then release it and it would bear the sins away.

In this way alone the sins of the people were dealt with. Similarly, when we come to Christ and confess our sins, he most certainly carries them away.

Christ is the only one chose to bear our sins.

John 1:29 Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

The Lamb Who Bears the Sin

The verb here is a present participle. He is the one who is carrying the sin. This lamb whom God chose willingly rides into Jerusalem carrying our sin. This makes it very foolish of us to carry the sin ourselves.

How silly would it be for me to carry this weight on my back. Why bother when I can just put it down on the floor. I accomplish nothing by carrying it on my shoulder other than making it harder for me to preach. In the same way we accomplish nothing when we attempt to carry our own sin. God has provided the lamb who is Christ to carry it for us.

We are so foolish that more often than we realize attempt to bear the burden of our sins. We do this whenever we think I will make up for it, or when we live with the guilt of our sins.

We do this because our faith is weak. In the weakness of our faith, we fail to trust that our sins is completely washed away. In our weakness we fail to trust that others have forgiven us. We end up bearing the burden ourselves rather than give them to Christ.

Psalm 91:3 Surely, He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.

The fowler isn't a word we use much anymore. It means a person who sets a trap for birds. In this case it is a picture of Satan who sets a trap for us. We fall into the trap of sin and temptation, but it is God who gets us out.

2 Peter 2:9 The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations.

Peter's words mean this, that we step right in the middle of sin and temptation but that the Lord delivers us.

Psalm 34:17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles.

They are called the "righteous" even though they are in trouble, that is temptation and sin. But they are called righteous because God has delivered them from their sin.

We cannot carry our own sin. We cannot make up for it. Jesus rode into Jerusalem as a king. He is the king who is strong to save us from all sin. We don't need to carry our guilt.

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The Lamb who carries the sin of the World

Finally, our text makes it clear that this Lamb has been chosen for the world. Christ rode into Jerusalem as our king. He wasn't there only for people like Saint Peter and Paul, but for us as well.

We think again of the account of Zacchaeus and how Jesus insisted that he would visit his house. Even though the Pharisees laughed and ridiculed him, Jesus was clear that he came for the lowliest sinner.

These last two words of our text are of the greatest comfort to us. When we are tempted to think, "I'm not good enough, look at what a great sinner I am," then we have these words reminding us that Jesus came for the world and for me.

Jesus is my king, the lamb who carries my sin.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem as God's chosen Passover lamb. He came to carry the sins of the world so that we don't have to. How foolish we are when we try to carry that burden ourselves or make excuses to load it on the back of others. Jesus is the Lamb of God who carries the sin of the world. Amen