

Thinking About Easter - Part 6 - The Lamb of God



Lambs are cute. At one time in my life my father-in-law was a manager of a sheep ranch. I got to see recently birthed lambs as they struggled to take their first steps. Everyone wanted to hold them. Everyone wanted to cuddle them. They were so cute. When John the Baptist said, "*Behold the Lamb of God*" he wasn't thinking cute, far from it. Seeing a lamb die is sad, but offering your pet first born lamb was hard to let go. But what we don't see here is what every Jewish family had in mind when they heard those words.

The context was that Passover was near (John 2.12) People all over Palestine were preparing to journey to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. It was one of the three feasts required by law for all adult males to attend. The law required that they select the lamb and keep it for four days to be sure it was without blemish. People were grooming their specially selected lamb for Passover. Many more would buy a lamb of the many flocks being led to Jerusalem. Sheep were being moved in flocks all over Palestine toward Jerusalem. What most of us miss here is the pathos, the emotional feelings, that surged through a Jew at Passover.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, estimated conservatively that the crowd in Jerusalem at Passover in A.D. 65 was more than 3,000,000. He calculated the numbers of lambs slain at Passover to be 256,500! Each lamb of eight days old to a year old could represent 10-20 people. King Agrippa attempted a census of the Passover and found that there were 600,000 pairs of kidneys counted, each lamb slain accounted for 10-12 diners. That gave a number almost double Josephus' estimation. Can you imagine the smell of 300,000 roasting lambs?

The people would line up before two rows of priests (24 courses) with golden and silver bowls catching the blood and passing it forward to the altar. At the altar a priest or priests would throw the basin of blood at the foot of the altar. It is not possible for our western antiseptic minds to embrace the bloody horror of more than 300,000 lambs being slain!

Imagine standing before a priest with your lamb cradled in your arms as it utters pathetic bleating as it too observed the bloody massacre around it. You, as the designated family member, would have to hold the lamb and before the priest slit its throat and allow the blood to flow into the provided basins. The lamb would die in your arms. Add to that that this event was repeated by every family every year.

Now, see and hear John pointing out Jesus and crying, "*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*"

Application

Jesus Christ was God incarnate come to earth with one purpose in mind, to save his people from their sins. That's the point. He came to die, not for himself, but for you and me. He was the Lamb of God, the only spotless lamb that could be a satisfactory offering for sin, once for all. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." According to Jesus he was referring to the crucifixion. He was like the serpent being lifted up in the wilderness when the people were dying of snake bites.

Moses lifted up that serpent on a pole (a cross) that all could see. Whoever looked in faith would survive. Is it any wonder that the Apostle Paul declared that he preached Christ and him crucified? It is the power of God to everyone who believes. There is power in the cross.

Prayer

Precious Lord Jesus, you died for me. I'm stunned. Why would you do that for me? Why would you die for me? But there was no other way to save me from my sin. So, thank you for offering the ultimate sacrifice and taking my place on the cross. You paid a debt I could never ever pay. You are my Savior. You are my Lamb of God.

LAMB OF GOD THROUGH SCRIPTURE

The LAMB is the name for our Savior that refers to Jesus being the sacrificial once-for-all offering given on our behalf.

- By faith Abel offered a sacrifice acceptable to God. [Hebrews 11:4](#) and [Genesis 4:3-7](#)
- The Lord will provide himself a [Lamb](#). [Genesis 22:6-8](#)
- When I see the [blood](#) I will pass over you. [Exodus 12:7](#)
- He is brought as a [lamb](#) to the slaughter. [Isa. 53:7](#).
- Behold the [Lamb of God](#), which takes away the sin of the world. [John 1:29](#) .
- Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a [lamb without blemish](#). [1 Pet. 1:18-20](#)

Revelation

- Worthy is the [Lamb](#) that was slain, [Rev. 5:12](#)
- These are made white in the blood of the [Lamb](#), because of their faith in him, [Rev 7:14](#)
- We overcome Satan by the blood of the [Lamb](#), [Rev. 12:11](#)
- The Son of Man is the [Lamb](#) slain from the foundation of the world, [Rev. 13:8](#)
- The [Lamb](#) is the light and the Temple of heaven, [Rev 21:22](#)
- Only those who are written in the [Lamb's](#) Book of Life shall enter in, [Rev 21:27](#)
- River of Life flowing out of the throne of God and the [Lamb](#), [Rev 22:1-3](#) (no more curse)