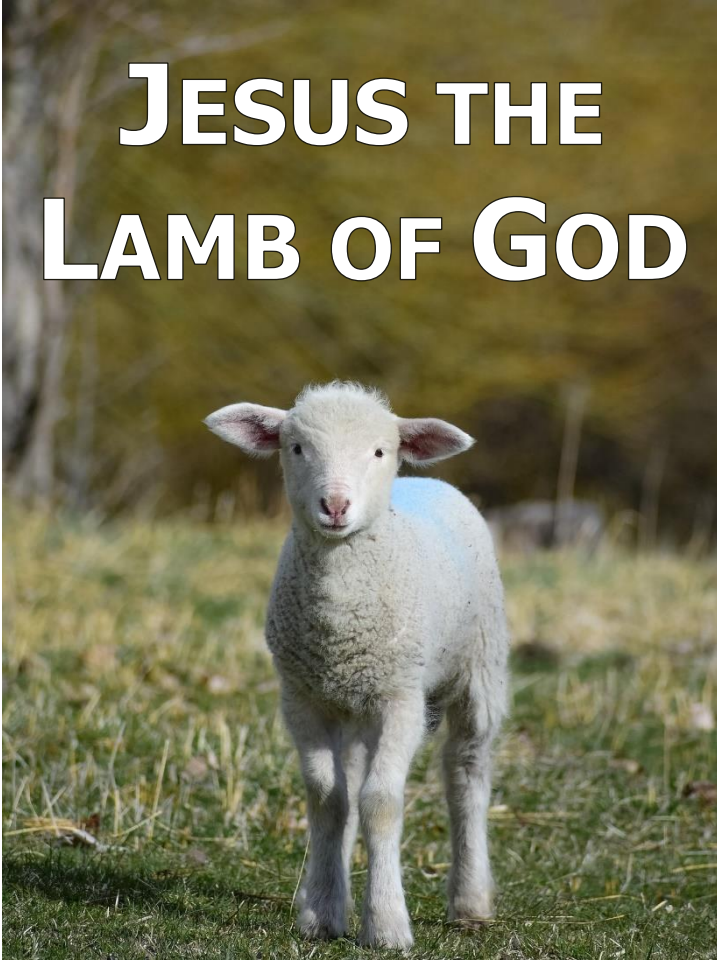


JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD



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LifeinJesus.net

'Jesus the Lamb of God'
by
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JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD

In the Old Testament, God spoke to His people, the Jews, through prophets. One of the names God gave the prophets to describe Jesus long before He was born, was the Lamb of God. Why did God prompt the prophets to describe Jesus as a lamb?

First it is important to understand about sacrifices in the Bible – how they came about and what they meant. A sacrifice is when someone gives up their own life for the benefit of others. For example, when a father saves his child from drowning, but drowns himself in the attempt, he has sacrificed his life for his child – because of his death, his child is alive.

The First Sacrifice

Sin is the word the Bible uses for wrong thoughts, words and actions. The first sin led to the very first sacrifice. When Adam and Eve first sinned in the Garden of Eden, they became aware and ashamed of the fact that they were naked and they hid. God wanted to help them, so He provided material for them to wear – to cover them. To do this he had to kill an animal so He could use the skin. The animal had to shed its blood and lose its life so Adam and Eve could be covered after they had sinned.

This established a pattern of shedding blood to cover people's sins so they could be forgiven. The Bible says that after Adam and Eve left the garden, their sons brought offerings to God and one brought an animal from his flock which would have been a lamb or a kid goat. And people continued to offer God animal sacrifices when they sinned.

The Passover Lamb

Some centuries later, the Jews were made slaves in Egypt. They were cruelly treated and longed for escape. God told a man called Moses to lead them out of Egypt and into a land of their own. But the king of Egypt, the Pharaoh, would not let them go because he would lose his workforce for his massive building programme.

God sent various plagues on the Egyptians to make Pharaoh change his mind, but he wouldn't. Eventually God said He would strike dead the firstborn child of every family, but He didn't want to kill the children of the Jews, so He gave them instructions through Moses which, when carried out, would keep them safe.

The instructions were for each household to kill a lamb and smear the doorposts and lintel of their doors with its blood. Exodus 12:23 says – *'For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel, and on the two door posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to strike you.'*

Once again, God was using blood to protect them. Each house with the blood smeared round the door was passed over and their children were safe. The event became known as the Passover. It was the blood that saved the people and for there to be blood, something had to die. It was a lamb – one for each household.

Moses eventually led the Jews out of Egypt and into the desert from where God guided them to their new homeland. Each year they would celebrate the Passover with a special meal.

The Law and Sacrifices

God has always hated sin and cannot ignore it. He knew that leaving it unpunished would lead to so much hurt and complete chaos. Also, He could never have a relationship with people who were guilty because, as a holy God, He cannot have sin in His presence. Yet He dearly wanted a love relationship with people which would bring pleasure to them and to Himself.

So while the people were in the desert, God gave Moses the law. This was a detailed list of rules for daily living and with it, God gave them a specific pattern of animal sacrifices through which the people could gain forgiveness from God. Blood had to be shed to cover their sins. Many of the animals were then eaten as meals, but others were simply to die so their sacrifice could cover the sins of the people, in the same way that the skin of the killed animal physically covered Adam and Eve's nakedness.

Lambs weren't the only animals used, but they were the main animal used to cover sins. Someone who had sinned had to bring the lamb to the priests in the temple who would sacrifice it and could then declare the person forgiven by God. The priest inspected the lamb to make sure it was perfect, not the person. Every Jew would know the significance of a lamb. Every day two lambs were offered, one in the morning and one in the evening, as a general offering for the sins of the people.

Born as a Lamb

Jesus's mother was Mary, but His father was God. An angel came to tell Mary that she was going to have a baby. He said in Luke 1:30-33&35 – *“Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹Behold, you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and shall name him 'Jesus.'* ³²*He will be great and*

will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom ...³⁵ The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore also the holy one who is born from you will be called the Son of God.”

When he realised that she was pregnant, her fiancé, Joseph, didn't want to marry her anymore, believing she had been unfaithful. But an angel spoke to him in a dream and said in Matthew 1:20-21 – *“Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take to yourself Mary, your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹She shall give birth to a son. You shall name him Jesus, for it is he who shall save his people from their sins.”* Jesus was to save His people from their sins and for this to happen His blood had to be shed. He was born to die.

Mary and Joseph lived in a city called Nazareth. The Romans, who had control of all the area, announced that a census was going to be taken. Everyone had to travel to the place their family originally came from in order to be counted. This meant that Mary, who was now heavily pregnant, and Joseph had to travel about seventy miles to Bethlehem. And it was while they were in Bethlehem that Jesus was born. It was no accident that he was born there. It was part of God's plan because it was in the fields round Bethlehem that the lambs which were used for the sacrifices in the temple were born and reared.

And because there were so many people crowding into Bethlehem for the census, Mary and Joseph couldn't find anywhere to stay and had to sleep in an animal shelter. So when Jesus was born, the only place to lay Him down was in the feeding trough or manger. He was born in the place where a lamb might be born and slept in the place where it would eat.

Recognised as the Lamb of God

Mary's cousin Elizabeth had just had a baby too called John. He spent his life telling people about Jesus and how He was going to save them. One day, when Jesus was about thirty years old, John saw Him coming towards Him and said in John 1:29 – *“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* John knew Jesus was born as a Lamb and would be sacrificed for sin just as lambs had been for so long in the temple.

Died as a Lamb

The last meal Jesus ate before He was killed, was the celebration of the Passover with His followers. This is really significant. Jesus knew that He would be the Lamb who was sacrificed the very next day. Jesus is the only person who has lived, and who ever will live, a completely sinless life. He never thought or said or did anything wrong. Just like the priests did with the sacrificial lambs in the temple, God inspected Jesus, not us, and found Him perfect, without blemish. He died for no fault of His own. 1 Peter 1:19 says you are saved – *‘with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish or spot, the blood of Christ.’* We couldn't be perfect, so Jesus shed His blood in our place to pay for our sins.

He was arrested that same night and put through a mockery of a trial before the Jewish leaders and before the Romans. The Jews accused Him of all sorts of things but He didn't try to justify Himself even when He was being tortured. He kept silent. The prophet Isaiah had said this would happen in Isaiah 53:7 – *‘When he (Jesus) was afflicted he didn't open his mouth. As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he didn't open his mouth.’* A lamb is silent when it is led to slaughter, unlike a kid goat which will make a lot of noise.

Why didn't Jesus defend Himself against the accusations of the Jews? He knew that His death had nothing to do with what they were saying or doing. He knew He was fulfilling God's plan. He didn't die because the Jews hated Him and felt threatened by Him. He didn't die because the Romans wanted Him out of the way to restore peace. He died because it was God's perfect timing to bring an end to the sacrifice system with one final once-for-all sacrifice, so people could be fully and forever forgiven and come into a love relationship with Him. He died once for all people; He died once for all sins, past, present and future; and He died once for all time. It will never need to be repeated. He died as the last lamb ever needed to be sacrificed.

Jesus was the once-for-all sacrifice. His sacrifice was for you. He suffered God's anger and punishment for sin so you wouldn't have to; He took your sin on Himself so you could be forgiven. 1 Corinthians 5:7 says – '*Christ (Jesus), our Passover, has been sacrificed in our place.*' When Jesus shed His blood and died, all your sins past, present and future were forgiven and you are now able to come into a love relationship with God as your Father and you as His forgiven child. The way into that relationship is open to you because of Jesus, but you have to receive Him as your Lord and Saviour and be born-again to enter into it. (To read about being born-again go to the end of this booklet.)

No-one is perfect. You can compare yourself with others and think you're not so bad, but you know in your heart that you aren't perfect – no-one is. But when you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, He will make you completely clean in your spirit. You will be a new creation. You will be justified before God – just as if you had never sinned. Jesus died so His blood could blot out all your sins and you could walk free.

The Lamb Now Reigning in Glory

After He had died, Jesus came back to life and a few weeks later returned to heaven. The last book of the Bible called 'Revelation', describes Jesus as full of the glory of God. But it also describes Him in Revelation 5:6 as – *'a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain.'* In heaven, in all His glory, He is still the Lamb who was sacrificed with the marks of His death still upon His body. And there in heaven, angels continually praise and worship Him. Revelation 5:12 describes thousands and thousands of angels saying with a loud voice – *"Worthy is the Lamb who has been killed to receive the power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, and blessing!"*

The Lamb of God

The Lamb of God was born to die as a sacrificial lamb so you could become God's child. That's how much He loves you – enough to sacrifice His own life and shed His own blood for you. The temple lamb sacrifices had to be repeated over and over. But Jesus was sacrificed as the perfect Lamb once-for-all. Hebrews 7:27 explains that Jesus doesn't need – *'to offer up sacrifices daily, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. For he did this once for all, when he offered up himself.'* Jesus was and is the Lamb of God. Be born-again today and His blood will deal with your sins once and for all, and you can walk free in a love relationship with your Father God, knowing you are completely forgiven and enjoying His love and peace and joy.

Being Born-Again

When you acknowledge Jesus as God and decide to follow Him, you make Him your Lord. When you accept His sacrifice on the Cross for yourself personally, you make Him your Saviour. You are then born-again and have a new perfect spirit. God becomes your Father and you His child, and you can start to enjoy your personal love relationship with Him.

Romans 10:9 says – *‘If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.’* Tell God you are sorry for the wrong things you do, say and think. Choose to believe that Jesus is Lord, that He died for you and is now alive. Accept Him as your Lord and Saviour. Say it with your voice and believe it in your heart.

If you’ve done that sincerely, you are now born-again and Jesus has come to live in you. Everything you’ve ever done wrong or ever will do wrong is forgiven, and after this life is over, you’ll live in peace and joy with your loving Father God for ever.

As a child of God, you now have a whole new family of brothers and sisters. Tell a trusted Christian that you are now born-again so they can help you in your new life in Jesus. And you have the Bible to help you understand and experience more of God’s love for you and all Jesus has done and won for you. It will help you to live your life in the best possible way – His way.

Life in Jesus

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One of the names for Jesus in the Bible
is the Lamb of God.

It seems a strange name,
but what does it mean
and why was He described this way?

This booklet will answer these questions
and help you to understand just why Jesus died
and what His death can mean for you.



Katherine Hilditch has been teaching in local churches for many years. In 2013 she wrote her first booklet and since then has written many more. She created her website to make all the booklets freely available to everyone. They can be read online or printed out. Katherine's threefold purpose is to help people understand more about Jesus and all He has done and won for them, to encourage them to go deeper in their relationship with God and to provide material to help them share their faith with others. To read her story and find all the booklets go to –

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