

He Loved Me...

He Loves Me Lots

The Gospel of John

Text

John 1:29-34

Topic

John the Baptist formally introduces Jesus as "The Lamb of God
Who takes away the sin of the world"

Title

***"This Lamb is Your Lamb, This Lamb is My Lamb,
This Lamb was Sent for You and Me"***

Boxers boast some of the fiercest nicknames in professional sports.

"Iron" Mike Tyson... Tommy "The Hitman" Hearns... Rubin "Hurricane" Carter...
Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini... "Merciless" Ray Mercer... James "Boncrusher"
Smith... "Raging Bull" Jake Lamotta... "The Brockton Bomber" Rocky
Marciano... Hector "Macho" Camacho.

Fictional fighter Apollo Creed was "The Master of Disaster," "The Dancing
Destroyer," "The King of Sting," "The Prince of Punch," and "The Count of
Monte Fisto."

Compare these nicknames; and, yes, they are real:

- "The Punching Postman" (Tony Thornton).

- “Wimpy” (Jerry Halstead).
- “The Ding-a-Ling Man” (Darnell Wilson).

Those nicknames don’t quite have the same effect.

Announcing Jesus to the world, John the Baptist said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

“The Lamb of God” may not sound fierce. Consider this: The last book of the New Testament, the Revelation, describes the spiritual warfare by which Satan, sin, and death are once-for-all defeated. Jesus is called “The Lamb of God” twenty-nine times in the Revelation.

Satan boasts the title, “The Roaring Lion,” who goes about seeking those he can devour (First Peter 5:8). Lamb versus Lion and the Lamb wins easily.

Properly understood, “Lamb” is the most powerful title in the universe.

I’ll organize my comments around two points: **#1 John Baptized The Lamb And He Received God The Holy Spirit**, and **#2 The Lamb Baptizes You And You Receive God The Holy Spirit**.

#1 - John Baptized The Lamb And He Received God The Holy Spirit (v29-31)

The Roaring Lion has other powerful titles: “The Ruler of This World,” “The Prince of the Power of the Air,” “The Dragon,” “The Murderer,” “The Accuser,” and “The Devil.” He masquerades as an “Angel of Light” (Second Corinthians 11:14).

Jesus will first incarcerate him, then cast him into the Lake of Fire, where he will suffer eternal conscious torment (Revelation 20:10).

As Apollo Creed once said to Rocky Balboa, “Ain’t gonna be no rematch.”

I think we are sufficiently convinced that “The Lamb of God” is quite a title.

Joh 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

This is another masterful, carefully crafted verse. It is at once simple and sublime. It's best to start with the rich meaning of "The Lamb of God."

The Jews coming out to hear John preach grew up sacrificing lambs. The shedding of innocent blood was necessary for a sinful man to approach the holy God.

The person offering the sacrifice lay his hands upon the animal to symbolize that it was taking his place.

Then the person making the sacrifice had to kill the animal, which was usually done by cutting its throat with a sharp knife. It was brutal and bloody.

- Priests slaughtered two sacrificial lambs every day in the Temple, morning and evening.
- Whenever necessary, a Jew could bring an animal for a sin offering, a burnt offering, a peace offering, or a trespass offering.
- Annually the Jews were to celebrate their Exodus from Egypt by each family sacrificing a lamb at Passover.

It's anybody's guess how many animals were offered during the years that the Temple was in operation. Not to mention animal sacrifices for the 2500 years between Adam and Moses.

When John identified Jesus as "The Lamb of God," it was a stunning pronouncement:

- It meant that all the lambs previously sacrificed anticipated His coming to be the Last Lamb.
- It told that Jesus would be slaughtered as a sacrificial lamb.

Jesus is "The Lamb **of God.**" God the Father *sent* Jesus, He *gave* Jesus to the human race to be our Lamb. He is the only Lamb God has provided. Believing

in His substitutionary death and resurrection is the exclusive way you can be saved.

In *Avengers: Infinity War*, Peter Parker asks his best friend to cause a distraction so he can exit the bus without being seen. Easy-peasy, because when Ned looks out the window, he is startled to see a spaceship and yells out, *"We're all gonna die! It's a spaceship!"*

When John the Baptist says, "Behold!" it has that kind of impact. Only in the case of Jesus, it's because those who receive Him are *"all gonna live!"*

Jesus' sacrifice will "take away the sin of the world." "Sin" is singular, meaning all sin, including the sin nature we inherit from our original parents, Adam and Eve. The death of The Lamb of God solves the universal problem of sin.

Animal sacrifices were never meant to be sufficient to "take away" sin once-and-for-all. They were a temporary fix.

My Oldsmobile Vista Cruiser station wagon started leaking radiator fluid. It was Christmastime in the 1980s, and we were leaving SoCal to return home. My brother put Stop Leak in it. We limped home on that temporary fix. What it needed was a new radiator.

Jesus' sacrifice was permanent. On the Cross, at the precise moment thousands of Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple, Jesus cried out, **"It is finished!"**

Every person, everywhere, for all time, is included in "of the world." Let me put it another way. Can you imagine Jesus saying to anyone, "I'm sorry, but I didn't die for you?"

Not everyone will be saved. Only those who believe and receive the Lord's sacrifice on their behalf and in their place are saved.

Joh 1:30 This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'

John was older than Jesus, but he said Jesus was “before me.” He may have spoken more than he knew, but this is a declaration of Jesus’ preexistence. A Person called the Word was with God and was God. The Word was Jesus.

This is the third time John has said Jesus “is preferred before me” (v15, 27, 30). He was all about people beholding Jesus. John did nothing to call attention to himself. His was genuine humility. He did not care what others thought about him or how he was treated.

John the Baptist knew that God didn’t need him. There was nothing special about him that caused God to choose him to be Jesus’ forerunner.

I’d rather know that God *wants* me than *needs* me.

Were you ever the last person chosen in a schoolyard pick? God doesn’t need me, but He wants me. I am always His first pick. And somehow, so are each of you.

I’m an absolute zero but God saved me, and wants me to partner with Him in the Gospel.

Joh 1:31 I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.”

John did not know that his cousin was the Messiah until God identified Jesus to him.

John baptized “with water” hints that the Messiah would baptize using another medium.

Did you know that there are around eight hundred people who consider themselves religious Samaritans?

After Solomon’s death, Israel split:

- The nation in the north was called Israel. Their capital was Samaria. They set up a system of Temple worship on Mount Gerizim.

- The nation to the south was called Judah. They continued to worship in the prescribed way in the Jerusalem Temple.

The Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, and those tribes were scattered.

The eight hundred Samaritans claim their direct descent from those Jews who remained.

According to National Geographic, "They consider themselves the true observers of Israelite religion, and view Judaism as a religious practice corrupted during the Babylonian exile." At their annual Passover, **dozens of lambs are sacrificed.**

There is a strong movement in Israel to rebuild the Temple and reinstate animal sacrifice.

Guys, that is all over for now, in the current Church Age we are in. "Behold!" Jesus, God's Lamb, Who takes away sin once-for-all for those who believe and receive Him.

#2 - The Lamb Baptizes You And You Receive God The Holy Spirit (v32-34)

The Fellowship of the Ring were forced by evil circumstances to go through the Mines of Moria on their way to Mordor. They came to a place where Gandalf must choose from several different paths.

On your journey through the rich veins of spiritual wisdom and insight in the Bible, you come to places where you must choose from different interpretations of certain nonessential (but nevertheless important) positions.

One of those places is what is called "Spirit baptism," or "the Baptism with the Holy Spirit."

We're going to talk about the controversy a little in a moment. First, we want to keep beholding Jesus because whatever you choose to believe about the Spirit and baptism, **Jesus is the Baptizer.**

Joh 1:32 And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.

There was a visible manifestation of the Spirit that looked like a dove to John and those who saw it.

Jesus was not without the Holy Spirit before His baptism. The Spirit of God came upon Him in a special empowering for the earthly ministry He was embarking upon.

John was "sent" to connect Jesus to the prophecies of the Messiah. One commentator writes,

Jesus is "the coming Davidic king" upon whom the Lord promised to pour out his Spirit in Isaiah 11:1-9; He is the servant/elect one upon whom God will put His Spirit in Isaiah 42:1; He is the prophet who announces, "The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor" in Isaiah 61:1.

Our text is *not* a teaching on the baptism with the Holy Spirit. It is a testimony that Jesus is, in fact, the Messiah, and part of the evidence is John's testimony that the Holy Spirit remained upon Him.

God the Holy Spirit was not resident in Old Testament believers the way He is in the Church Age:

- King David writes, "Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11).
- Samson is an example of a believer who had the Spirit taken away from him for a time.

The Messiah would bring a new relationship with the Holy Spirit. He would abide with us, in us. For example, Ezekiel writes, "And I will give them one

heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh..." (11:19).

Joh 1:33 I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

John did not know Jesus was the Messiah until the day He presented Himself to be water baptized.

John's water baptizing was a physical illustration of Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit. Jesus received the Holy Spirit, and He would baptize His believers with the Holy Spirit.

The apostle John is the only gospel writer that does not call John "the Baptist."

Jesus is the true "baptist," baptizing with the Holy Spirit, not water.

Joh 1:34 And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

The human cousin that John pointed out and identified, Jesus, was simultaneously the unique "Son of God." A commentator writes, "While believers are children of God through the new birth, Jesus is the eternal Son of God. He stands in a unique relationship with the Father. The Jews recognized that when Jesus called God His own Father, He was making Himself equal with God (John 5:18)."

Jesus is the promised baptizer with the Holy Spirit. Not too much else here to help us decide what we believe about the Doctrine of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

If you haven't discovered it, the Blue Letter Bible is a terrific online resource. It's available as an app and at blueletterbible.org.

They identify several positions on when a believer receives what the Bible labels the baptism with the Holy Spirit:

1. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is received once at the moment of your salvation.
2. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit may be received when a person is saved, or there may be a delay.
3. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is always received after a person is saved, and there will be an outward manifestation of Him.

We can dismiss #3. It is altogether contrary to the teaching of the Bible. Our answer, if we can call it that, is one of the other two positions.

We read about Spirit baptism in First Corinthians 12:12-13, "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body** - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

The moment you are saved, God the Holy Spirit "baptizes" you. He places you in the body of Christ. It is a spiritual immersion. You become spiritually connected to every other believer.

It is, therefore, true that a Baptism with the Holy Spirit happens the moment you are saved.

Those who hold that the baptism with the Spirit happens once at conversion nevertheless teach that a believer needs fresh "fillings" with the Holy Spirit.

Charismatic scholar Gordon Fee writes,

*[The early church] simply did not think of Christian initiation as a two-stage process. For them, to be Christian meant to have the Spirit. To be "spiritual," therefore, did not mean to be some kind of special Christian. For them, to be spiritual meant to be a Christian - not over against a nominal or carnal Christian, **but over against a non-Christian, one who does not have the Spirit.***

It sounds like we have chosen the first position. Not so fast. Gordon Fee goes on to say,

What we must understand is that the Spirit [is] the chief element, the primary ingredient, of [our] new existence. [It] is not merely a matter of getting saved, forgiven, and prepared for Heaven.

*It [is] above all else **to receive the Spirit, to walk with power.***

Ideally, you are saved and begin walking in the empowering of the indwelling Holy Spirit. I said “ideally” because that isn’t always the case. Giants of the faith like D.L. Moody and R.A. Torrey speak of further experiencing the Holy Spirit in their lives. Moody wrote,

*I think it is clearly taught in Scripture that every believer has the Holy Ghost dwelling in him. He may be quenching the Spirit of God, and he may not glorify God as he should, but if he is a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost dwells in him... Though Christian men and women have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, yet He is not dwelling within them in power; in other words, **God has a great many sons and daughters without power.***

What if you are saved but are not experiencing the Holy Spirit powerfully in your life? Consider the following:

- Jesus spoke to His disciples of a coming, further baptism with the Holy Spirit, calling it “the **Promise** of the Father” (Acts 1:4).
- Twice in the Book of Acts, this baptism is called “the **gift** of the Holy Spirit” (2:38, 10:45).
- In the Gospel of Luke, we read, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father **give the Holy Spirit** to those who **ask** Him!” (Luke 11:13).

1. **Promises** are kept by the Promiser. They don’t depend upon the promisee. You have been promised the power of the Holy Spirit to live your life.

2. **Gifts** are given freely to be received by the giftee with no prerequisite.
3. **Asking** God for the Holy Spirit is always answered, "Yes."

The baptism with the Holy Spirit for empowered living is a promised gift your Heavenly Father does not withhold when you ask.

It is normal to be enabled to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit from Day One of being immersed into the body of Christ. If you're not experiencing that power, you can experience it.

The best 'position' to take is summarized by Moody: "The Holy Spirit *in us* is one thing, and the Holy Spirit *on us* is another."

God the Holy Spirit is a promised gift that the Lord cannot withhold if you simply ask for Him.

Ask...Believe...Receive...Repeat when if and when it is necessary.