

John Identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God

John 1: 29-34

DIG: How does John finally answer their question about baptism (John 1:30-31)? What does he mean by calling Jesus the Lamb of God and the Son of God? What proof does he have for these claims? Why did the Holy Spirit descend on Christ like a dove (Yochanan 1:32)?

REFLECT: Yochanan was effective, but remained humble. Humility does not lead to feelings of inferiority or worthlessness. Rather, it seeks to see one's place in the Lord's plan and give preference to the welfare of others over self. Is pride, or has pride ever been a problem in your life? What area(s) of your life could you show more humility?²⁹² Of the titles for Jesus given so far (the Word, the Light, the Messiah, the Lamb of God, the Son of God), which means the most to you? Why? What is one "evidence" that has led you to faith in Yeshua?

No one is more careful about the details of time as the apostle John is. Starting from these verses and going to 2:11 he tells us, step by step, the story of the first momentous week in the public life of Jesus. The events of **the first day** are in Yochanan 1:19-28; the story of **the second day** is told here in 1:29-34; **the third day** is unfolded in 1:35-39. The three verses 1:40-42 tell the story of **the fourth day**; the events of **the fifth day** are told in 1:43-51. **The sixth day** is not recorded for some reason. And the events of **the seventh day** of the week are told in 2:1-11.²⁹³

On **the second day** of this momentous week in **the Life of Christ**, Yochanan publically pointed out Yeshua as **the Meshiach** to whom he had given his witness. **The Baptizer** went on to tell how he had come to know that Jesus was **the Anointed One**. Every detail of his life pointed toward that grand moment when he would pick a figure out of the crowd and say look: That's Him! **The next day** John saw Jesus coming toward him (John 1:29a). It was **the day** following being questioned by the members of the Great Sanhedrin who were involved in **the second stage of interrogation** (see Lg - **The Great Sanhedrin**) to see if Yochanan was, perhaps, **the Messiah**.

And John said: Look, **the Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29b)! This was no accident. There before **the Baptizer** stood **the Chosen One** whom all the prophecies in the TaNaKh had foreshadowed. Yochanan identified Yeshua with the dominant sacrificial animal used in connection with Temple ritual, and particularly with **the**

sin offerings (see my commentary on **Exodus Fc - The Sin Offering**), since **He** is the one who takes away the sin of the world. On **God's** requiring a human sacrifice for sins see **First Corinthians 15:3; Hebrews 7:26-28**), and indeed the entire book of **Hebrews**.

Jesus planned **His** own sacrifice.

It means **He** intentionally planted the tree from which **His** cross would be carved.

It means **Yeshua** willingly placed the iron in the heart of the earth from which the nails would be cast.

It means **He** voluntarily placed **His** Judas in the womb of a woman.

It means **Messiah** was the one who set in motion the political machinery that would send Pontius Pilate to Jerusalem.

And it also means **He** didn't have to do it - but **He** did.²⁹⁴

It is useful to see the progressive nature of the **Spirit's** teaching concerning the **Lamb**. First, in **Genesis 4:4** we have the **Lamb typified** in the first fruits of the flock slain by Abel in sacrifice. Second, we have the **Lamb prophesied** in **Genesis 22:8**, where Abraham said to Isaac: **God will provide Himself a lamb**. Third, in **Exodus 12:7**, we have the **lamb** slain and the blood *applied* to the doorframes of their houses. Fourth, in **Isaiah 53:7**, we have the **Lamb personified**, learning for the first time that the **Lamb** will be a Man. Fifth, in **John 1:29** we have the **Lamb identified**, learning exactly who **He** is. Sixth, in **Revelation 5:6-14**, we have the **Lamb magnified** by every creature in heaven and under the earth and on the sea. Seventh, in the last chapter of the Bible, we have the **Lamb glorified**, seated upon the eternal throne of **God** in **Revelation 22:1**.²⁹⁵

Everywhere in the B'rit Chadashah **Yeshua Messiah** is equated with the **Passover lamb** (**First Corinthians 5:7**). The figure of the **lamb** connects **Jesus** with the passage identifying **Christ** as the **Suffering Servant** of **Isaiah 53** (also see **Acts 8:32**); and His sacrificial death by execution on a stake is compared with that of a **lamb without a defect or spot** (**First Peter 1:19 CJB**), as required by the Torah (**Exodus 12:5, 29:1; Leviticus 1:3 and 10, 9:3, 23:12**). In the book of **Revelation**, **John** referred to **Yeshua** as the **Lamb** nearly thirty times.

There are two concepts of the **Lamb of God** from the TaNaKh. The first is the **Passover lamb** of **Exodus** (see my commentary on **Exodus Bw - Christ and the Passover**), and the other is the suffering **lamb** of **Isaiah** (see my commentary on **Isaiah Py - He Was Oppressed and Afflicted, Yet He Did Not Open His Mouth**). When **John** called **Jesus** the **Lamb of God**, he identified **Yeshua** with both of these as the **Passover Lamb**. Both **Peter** (**First Peter 1:18-19**) and **Yochanan** (see my commentary on **Revelation Cf - You Are Worthy To Take the Scroll**) did the same.

Evidently, this confrontation took place in front of others also, for Yochanan continued, saying: **This is the one I meant when I said: A man who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me (John 1:30).** Jesus came after John in that John was six months older than Jesus in His humanity; however, Jesus is before John in His deity. For the third time (John 1:15, 27) John declares that Christ is preferred before him.

I myself did not know Him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that He might be revealed to Isra'el (Yochanan 1:31). John said he did not know Jesus. Which seems strange to us because we know he and Yeshua were relatives (Luke 1:36). Yochanan must have at least been acquainted with Him. Certainly, their families had mingled. Undoubtedly, Elizabeth had told her son the story of Mary's visit many times. But what John was saying is not that he didn't know *who* Jesus was, but what he didn't know *what* Jesus was. It had suddenly been revealed to him that Jesus, his own cousin, was none other than **God's chosen One.**

Then John tells of the purpose of **Messiah's baptism.** It was to make Him known to Isra'el. It was to prepare a "people" for Him. This "people" was prepared by them standing as sinners before God (Mark 1:5), and that is why John baptized in the Jordan, which for them was the river of death; for, being baptized in the Jordan, they acknowledged that **the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).** Today, however, believers baptism demonstrates the baptized one has *already* died - died to sin, died with Christ. Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in that order, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (Romans 6:3-4).²⁹⁶

Then Yochanan gave this testimony, saying: **I saw the Spirit come down from heaven like a dove and remain on Him (John 1:32).** Prior to the baptism of Jesus, the Baptizer had evidently received a revelation from God that when the Holy Spirit fell on the Chosen One, and remained, that would identify the Messiah. When the Ruach HaKodesh came upon the disciples on the Feast of Weeks, we read they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them (Acts 2:3). Fire points to divine judgment and because of their sin nature, they needed the purging fire of judgment. They were judged guilty of their sins. Yeshua, however, came to pay that horrible price. So because they would believe that Jesus was the son of God, they would be saved. But there was nothing in the Chosen One of God that needed judging, so the Holy Spirit came down on Him like a dove.²⁹⁷

And I myself did not know Him, but the One who sent me to baptize with water told me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit" (John 1:33). The Ruach HaKodesh did not come down upon Him and then leave again, which we see commonly in the TaNaKh. For example, David would say: **Do not reject me! Do not take your Holy Spirit from me (Psalm 51:11).** The Ruach remained, or *took up residence in Him*. This term has to do with the divine side of things and speaks of fellowship. We see the same word in John 14:10, where the inspired apostle recorded Yeshua's message: **The words I say to you I do not speak on My own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me (residing in Me), who is doing His work.** So in John 15, where the Lord Jesus speaks of the fundamental requirement in bearing spiritual fruit - fellowship with Him - He says: **They remain in Me, and I in them, the same bear much fruit (Yochanan 15:5a).**

The phrase **with the Holy Spirit** is *en pneumati* in the Greek. Some make a big deal out of the change in adjectives. They say, "Well, you were **baptized in the Holy Spirit**, but have you been **baptized with the Holy Spirit?**" Or, "You were **baptized with the Holy Spirit**, but have you been **baptized by the Holy Spirit.**" All this is a smoke screen because the Greek adjective *en* can be translated either **in**, or **by**, or **with** (Mark 1:8; Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5, 11:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Being baptized in-by-with the Holy Spirit is a hallmark of salvation (see Bw - [What God Does For Us at the Moment of Faith](#)).

When the Ruach HaKodesh in the form of a dove, descended upon Jesus that authenticated the previous revelation given to John. So Yochanan knew, and could point to Jesus and say: **Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.** In Genesis 4 the sacrifice was offered for *the individual*; in Exodus 12 the sacrifice was offered for *the household*; in Leviticus 16 on the annual Day of Atonement the sacrifice was offered for *the nation*; but here in John 1:34, Gentiles are embraced as well as Jews because **the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world.**²⁹⁸

I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One (John 1:34). Once again Yochanan makes it perfectly clear that he had only one purpose. It was to point sinners to **the Messiah.** He was nothing and Christ was everything. He claimed no greatness and no place for himself; he was only a man who, as it were, drew back the curtain and left Yeshua as the only **One** standing in the spotlight on center stage. Call it what you wish: An act of grace. A plan of redemption. A martyr's sacrifice. But whatever you call it . . . don't call it an accident. It was anything but that.²⁹⁹