

John 1:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith,
Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the
world.

Analysis

John the Baptist's proclamation 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' represents one of Scripture's most theologically rich statements. The command 'Behold' (ἴδε/ide) is emphatic—look intently, fix your gaze upon this person. The title 'Lamb of God' (ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) contains multiple Old Testament allusions. Primarily, it evokes the Passover lamb (Exodus 12) whose blood protected Israelite households from judgment—Jesus becomes the ultimate Passover sacrifice (1 Corinthians 5:7). It also recalls the daily sacrifices at the Temple, the binding of Isaac where God provided a ram (Genesis 22), and Isaiah's suffering servant who was 'brought as a lamb to the slaughter' (Isaiah 53:7). The genitive 'of God' indicates both ownership (God's lamb) and provision (God provides the lamb), fulfilling Genesis 22:8 where Abraham told Isaac 'God will provide himself a lamb.' The present participle 'which taketh away' (ὁ αἴρων/ho airōn) indicates ongoing action—Jesus continuously bears and removes sin. The verb αἴρω (airō) means both to lift up (bearing) and to take away (removing)—Jesus both bears sin's penalty and removes sin's guilt. The scope is universal: 'the sin of the world' (τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου). The singular 'sin' may indicate sin as a collective reality, the sinful condition of humanity, rather than merely individual sinful acts. The word 'world' (κόσμος/kosmos) emphasizes the global, cosmic scope—not just Israel's sin but humanity's sin universally.

Historical Context

This declaration occurred at the Jordan River where John baptized, likely near Bethany beyond Jordan (John 1:28). John the Baptist had been conducting a revival ministry calling Israel to repentance in preparation for Messiah. His baptism symbolized cleansing from sin and readiness for the coming kingdom. When Jesus appeared to be baptized, John initially resisted (Matthew 3:14), recognizing Jesus' sinlessness. After baptizing Jesus and witnessing the Spirit's descent and the Father's affirmation, John received divine revelation about Jesus' identity and mission. The next day, seeing Jesus approaching, John makes this proclamation. The imagery would have resonated powerfully with Jewish hearers familiar with the sacrificial system. Daily morning and evening sacrifices occurred at the Temple with lambs offered for sin. During Passover, thousands of lambs were slaughtered at the Temple commemorating Israel's exodus deliverance. The Day of Atonement ritual involved transferring Israel's sins to a goat driven into the wilderness. John synthesizes these images, declaring that Jesus fulfills what all these sacrifices foreshadowed. Historically, this verse marked the moment when Jesus' mission was publicly identified as redemptive and sacrificial rather than merely prophetic or kingly. For early Christians facing persecution, this identification of Jesus as the Lamb provided comfort—the same one who died as a lamb would return as the conquering Lion (Revelation 5:5-6).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the title 'Lamb of God' connect Jesus to the Old Testament sacrificial system, and what does this teach about atonement?
2. What is the significance of the Lamb taking away 'the sin of the world' rather than merely Israel's sin or individual sins?

3. How does John the Baptist's declaration challenge expectations of Messiah as conquering king rather than sacrificial lamb?
4. In what ways does understanding Jesus as both the lamb provided by God and the Lamb who is God deepen appreciation for the cross?

Interlinear Text

τοῦ	ἐπαύριον	βλέπει	τοῦ	Ἰωάννης	τοῦ	Ἰησοῦν		
which	The next day	seeth	which	John	which	Jesus		
G3588	G1887	G991	G3588	G2491	G3588	G2424		
ἐρχόμενον	πρὸς	αὐτόν	καὶ	λέγει	Ἴδε	τοῦ	ἀμνὸς	τοῦ
coming	unto	him	and	saith	G1492	which	the Lamb	which
G2064	G4314	G846	G2532	G3004		G3588	G286	G3588
θεοῦ	τοῦ	αἴρων	τοῦ	ἀμαρτίαν	τοῦ	κόσμου		
of God	which	taketh away	which	the sin	which	of the world		
G2316	G3588	G142	G3588	G266	G3588	G2889		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 53:7 (Parallel theme): He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

1 John 2:2 (Sin): And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 3:5 (Sin): And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

1 Peter 1:19 (Parallel theme): But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

2 Corinthians 5:21 (Sin): For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Hebrews 1:3 (Sin): Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Isaiah 53:11 (Parallel theme): He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

1 Peter 2:24 (Sin): Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Revelation 6:1 (Parallel theme): And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

Revelation 12:11 (Parallel theme): And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

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