

John 1:29-34

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ He is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.’ ³¹ I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel.”

³² Then John testified, “I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. ³³ I didn’t know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.”

Background

It might seem like this took place at the time of the Lord’s baptism, however, the event in verses 29-31 occurred some weeks later. This is clear from the timeline in surrounding verses and the other gospel accounts. John knew who Jesus was, but he didn’t recognize Him as the Messiah until His baptism. God revealed it to him and this was confirmed by the descent of the Holy Spirit, which John witnessed. This was not just symbolic; the Spirit visibly descended like a dove to anoint Jesus. You can read the parallel account of this event in Luke 3:22. This marked Jesus’ anointing and the start of His public ministry.

Teaching Points

1. Sacrifice is the primary thought in the title, “Lamb of God.”

When John called Jesus the “Lamb of God,” he wasn’t referring to meekness but to **sacrifice**. He was probably thinking of some of the Old Testament sacrifices, including the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12), and Isaiah 53’s suffering Servant, and of course the daily temple sacrifices. These all pointed to Jesus as the one sacrificed for our sins, our substitute.

2. The work of Christ on the cross was not only for *sins*, but also for *sin*.

In verse 29, John says Jesus takes away the *sin* (not *sins*) of the world. This highlights that Christ’s death addressed not just individual acts of sin, but the entire problem of sin, including our sinful nature and the corruption of creation itself. Jesus, the Lamb of God, died to remove both our sins and the root cause—sin itself—bringing ultimate restoration.

3. The baptism of the Holy Spirit took place on Pentecost.

When John said Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit in verse 33, he was referring to Pentecost, when the Spirit came upon the Church (Acts 2). Before then, believers weren't permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39). The baptism of the Holy Spirit took place at Pentecost. When you become a Christian, you share in that baptism, joined into one body by the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Application

1. Let's remember to emphasize the Person and work of Christ, as John the Baptist did.

John the Baptist emphasized the **Person** and **work** of Christ, not just His great moral teachings or kindness. He declared Jesus as "*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" (His work) and "*The Chosen One of God*" (His Person). Similarly, in ministry, we must keep our focus on sharing who Jesus is and what He has done. It's easy to get distracted by crowd-pleasing activities and forget the core message.