



**Old Testament Reading: Malachi 4:1-6**  
**New Testament Reading: Matthew 11:1-15**

**Follow the Lamb**  
**“Behold The Lamb”**  
**John 1:19-37**

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While the thought of sacrificing an innocent animal for man’s sin seems strange to us today, those who heard John proclaim Jesus as ***“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,”*** knew exactly what he meant.

- Every morning and every evening, another lamb was sacrificed in the temple in Jerusalem for the sins of the people.
- Every year, a Passover Lamb was slain, memorializing the day their forefathers were delivered from Egypt when they sacrificed a lamb and put its blood on their doorposts, as God had instructed.
- These daily and annual sacrifices all pointed to the day when the perfect, sufficient sacrifice would be made for man’s sin – **Jesus Christ – the Lamb of God.**

In many churches, the phrase ***“the blood of Jesus Christ”*** has been replaced with ***“the life of Jesus Christ”*** so as not to offend sophisticated saints with a bloody cross.

- However, a “bloodless gospel” is not sufficient for salvation; for without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.

- The “**way of Cain**” is to attempt to satisfy God’s requirement for forgiveness by giving Him what we think our sins should cost, rather than bringing Him the blood sacrifice He said our sins required.
- As the Apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 1:19-21, we were not “**redeemed with perishable things – but with the precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless; the blood of Christ.**”

John’s primary purpose in writing his gospel was to present Jesus Christ as God’s son – the only One worthy to be the Messiah, the Savior.

- His first witness was “John, the Baptist,” the first man to recognize Jesus as the Lamb of God, sent to pay the price for the sins of the whole world.
- The birth and ministry of John the Baptist was prophesied in the Old Testament Book of Malachi.
- He was born to Zechariah and Elizabeth six months before Jesus was born, and called of God to “**prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.**”
- He grew up to become one of the most famous prophets in Christian history – taking the Nazarite Vow at the age of 14, wearing animal skin clothing like Elijah, and eating wild honey and locusts – *a bean that grows in pods on trees.*
- At the age of 29, John settled in Bethabara, near the Jordan River, and began preaching – calling people to repentance – the first voice of God the Jewish people had heard for 400 years.

John’s message was: “**Behold**” – to consider; to think of Jesus; to know Him and learn about Him, for Jesus was:

### 1. **The Lamb provided for a Person – Genesis 4:1-7**

- Abel brought a lamb to be sacrificed unto God so he could be forgiven of his sins. Cain brought the first fruits of the ground.
- Abel’s offering was accepted because it was the blood sacrifice that God had required. Cain’s offering was rejected because he thought God should be satisfied with what he wanted to give God.
- Cain’s rebellion led him to kill his brother.
- In Genesis 22 – in obedience to God, Abraham raised his knife to take the life of his only son, Isaac.
- An angel told Abraham not to hurt the child, for God had provided “a lamb” to be sacrificed in place of Isaac.
- Jesus Christ died for our sins – “**the just for the unjust, that He might reconcile us with God!**”

### 2. **The Lamb is provided for a Family – Exodus 12:1-51**

- God decided to set the Israelites free from their slavery to the Egyptians, but the Egyptians did not want to lose their laborers.
- To force them to set the Jews free, God chose to smite the Egyptians with a plague that would kill the firstborn of every family, including animals.
- Moses instructed each family to sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood upon the doorposts so the **“angel of death”** would **“pass over”** those who were **“under the blood.”**

### 3. **The Lamb is provided for a Nation – Exodus 29:38:39**

- In addition to all the other animal and grain sacrifices, each Jewish family sacrificed two lambs each day:
  - One in the morning, as a burnt offering; asking for God’s protection and provision.
  - One in the evening as a burnt offering, asking God’s forgiveness and cleansing of any sins they committed that day!
- The fires of the altar were never extinguished, giving us a picture of the continual intercession Jesus Christ is making on our behalf before the throne of God.

### 4. **The Lamb is provided for the World – John 1:29**

- When Jesus gave His life upon the cross, God’s plan of salvation was no longer limited to the nation of Israel – but to the whole world!
- The gospel of God’s grace spread from Jerusalem to Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, Spain, England, America, and the rest of the world.
- Soon, the last “elect” will “behold the Lamb” and be saved, and the rapture of the Church will remove every true believer from this earth – and we will see the “Lamb of God upon His Throne” in heaven.
- Until then, the Lamb of God provides:
  - Our acceptance with God the Father
  - Our protection and deliverance from evil
  - Our guidance and direction for daily life
  - Our forgiveness of sin – our salvation – and our promise of everlasting life!

**Is YOUR NAME written down in the Lamb’s Book of Life?**