

Introducing the Son of God!

Our Daily Bread University
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The Lamb of God!

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)

For Jews, a lamb was a familiar symbol. Way back when Moses led the Jews out of Egypt, God told them he was going to send a plague against Egypt. The angel of death would kill the firstborn son in every house. But God provided a way to protect the Jews. Each family was told to kill a lamb and put its blood on the doorposts of their house. If the angel of death saw the blood of the lamb, he would pass over that house and no one there would die. This event was called Passover because God passed over those who sprinkled the blood of the lamb on their doorposts.

Later God said in his law, “When anyone is guilty ... he must confess in what way he has sinned and, as a penalty for the sin he has committed, he must bring to the Lord a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for his sin.” Every Jew had sinned, and every Jew had sacrificed a lamb to pay for his or her sins. So when John said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” they understood. They just didn’t know how Jesus would take away their sin.

Then John the Baptist told his disciples, “This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’” This was a strange saying because John was born six months before Jesus. John realized that Jesus had always existed. He lived in heaven -- as God -- before he came to earth as a baby.

John the Baptist reminded them that Jesus was the one God had pointed out to him. He was the one the Holy Spirit had remained on when it came down from heaven like a dove. John had seen

it with his own eyes. He assured his disciples, “I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”

Before Jesus came, there was a way a Jew could get rid of sin and guilt -- that was to kill a lamb and offer its blood to God as a sacrifice. God says all sin must be paid for with death. God sent Jesus to die -- to be the sacrifice for everyone's sin. At the first Passover, all those who believed God put lamb's blood on their doorposts. They were protected. Jesus is the Lamb of God. If you want his blood to protect you, you must believe God's promise and ask Jesus to let his death pay for your sins. Then God will pass over your sins and forgive you.

Life Questions:

Have you asked God to pass over your sins, because Jesus died for you? If not, will you do so now?

Three Temptations

At once the [Holy] Spirit sent him [Jesus] out into the desert and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. (Mark 1:12-13)

Jesus went without eating for forty days and nights. After that he was very hungry. Satan came to him and pointed out stones on the ground. He tried to get Jesus to turn the stones into bread. Jesus said, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” This was a quote from God's Word in the book of Deuteronomy.

Then Satan transported Jesus to the highest point on top of the temple. He tried to get Jesus to jump off and let the angels catch him. The devil quoted a promise from the Bible that said God would make sure the angels caught him. But Jesus knew that wasn't how God wanted him to demonstrate he was God. So Jesus again quoted Deuteronomy, saying, “It is also written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Finally, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain. He showed him all the kingdoms of the world in all their glory. Then he said, “All this I will give you, if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus didn't argue with him over who really owned the kingdoms

of this world or whether he had the power to offer earthly wealth and glory. He just said, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came to take care of him.

Three times the devil tempted Jesus. And three times Jesus responded by quoting God's Word. The Bible says that everyone will be tempted. Jesus taught us to pray that we would not fall into sin when we are tempted.

Ephesians 6:10-17 teaches that the armor of God can protect us from the devil. Most of the armor is designed to help you resist the devil's evil attacks. There's only one piece of equipment described in that passage that you can use to fight back against the devil. It's the sword of the Holy Spirit -- God's Word.

The word of God is very powerful. The devil could not overcome the word of God when Jesus used it. You should use it too. The more you memorize and understand the Bible, the better you will be able to fight off temptation.

Life Questions:

What Bible verses and promises do you know by heart?
How could you prepare yourself to fight off temptation?

New Wine Out of Water

This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him. (John 2:11)

Jesus and his mother, Mary, were invited to a wedding in the village of Cana. Mary was already there when Jesus and his disciples arrived. And Mary knew something the other guests didn't know: the host had run out of wine.

In those times it was the custom for wedding celebrations to go on for several days. Guests expected food and wine to be provided every day. It was very embarrassing for the wine to run out. Guests might think the host was rude.

Mary thought Jesus might be able to help. She knew he was the

Messiah. Mary said to Jesus, “They have no more wine.” She was suggesting that he do something to supply their need. Jesus answered her, “Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come.”

If Mary was trying to get Jesus to use his power for her purposes, he had to make it clear that his directions came from God the Father. He didn’t come to do tricks or show off. He came to do the will of his Father in heaven. Mary didn’t try to make Jesus do what she wanted. She told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Instead of trying to make Jesus do what she wanted him to do, Mary presented the need to Jesus and trusted him to take care of it in the way he thought best.

Jesus responded to her faith. He saw six large stone water jars. These are the kind the Jews used for special washings to make themselves pure. Each jar could hold up to thirty gallons. Jesus told the servants to fill these jars up to the brim with water, almost a hundred and eighty gallons! That’s a lot of water!

The servants obeyed. When the jars were filled with water, Jesus told them to dip some out and take it to the person in charge of the dinner. Imagine how they must have felt. They thought they were dipping plain old water so someone could taste it! When the person in charge tasted it, the plain old water had turned into wonderful new wine.

The person in charge raved about this being the best wine he had ever tasted. He didn’t realize how great it really was! The servants did! The disciples did! Mary did! They knew they had seen the glory of God and it brought joy!

Life Question:

When you pray, do you try to tell God what to do? Or, do you present your needs and trust him to do what is best?

Jesus Tells His Secret to a Lonely Woman

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming.” “When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.” (John 4:25-26)

The Samaritans were related to the Jews. In times past, the Samaritan Jews married people who were not Jews. They married people who worshipped idols. The Samaritans didn't follow God's rules for worship. After that, the Jews and Samaritans always argued. The Jews hated the Samaritans. They thought God hated the Samaritans too, but Jesus came to offer God's love to everyone.

Samaria is in the middle of Israel. Jesus was coming from Judea. He needed to go to Galilee. Most Jews would walk miles out of their way so they wouldn't have to go through Samaria. They didn't even want to see a Samaritan. Jesus needed to go through Samaria. He wanted to show people that God loves everyone.

Jesus met this woman at Jacob's Well at noon. Most of the women came to the well early in the morning, when it was cool. She waited till noon so she wouldn't meet anyone. She expected them to reject her. You see, she had been married five times. Now she was living with a man who wasn't her husband. Everyone knew that was wrong.

Imagine her surprise when Jesus -- a Jewish man -- asked her for a drink and spoke kindly to her! She wasn't kind to Jesus. She wanted to argue, but Jesus didn't argue with her. Instead he offered her something she was thirsty for -- living water. He offered her eternal life. He offered her God's love and acceptance.

Jesus knew all about her five husbands. He knew about her secret sin, but he didn't look down on her or hate her. He loved her. She had heard that the Messiah would know everything. She wondered if this could be him. And Jesus told her: I who speak to you am he. It was amazing to find the Messiah. It was more amazing that he would speak to her -- a rejected sinner.

She ran to tell everyone in town. She wasn't ashamed anymore! She introduced everyone to Jesus. Many of the Samaritans believed in Jesus because of her.

Life Question:

Do you sometimes reject people who are loved by God? Do you introduce people to Jesus? Jesus knows everything you do -- good and bad. He still loves you! How does that make you feel?

Jesus Tells His Secret in His Hometown

He [Jesus] went to Nazareth where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue as was his custom. And he stood up to read. [After reading a prophecy about the Messiah he said to them,] “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:16, 21b)

Jesus had grown up in Nazareth. He knew everyone and everyone knew him. They had seen him as a boy working with Joseph at the carpentry shop. They knew his mother and his younger brothers and sisters. Jesus had played in their streets. He had gone to their synagogue as a young man. The people of Nazareth heard about the wonders Jesus had been doing and were curious.

Each Sabbath day the Jews came together to hear God’s Word. An elder would read from one of the prophets then encourage them to hope for the Messiah. If a rabbi was visiting, he was invited to read the Scripture and explain it. Jesus was invited to read the Scripture.

He read from the prophet Isaiah. It spoke about how the Messiah would come to preach good news to poor people, to set captives free, to make the blind see again and announce the year when God would set people free. Jesus stopped reading just before the passage where it promised that God would pay back their enemies. His hometown crowd waited to hear what he would say next. Jesus said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” At first they were amazed and said good things about him. But when they realized that he was implying that he was the Messiah, the crowd turned on him.

People began to say things like, “Hey, wait a minute! Isn’t this Joseph’s son? We know this guy. Who does he think he is?” Jesus wasn’t acting like they expected the Messiah to act. They didn’t think of him as the promised one who would bring God’s kingdom. They knew him as the carpenter’s son.

Jesus told them that prophets aren’t accepted in their hometowns. He pointed out stories showing how Elijah and Elisha had to do their miracles for people who weren’t even Jews because the Jews had hard hearts. The crowd got mad. How dare Jesus imply that Gentiles were better able to receive the Messiah than they! They got so mad they tried to kill Jesus for being a false prophet.

The mob grabbed him and carried him to the cliff that Nazareth is built on. It's a long drop straight down to the jagged rocks below! Just as they were ready to throw him to his death, he walked through the middle of them and went away. Jesus had a mission to fulfill. He had to preach to people who would believe.

Life Questions:

What would you have said after Jesus gave his sermon?