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 Date: March 2, 2008  
 Title: Why I need a Savior - John the Baptist "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World"  
 Text: John 1:19-42 (vv. 29, 36)  
 Theme: Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God whose Life and Death take away the Sins of the World.

John's intent is to drive us back to those opening verses of Genesis 1 and for us to see that the God of Genesis is the God of John.

We need life because we are dead. We need light because we exist in darkness. We need a lamb because we are defiled.

### **Its Eternal Value:**

The Bible says, "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:35-37). The soul of man is so weighty that nothing created can compensate for it. Of all things important, none can compare with the seriousness of this one question.

Humanist Manifesto II (1973) - Traditional moral codes and newer irrational cults both fail to meet the pressing needs of today and tomorrow. False "**theologies of hope**" and messianic ideologies, substituting new dogmas for old, **cannot cope with existing world realities**.

We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; **it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race. As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity**. Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we now know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural.

Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. **They distract humans from present concerns**, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices. Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the "**ghost in the machine**" and the "separable soul."

Too often traditional faiths encourage dependence rather than independence, obedience rather than affirmation, fear rather than courage. More recently they have generated concerned social action, **with many signs of relevance appearing in the wake of the "God Is Dead" theologies. But we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.**

<http://www.americanhumanist.org/about/manifesto2.html>

Listen to quote from Sam Harris, author of *Letters to a Christian Nation*:

The notion that Jesus Christ died for our sins and that his death constitutes a successful propitiation of a “loving” God is a direct and undisguised inheritance of the scapegoating barbarism that has plagued bewildered people throughout history. Viewed in a modern context, it is an idea at once so depraved and fantastical that it is hard to know where to begin to criticize it. Add to the abject mythology surrounding one man’s death by torture – Christ’s passion – the symbolic cannibalism of the Eucharist.” <http://www.samharris.org>

Heap upon me any term of derision you may like, call me a fool, a naïve, arrogant, and idiotic, but I will stand in the security and satisfaction of knowing Him and being known by Him. I openly and unashamedly affirm that my eternal salvation and immediate satisfaction rests solely and only in Christ and in Christ alone. I with full conviction seek to declare and demonstration that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. There is no truth greater than this truth as it relates to man and his soul.

**Questions:**

1. Why do you need a Savior?
2. Why is the provision of God described as life, light, and a lamb?
3. Are you saved from death, darkness, and distance?
4. Have you accepted God’s ultimately and only provision for eternal life?

**To Know:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to know Jesus Christ as our sustaining life, our steering light, and our sacrificial lamb.

**To Choose:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose Jesus above all else.

**To Feel:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in Jesus for deliverance from our sin.

**How will they best hear:**

1. I was indirectly struck by lightning on August 27, 1996. I was completely way-laid by the strike and have no idea what was happening to me. There was a point in time during the event when my eyes opened and I gasped for air. I was, in a sense, coming back from death and into life.
2. It is the feeling you get when you are under water with all of your air spent only to burst the surface and take that first gasp of air. It is that initial burst of energy.
3. I do not know if you have ever gone spelunking (cave exploring). The darkness that consumes you is so dark that in the absence of any light you will go blind and insane.
4. Your sin is like a terminal disease that has no cure. The only hope is found in Jesus.

### The Present Danger:

Our distractions in life are numerous. Marriage, parenting, employment, recession, the price of fuel, the cost of a home, aging parents, sickly children, the onslaught against our sanity is endless. All of these “things” intending to show our inability deaden us to our most crying need. They put off what is both inevitable and urgent. What do you think of Jesus?

Our study today seeks to answer a simple question, “Why do I need a Savior?” John’s answer in the first chapter of his gospel is three-fold. You are dead, you are dark, and you are distant. Thus God has provided life, light, and a lamb.

- I. The Word is the Life of God (1:1-4)
  - A. The Life’s Reality – with Him (vv. 1, 2) – an equal counterpart
  - B. The Life’s Activity – through Him (v. 3) – a creative channel

The life of God sustains and causes all things. Nothing apart from Him exists.

- “yet for us there is but one God, the Father, **from whom are all things** and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, **by whom are all things**, and we exist through Him” (1 Cor. 8:6).
- “**For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.** To Him be the glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36).
- “**For by Him all things** were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--**all things** have been created through Him and for Him” (Col. 1:16).

“The Logos is John's explanation of the creation of the universe. The author of Hebrews (Heb 1:2) names God's Son as the one ‘through whom he made the ages.’ Paul pointedly asserts that ‘the all things were created in him’ (Christ) and ‘the all things stand created through him and unto him’ (Col 1:16). Hence it is not a peculiar doctrine that John here enunciates. In 1 Corinthians 8:6, Paul distinguishes between the Father as the primary source of the all things and the Son as the intermediate agent as here.” (A.T. Robertson’s Word Pictures)

John revisits this idea in verse 10. John’s intent is to show us a Savior who is able and worthy. He is able to save and worthy of our worship.

- C. The Life’s Necessity - in Him (vv. 4, 5) – a revealing power

We reject the life at our peril. Jesus Christ is openly declared as life and is eternal life (John 3:15, 36; 17:3). He has life in Himself (5:26; 14:6). It is only as we believe Him that

we have life (John 5:24; 20:31). Life is not possible apart from Him (6:47). The two ideas are inseparably linked (5:39). This is the consistent message of John's record.

He is the bread of life and to partake of Him, to receive Him, is to receive life (6:35, 53, 54). The life found in Jesus is abundant life. It exceeds the need and overflows the boundaries (John 10:10). The life He gives is in contrast to an existence marked by perishing (10:28).

#### Conclusion:

John's opening thoughts "proves the excellency of the Christian religion, that the author and founder of it is the same that was the author and founder of the world. **When we worship Christ, we worship him to whom the patriarchs gave honor as the Creator of the world, and on whom all creatures depend** [3.] **This shows how well qualified he was for the work of our redemption and salvation.** Help was laid upon one that was mighty indeed; for it was laid upon him that made all things; and he is appointed the author of our bliss who was the author of our being." (Matthew Henry's Commentary)

## II. The Word is the Light of God (1:5-14)

"To the ancient Hebrew, surrounded by sun worshipers, light was a holy thing, the natural symbol for deity. In the NT [light] is employed as an expression for the eternally real in contrast to the [darkness] of sin and unreality." ("Light," D.H. Tongue in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 642).

The light of God illuminates the darkness. God brings light to darkness. God enables the darkness to believe the light. In believing the light, darkness becomes light and death becomes life.

### A. The Light Rejected (vv. 5, 9-11)

This "life was the light of men" (1:4). The word "shines" is a present active indicative (v. 5). The light continues to shine in the darkness. The darkness was not eager to take it ("comprehend" **katalambano**), it did not receive him (**paralambano** [See also John 3:19, 20]). It is the same word used in verse 11 without a prefix. The darkness rejects the light with force.

### B. The Light Reflected (vv. 6-8)

John's ministry was to bear witness to the light. He was not the light. He was reflector of the light (1:7, 8; 5:31-36). There are lesser lights, like John, and even false lights (Satan is described as taking on the appearance of an "angels of light" 2 Cor. 11:14). Jesus is the true light (1:9). "The word 'true' bears an exclusive sense (v. 9). This light alone is really light." ("Phos, etc.," H. Conzelmann, IX, 31-358, in Theological Dictionary of the new Testament, Abridged in One Volume, 1298).

### C. The Light Received (vv. 12-14)

Those who are truly enlightened are done so by Him (“He lights every man that comes into the world”). Those who love truth love the light for the light is truth (John 3:21).

Conclusion:

When confronted by the angry, self-righteous mob in John 8, Jesus forgives the immoral and adds, “I am the light of the world; he who comes with me will not be walking in the dark but will have the light of life” (8:12).

When confronted with the perplexing problem of the blind in John 9 Jesus heals the blind and states, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (9:5).

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He continued to reference Himself as “the light of this world” (11:9). It is His light that gives light (v. 10). It is as we believe in the light that we “become sons of light” (12:35, 36). In so doing we no longer “go on living in darkness” (12:46).

“In 1 John 1:5 it is stated absolutely that [God is light]. James calls God, as Creator of heavenly bodies, [Father of light] (1:17), adding the caveat that he does not change position or suffer eclipse as they do. The Pastorals recall the majesty of God on Sinai by stating that he dwell in [light unapproachable]. Only those who receive the Logos become children of light and ultimately enter the Holy City whose [light] is the lamb (Rev. 21:23).” (“Light,” D.H. Tongue in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 642).

### III. The Word is the Lamb of God (1:15-36)

Only twice is the word “lamb” used in John’s Gospel (vv. 29, 36).

“The use of the genitive of possession – the lamb *of God* – specifically relates Christ to God in the act of sin-bearing. He is at once the sacrificial victim presented to god and the victim provided by God.” (“Lamb of God,” H.D. McDonald in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 618).

There are, however, at least five words describing the lamb of God.

#### A. The Lamb is the Grace of God (v. 17).

What is grace? Grace is God giving life to the dead. Grace is God giving light to the dark. Grace is God giving a lamb to the defiled. John’s statement is not to say grace and truth did not exist prior to this moment, but the difference in its clarity and its pervasiveness would be noted. When the Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the world, it was an act of grace. God did for us what we could never do for ourselves.

B. The Lamb is the Image of God (vv. 18, 38).

Verse 18 uses our English word **exegesis**. It simply means, "To lead out." It is the Son who brings before people the image of God. It is only through the Son that the Father can be known. This idea is brought out further by the title "Rabbi" or "Teacher" in verse 38. In the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God "became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father" (John 1:14).

C. The Lamb is the Satisfier of God (vv. 29, 36).

- "having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and **He has taken it out of the way**, having nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:14).
- "You know that **He appeared in order to take away sins**; and in Him there is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

It is in the death of His Son that the Father's wrath against sin is satisfied. The imagery employed by John is the antitype of the lamb typology found throughout the Old Testament narrative. This language is intentional.

Think of Genesis 22:7, 8

<sup>7</sup>"Then Isaac said to Abraham, My father; and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, We have wood and fire here, but where is the lamb for the burned offering? <sup>8</sup> And Abraham said, **God himself will give the lamb for the burned offering**; so they went on together" (Gen. 22:7, 8).

Think of Isaiah 53:7, 8

<sup>7</sup>"Men were cruel to him, **but he was gentle and quiet; as a lamb taken to its death, and as a sheep before those who take her wool makes no sound, so he said not a word.** <sup>8</sup> They took away from him help and right, and who gave a thought to his fate? for he was cut off from the land of the living: he came to his death for the sin of my people" (Isa. 53:7, 8).

"Before their polemic against Christian, which drove Jewish commentators to seek another explanation, the lamb of Isaiah 53 was identified with the Messiah as the servant of God." ("Lamb of God," H.D. McDonald in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 618).

Think of 1 Corinthians 5:7

"Take away, then, the old leaven, so that you may be a new mass, even as you are without leaven. **For Christ has been put to death as our Passover**" (1 Cor. 5:7).

## Think of 1 Peter 1:18-20

<sup>18</sup>“Being conscious that you have been made free from that foolish way of life which was your heritage from your fathers, not through a payment of things like silver or gold which come to destruction, <sup>19</sup>But through holy blood, **like that of a clean and unmarked lamb**, even the blood of Christ: <sup>20</sup>Who was marked out by God before the making of the world, but was caused to be seen in these last times for you” (1 Pet. 1:18-20).

## Think of Revelation 5

The Book of Revelation “unites the two ideas of redemption and kingship. In the general term ‘lamb,’ then, two ideas unite: victorious power and vicarious suffering. **At the heart of God’s sovereignty there is sacrificial love.**” (“Lamb of God,” H.D. McDonald in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 618).

The Lamb is worthy. And it is through the voluntary, substitutionary, sacrificial offering by the Lamb as the Lamb that the Father’s wrath against the sins of His people is satisfied. God’s wrath against you has been placated.

D. The Lamb is the Son of God (vv. 34, 49).

It is a Messianic title, but it is more than this. It speaks of a relationship between the two parties. This referencing is too numerous to site (Mark 1:1, 11, 19; 5:7; 8:38; 9:7; 14:61, 62; 15:39).

Mark’s usage of the phrase leaves the reader no other conclusion than Jesus as the Son of God that is unique and different from anyone else. Because of whom He is in relation to the Father, the Son can offer an eternal and powerful sacrifice for sin.

E. The Lamb is the Anointed of God (vv. 41-45).

“Andrew and John had made the greatest discovery of the ages, far beyond gold or diamond mines.” (A.T. Robertson’s Word Pictures)

Listen carefully to the following familiar verses.

- <sup>9</sup>“The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. <sup>10</sup>They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb” (Ps. 19:9, 10).
- <sup>4</sup>“If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; <sup>5</sup>Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God” (Prov. 2:4, 5).

Is not the Word in the Psalms and Wisdom in the Proverbs a foreshadowing of Jesus? Is Jesus Christ not the personification of the Word and Wisdom? I do not believe we would be wrong to make such conclusions.

“All the ideas surrounding the figure of the lamb built up through the progressive revelation of the OT may indeed go into the concept as it occurs in the NT.” (“Lamb of God,” H.D. McDonald in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 618).

He is enough in this life and in the life to come. There is nothing more that can be added and nothing can ever be subtracted. He is everything and always sufficient.

#### IV. Conclusion (1:50)

John begins his historical narrative of Jesus Christ by identifying Him as the life, light, and lamb. There are two choices confronting us from this passage.

#### **You can reject the life, light, and lamb.**

- the darkness did not comprehend it (v. 5)
- the world did not know Him (v. 10)
- His own did not receive Him (v. 11)

#### **You can receive the life, light, and lamb.**

- so that all might believe through him (v. 7)
- But as many as received Him, even to those who believe in His name (v. 12)

You are already in a position of rejection. You must now actively choose Him. What will your choice be today?

#### APPLICATION: (What’s the NEXT STEP)

1. If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Savior you are still dead in your sins and without life.
2. If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Savior you are still in darkness and lost to God.
3. If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Savior you are still defiled and separated from God.
4. Today I call you as an ambassador of God to be reconciled to Him.
5. Today you must choose.