Jesus the Lamb of God

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Synopsis:

Why is Jesus Called the Lamb of God?

Background:

God instructed man not to sin. However, very early in his being, man disobeyed God when Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree which God instructed them not to eat from. Ever since this time, man has been disobeying God by all sorts of means such as idol worship, breaking of the commandments which God handed down to Moses, as well as turning away from God and engaging in such things as nature and earth-worship, engaging in fornication, sodomy and adultery, alcoholism, debauchery as well as many other sins against our Holy God. These and other sins incur the wrath of our Holy God. The wrath of God which deserves nothing less than death!!! We have all --- each one of us --- at one time or another in our lives --- sinned. We are all sinners. Whether the sin is a big one, being one of the ones described above, or a little one, such as looking at a woman in lust, coveting the neighbor’s Bentley, or speaking a little white lie, the fact is that we are all sinners and have fallen short of the Glory of God. “..for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’ [Romans 3:23] There is none who has not sinned. None except one --- Christ alone. “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." [John 8:7-9]

So while we all deserve death, and there is nothing we could possibly do to appease, ameliorate, pacify or otherwise do to satisfy an angry God except by spending an eternity in hell, something so enormous has been done for us that we have not only been spared the death penalty, but have been granted a promise of life everlasting. That enormous deed was done some Two Thousand years ago when God sent His only son to die on the Cross for our sins at Calvary. “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” [Philippians 2:8] Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world as a human being (the unique God/man) to be the perfect sacrifice for sin and to make atonement --- propitiation for our sins. “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” [Romans 3:24-25] To understand this a little better, imagine that you had committed a capital crime and were sentenced to die. You were blindfolded and tied to a tree, with a firing squad squarely taking aim at you, ready to shoot you to death. Terrified you hear the sergeant shout out, “Ready --- Aim --- “ then silence. In a minute, your blindfold comes off, and when you open your eyes, there is Christ tied to the tree and shot in your place. He has taken the bullet for you. He has died in your place. This, my friends, is what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did on the Cross, for those who believe in Him --- for those who have received Him as Lord of their lives. How can anything compare to this? How can any love equal this? Christ not only paid the penalty for the sins of His generation, but for all generations to come for those who believe in Him.

So this brings me back to the question --- why the LAMB of God? Why not the goat of God or the Bull of God or the Rabbit of God? Why the Lamb? This has to do with Old Testament Jewish tradition. Moses, pleaded with Pharaoh to let his people go, but Pharaoh would not agree, so God enabled Moses to bring upon Egypt the ten plagues, the last one of which was the death of all of Egypt's newborn. This is what the LORD says: "About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again." — Exodus 11:4–6

OT Reference 1: Before this final plague, God commands Moses to tell the Israelites to slaughter a lamb and mark their homes with it's blood above their doors in order that the Angel of Death will pass over them (i.e., that they will not be touched by the death of the firstborn). So while the firstborn of all of Egypt die that night, the firstborn of Israel are saved. The passover sacrifice recalls the time when the LORD "passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt" and to this day Passover is one of the most significant Jewish Holidays. The blood of the lamb saved the Israelites from the Angel of Death sent by God. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.“Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: *[[1]](#footnote-1)r*I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. Exodus 12:1-13

OT Reference 2: When Isaac became a young boy, God spoke to Abraham and commanded him to take his son to Mount Moriah and offer him as a sacrifice to God. This was God’s test of Abraham’s faith. Abraham loved his son very much, but did not hesitate to follow God’s words for he was a man whose faith in God was strong. As Abraham and his son reached the place where the sacrifice was to be performed, Isaac said to his father, “Father, where is the lamb that is to be sacrificed?” Abraham replied, “My son, God will provide the lamb”. It is not known how eventually Abraham told his son that he was to be the sacrifice, but Isaac courageously laid on the sacrificial place ready to be sacrificed for god. As Abraham was taking out his knife, his hands were trembling. He was about to sacrifice his son when heard the voice of God saying, “Abraham, Stop! Do not hurt your son. You have proven your faith and shown how much you love Me by willing to sacrifice your son for Me. Therefore, I shall bless you and your family, and through you, I shall bless all the nations on earth”. God also provided a lamb for the sacrifice. Abraham went home along with his son, and their hearts full of love and faith.

There was a long Jewish tradition of sacrificing a lamb for the forgiveness of sins. When Jesus appears, he once again fulfills God's promise to provide the lamb for the sacrifice by becoming the lamb. He fulfills the law. Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished” (Matthew 5:17–18).

While in the Old testament God says to Abraham that he would provide the lamb to be the sacrifice, in the New Testament 400 years later, God sends His only Son to be the sacrificial lamb for all of mankind, therefore making him the Lamb of God. "who takes away the sins of the world" This is why Jesus is called the lamb of God.

OT Reference 3: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 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. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make any to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.” Isaiah 53:6-12

NT Reference 1: The phrase “lamb of God” (ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, *ho amnos tou theou*) appears only twice in the New Testament (John 1:29, 36). In both cases, John the Baptist speaks the phrase when he sees Jesus coming toward him. In John 1:29, he says, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” and in John 1:36 --- and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”

NT Reference 2: “Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Just as the angel of death did not touch but "Passed over" (hence passover) the houses of those marked with the Blood of the Lamb, have you marked your life with the Blood of THE Lamb (Jesus) so the angel of death cannot touch you? Did you not know that "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 the most famous verse of the Bible relates and speaks directly to this. Do you want to live forever, or die in another 30, 40, or 50 years from now? The answer depends entirely on you. Have you accepted Christ into your life? If not, what are you waiting for? What happens if you don't have 30, 40 or 50 years to live? What if you only have today? Would you want to go on living, knowing that Jesus was there for you offering you eternal life, but you turned it down? Beloved, accept Christ today, and be Baptized, for tomorrow is guaranteed to nobody.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)