

# John 1 vs 29-51

The hero we've been looking for

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## John 1 vs 29-51

### *History fulfilled...*

THE ceremony for the Jews is Passover – the night the angel of death passed over the land of Egypt and killed the first born of every household, because Pharaoh would not let the Israelites leave.

The Jews were told of only one escape from such punishment: when the blood of an innocent, spotless, lamb was sprinkled around the door post. A lamb that had lived with the family, in the house for at least 4 days, so that particularly the eldest son bonded with it ... and therefore knew that the lamb died in his place.

Now let's look at John 1 vs 29-34

*vs 29-34: The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."*

- v 29 is an immediate reference to this Old Testament sacrifice, when the lamb took **away the sin** of the people and they were made right with God ... set free.

### *Sin-bearing Lamb...*

In this context ....John the Baptist shouts in v29

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

In giving Jesus this unique name, John joins Jesus to the past sacrifice (Passover) ... and because we know the end of the story – he gives us a clue to what awaits Jesus ... the Cross.

Notice that he doesn't say, "**takes away the sin of**" the Jews, but rather "**the world**".

"**The Lamb of God**" is only mentioned by John the Baptist ... it's a specific reference to Godly sacrifice ... pointing to the fact that Jesus would die for the sin of the world.

This picture of the Messiah as a lamb is not new – here are two Old Testament references from the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah:

- Isaiah 53 v 7:

***He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he opened not his mouth.***

- Jeremiah 11 v 19:

***But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.***

God's revelation of the Messiah to Israel comes through the preaching of John the Baptist – a task that clearly God has given him to do:

- ***v 31 ...but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.***

### ***Heaven sent King...***

***v 32: I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.***

The Spirit descends ... and remains!

- There are references to the Holy Spirit being 'on' someone in the Old Testament but NOT remaining
- In the Old Testament the Spirit frequently 'fell on' God's chosen rulers and kings, but just temporarily

***v 33: I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'***

- No human being could give the Holy Spirit ... only God can give of Himself!
- Now Jesus, God's true King on earth, is to offer to fill people with God's presence permanently!
  - All John can do is get these people wet ... in contrast Jesus offers saturation
  - Saturated by THE creator ... to be joined to the person of the Creator, i.e. to become part of the Royal Family of God....remember:
  - John 1 v 12: ***But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.***

*v 34: And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.*

John finishes here by saying – THIS is my **witness** – this IS the Christ – **the Son of God**

### ***Passing on the baton....***

*vs 35-36: The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"*

v 36 When John the Baptist sees Jesus he can't help himself:

***"Behold, the Lamb of God!"***

And effectively John passes on 'the baton' or witness to the ministry of Jesus .... to those chosen to be disciples and eye witnesses.

- This is a really important point for us because both John the Baptist and John the writer of the Gospel want us to know that these carefully chosen eye witnesses are the authoritative representatives specially selected by Jesus to testify to Him!

### ***Life-changing encounter....***

*vs 37-39: The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.*

What a life changing day!! – Meeting and staying with Jesus the Messiah!!

- From that day on they were with him through to his resurrection
- Becoming two of the chosen 12 apostles

v 38 Notice how the disciples immediately call Jesus **"Rabbi" (which means Teacher)** yet he was not trained (and it was quite some process).

- We will see that his presence was such that even the officials of the synagogue would always call him Rabbi!

v40: *One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.*

Note that in v 40 only one of the two is named: the other is thought to be John (The Gospel writer)... and John is clearly a firsthand witness – remember:

John 1 v 14: ***And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

vs 41-42: *He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). 42He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter)."*

v 41 There clearly is no doubt in Andrew's mind as to whom he had been spending time with:

***He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ).***

- Yet to declare such a thing would be blasphemy and death if Jesus proved not to be the genuine Messiah!
- Yet there is no such doubt in his mind – Andrew had to speak – he tells his brother plainly ....and introduces Simon (Peter).

v 42 Simon – is to be named Peter ....which is Greek for ROCK.

- Rock in Aramaic = Cephas

### ***The penny drops....***

vs 43-46: *The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." 44Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."*

And after he has met Jesus ... there is no doubt in Philip's mind either ... so that just like Andrew ... off he goes: v 45: ***Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."***

By the way: We will constantly find the theme of Christ fulfilling the Old Testament. Christ is actually the sum and substance of the Old Testament!

- Deuteronomy 18 v 15: **The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.**

Nathanael's is an intelligent doubt: v 46: **Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"**

Nazareth is a northern town from the despised area of Galilee that had been settled and re-settled by a hotchpotch of different racial and religious groups.

It was despised religiously, politically and socially. Little did they realise that Jesus had actually been born in Bethlehem!

### ***Jesus sees EVERYTHING!....***

*vs 47-51: Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" 48Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." 49Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 50Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."*

Why put these verses in?

- Jesus knew Nathanael's heart and knew where he had been, even though clearly he had been nowhere near him – out of sight - hence Jesus could say, **"I saw you!"**

It's enough for Nathaniel!

v 49: ***Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!***

v 50: Jesus response - says ..... The old phrase – *"you haven't seen anything yet"*! Vs 50:

***"Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."***

*v-51: And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."*

**"Truly, truly"** is always used by Jesus to get our attention to a very major point.

In fact what Jesus says directly relates back to the words of the first book of the bible - Genesis 28 v 12:

***And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!***

- It means you will see the Salvation of Mankind.
- The “***ladder***” between heaven and earth is no-one less than Jesus – God’s Messiah, who is ***the Lamb of God*** who takes away the sins of the world!

## ***Summary of Chapter 1***

So – what have we learned?

- God used John the Baptist as a vital God-given link between the Old Testament, with all of its preparation for the Messiah, and the New Testament eye witnesses.
- John exalted Christ (not the Church...not traditions...not sacraments....not ministry!)
- Jesus is:
  - The Passover Lamb – come to die as a sacrifice for sin
  - The Messiah – come as God’s chosen ruler
  - The gateway to heaven!
  - The WORD of verses 1-18....become flesh
- What is promised in John Chapter 1 vs 1-18 is now possible through Jesus – remember John 1 v 12:

***But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.***

## ***What comes next?***

Jesus manifolds his glory in a surprising way...or was it?

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