

# JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD, THE SON OF GOD: THE THIRD WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST JOHN 01:29–34

## *Introduction*

John's witness about Jesus Christ is one of the greatest witnesses ever given by man. John was unmistakable in His proclamation of the Lord Jesus Christ (Lk. 4:18-19).

- I. Christ is the Lamb of God (v. 29).
- II. Christ is the Preeminent One (vv. 30-31).
- III. Christ is the Messiah, the One upon whom the Spirit of God remained (vv. 32-33).
- IV. Christ is the Son of God (v. 34).

## **I. *John 01:29 Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God***

Jesus Christ is the "Lamb of God". Down through the centuries "*the Lamb of God*" has been one of the most cherished symbols of Jesus Christ held by believers. There are four reasons for this.

1. The Lamb is a picture of Christ our Passover who was sacrificed for us.

*1 Cor 5:7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

*Historically*, the Passover refers back to the time when God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage (Exo. 11:1f). God had pronounced judgment, the taking of the firstborn, upon the people of Egypt for their injustices. As He prepared to execute the final judgment, the faithful — those who believed God — were instructed to slay a pure lamb and sprinkle its blood over the door posts of their homes. The blood of the innocent lamb would then serve as a sign that the coming judgment had already been carried out. When seeing the blood, God would *pass over* that house. Those who believed God applied the blood to their homes and were saved, but those who did not believe did not apply the blood to their homes and their firstborn were destroyed.

*Symbolically*, the Passover pictured the coming of Jesus Christ as the Saviour. The *lamb without defect* pictured His sinless life (cp. Jn. 1:29; Exo. 12:5), and the *blood sprinkled on the door posts* pictured His blood shed or poured out for the believer. It was a sign that the life and blood of the innocent lamb had been substituted for the firstborn. The *eating of the lamb* pictured the need for spiritual nourishment gained by feeding on Christ, the Bread of Life. The unleavened bread (bread without yeast)

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pictured the need for putting evil out of one's life and household. (See *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, Mt. 26:17.)

The major point to note is this: it was the blood of the lamb that saved the people. The lamb was sacrificed; that is, its blood was shed or poured out as a substitute for the people. The lamb symbolized Christ our Passover who was sacrificed for us. If we believe and apply His blood to our hearts and homes, He saves us. If we do not believe and do not apply the blood to our hearts and homes, we are destroyed. It is the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for us; it is His blood which saves us.

2. The Lamb is a picture of the precious blood of Christ which redeems us.

**1 Pet 1:18-19** *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

*Historically*, two lambs were sacrificed “regularly each day...one in the morning and the other at twilight” (Exo. 29: 38-39). The sacrifice of the two lambs, the shedding of their precious blood, became a substitute for the people. The people knew their sins had separated them from God and that their sins had to be removed before they could be reconciled to God. Thus, symbolically, the sins of the people were removed from the people and placed upon the two animals. The animals, without defect and without spot, had the sins of the people placed upon them; and symbolically, they bore the judgment of sin, which was death. They were sacrificed for sin, and by their death, they symbolically set the people free by redeeming them from their sins. (But note a critical point. It was not the deed that caused God to remove the sins, but the *faith* of the person in God's Word *that He would remove the sins.*)

This, of course, is a picture of Christ. (See Isa 53:6-7 Jer 11:19; Acts 8:32; 1 Cor 5:7; Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 2:22-24 ; Rev 5:6; 6:1; 7:9; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1; 15:3; 17:14; 19:9 21:22.)

Jesus Christ is..

- the perfect Lamb of God, without sin (defect or spot).
- the One upon whom the sins of the people were placed.
- the One who bore the judgment for sin, which was death.
- the One who was sacrificed for sin.
- the One whose death sets people free by redeeming them.
- the One whose blood is counted precious both by God and believers.

It should be noted that Christ willingly offered Himself as the sacrificial Lamb, as our substitute and sin-bearer; and God willingly accepted the offering and sacrifice of His Son for us (Jn. 10:17-18). God is *satisfied* with the settlement for sin that Christ made.

If any person really believes the blood of Christ to be precious — really believes that the blood of Christ covers his sins — God will take that person’s belief and count it as righteousness. That person is counted righteous by God (See *Credited and Justification*, Rom. 4:22).

3. The “Lamb of God” is not of men, but of God (tou Theou). The idea is that the Lamb belonged to God; that is, God gave, supplied, and provided the Lamb for sacrifice. (Gen 22:8 where God provided the lamb for Abraham as a substitute for Isaac.)

This glorious truth speaks volumes on...

- the unbelievable love of God for man (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:1).
- the great sacrifice and humiliation Christ underwent for man (Phil. 2:6-8; 1 Pet. 2:24)
- the forgiveness of sins and salvation which came from God’s grace and not from man’s resources and works (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 2:4-7).
- the divinity of Christ, His being *of God*.

4. The “Lamb of God” takes away the sin of the world.

- a. The phrase *takes away* (airon) means to lift away, to carry off. It means to bear on behalf of one, as one’s substitute. Jesus Christ was the sacrificial Lamb of God who bore our sins. He lifted our sins off of us and bore and carried them away.

***1 Pet 2:24*** *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

***Heb 9:28*** *So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

- b. The word *sin* (harmartian) is singular, not plural. All the sins of the world are taken and placed into one package. The whole package of sin — all the sin of every man who has ever lived — was laid upon and borne by Christ.

***1 John 1:7*** *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

- c. The world is looked at as a whole. Christ bore the sins of the whole world, not the sins of just some men. No matter the depth and ugliness of a man’s sin, Christ bore the sins of the whole world.

***1 John 2:1-2*** *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

## MATHEW 26:17 FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

*On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” **Mathew 26:17***

This feast is also known as the Passover Feast (see Lev. 23:5-8; Lk. 22:1). However, on the first day of the Passover week, the Feast of Unleavened Bread had special significance. It was the day that all preparations were made to celebrate the Passover. (Exo. 12:1-51, esp. 11-28 for the background of the Passover.) Preparations included securing the lamb and taking it to the temple to be sacrificed. Preparations also included securing the food and drink items necessary for the Passover and arranging the room for the Feast. But there were two preparations for which the Feast of Unleavened Bread received its name.

1. There was the baking of unleavened bread. On the very night of the Passover, God had told Israel to make final preparations for being delivered from Egyptian bondage. But the Israelites did not have time to bake leavened bread. They had to bake bread without leaven because of the time it takes for leavened bread to rise. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was simply one of the Passover ceremonies by which Israel remembered God’s glorious deliverance of their forefathers from Egyptian bondage.
2. There was a ceremony by which all leaven within the house had to be removed. It must be remembered that leaven was a symbol of evil to the Jews. Therefore, in removing all leaven, they were picturing the need for putting evil out of their lives and households. There was an actual search made throughout the rooms of the house looking for any crumb of leaven that might have fallen upon the floor or between some furniture. Whatever leaven was found, no matter how small a crumb, it was removed from the house. By removing all leaven from their households, the Jews were saying they wanted to be included among the faithful of their forefathers, the faithful who had cleansed their lives and households for the journey of deliverance from bondage. □

## ROMANS 04: 22 CREDITED — IMPUTED (ELOGISTHE)

Credited means to reckon, to impute, to credit, to count, to compute, to ascribe, to deposit, to put to one’s account. Abraham’s faith was counted for righteousness. Abraham deposited his faith with God, and God credited Abraham’s faith as righteousness. □

**ROMANS 04:22**  
**JUSTIFICATION: FAITH, RIGHTEOUSNESS**

*This is why “it is credited to him as righteousness.” **Romans 04:22***

In simple terms *justification* means that God takes the believer’s faith and counts it as righteousness (Rom. 4:3; see Gen. 15:6)

When a person *really believes* that Jesus Christ is *his Saviour*, God takes that person’s faith and counts it for righteousness (Rom. 4:3, 5, 9, 11, 22, 24). The person is not righteous; he has no righteousness of his own. He is still imperfect, still sinful, still corruptible, still short of God’s glory as a sinful human being. But he does believe that Jesus Christ *is his Saviour*. Such belief honours God’s Son (whom God loves very much), and because it honours God’s Son, God accepts that person’s faith for righteousness. God counts that person’s faith as righteousness. Therefore, that person becomes acceptable to God. A person’s belief — the right kind of belief — is critical.

*Gen 15:6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

*Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Gal 3:6 Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

*1 Cor 6:11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

*Phil 3:9 And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. □*

## **II. John 01:30–31 Jesus Christ, the Preeminent One**

Jesus Christ is the Preeminent One, the *One before all*. Note what John said (Jn. 1:15).

1. John said that Christ “was before me”; that is, He existed before me. He was the Preexistent One, the Eternal God. John said very simply...
  - Jesus was born “after me” (6 months after).
  - But He has “surpassed me” (mightier; more important in being, rank, and dignity).
  - Why? Because “He was before me.”

The words *because He was before me* (hoti protos mou en) literally mean *first to me* or *first of me*. It refers both to time and importance. Jesus Christ was first in time, existing before John. He existed “in the beginning” — throughout all eternity. John proclaimed, “He was before me”. He always existed; He was the First; He was the very cause for John’s existence. John also declared that Jesus was first in importance. He was first in superiority, Being, Person. His very name is the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

**Isa 44:6** “*This is what the LORD says — Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.*”

**Rev 22:13** *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. (see Rev. 1:8; 21:6; Isa. 44:6)*

2. John did not know who the Messiah would be, only that the Messiah was to come. Note that John knew Jesus personally; they were cousins (Lk. 1:36). However, John did not know that his cousin, Jesus, was to be the Messiah. Note another fact: how faithful John was! He was a man of strong faith. He had never seen the Messiah, yet he went about his mission of preaching and baptizing. He acted on God’s Word and on God’s Word alone, believing that the Messiah would come.

**Thought 1.** Christ is the Preeminent One, the Eternal God. Believers must follow the example of John and....

- declare that Christ is before all.
- believe God’s promise: the Messiah has come.
- act, and get about their mission of proclaiming Christ.

### **III. John 01:32–33 The Holy Spirit**

Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the One upon whom the Holy Spirit of God remained. Note several facts.

1. This is the *testimony*, the strong witness of John.
2. The dove was a sacred bird to the Jews. It was a symbol of peace and gentleness, of purity and innocence; but even more significant, the dove was often identified with the Spirit of God. When the dove descended upon Christ, it symbolized the Spirit of God Himself descending upon Christ. The dove identified Jesus as the Messiah, commissioning and empowering Him with the power of God.

Jesus was being commissioned and set apart by heaven itself. God was giving His Son an experience that would make the commissioning unquestionable and unforgettable. This man, Jesus of Nazareth, was being empowered by God’s very own Spirit to do the work of God.

**Thought 1.** Every true believer is commissioned and empowered by God to do the work of God. Some commissioning experiences are dramatic (the heavens are torn apart); other experiences are not so dramatic (the still small voice of God's Spirit tugs at the heart with an awareness that one is called). Nevertheless, every true believer is commissioned and empowered by God's Spirit.

The *awareness* of the commission and power, however, is a different matter. Very many are not aware of God's commission and of the Spirit's presence within. What makes the difference? The first two points: one's decision and submission, one's beginning and identification. Too many of us lack a consistent commitment in both steps. As a result, we wander through life unaware of God's commission and the presence of the Spirit of God empowering us to do the task.

- => Too many of us do not make a decision to follow Christ totally; we do not surrender all we are and have to Christ. Therefore, we are not aware of the great call and commission of Christ.
- => Too many of us do not begin with Christ; we just never identify with Him. We may be baptized, but we never follow through with Christ. The world never knows that we are followers of Christ, not a committed, genuine follower.

**John 15:16** *"You did not choose me. but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."*

**Acts 1:8** *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

**Acts 26:16** *'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you.'*

3. In the Old Testament the Spirit of God came upon men only on special occasions. He never came and remained upon men. John went out of his way to point out that the Spirit's descent upon Christ was unique: He came down (v. 32) and He remained upon Christ (v. 32). The Holy Spirit entered the life of Christ once-for-all, permanently and powerfully, in His full manifestation and unlimited power.

**Thought 1.** When a person is baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ, the Holy Spirit enters the life of the believer and becomes a permanent experience of the believer.

**John 16:7** *"But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."*

**Rom 8:9-10** *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.*

*1 Cor 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

4. John repeated he did not know who the Messiah would be. God's sign to John was the Holy Spirit coming upon the Messiah in the form of a dove.
5. Christ is the One who baptizes believers with the Holy Spirit.

**Thought 1.** It is the person who receives the Spirit of God that has the presence and care of God in his life. The greatest help the believers are to receive is the very presence of God Himself in the Person of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:15-26; See *Pentacost, Coming of the Holy Spirit*, Acts 02:01-04).

### ACTS 02:01—04 PENTECOST, COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The disciples had been deliberately prepared for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the Bible the revelation of the Spirit had been step by step, that is, progressive. Prophecy shows this clearly.

1. Joel prophesied, “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people...” (Joel 2:28-29).
2. John the Baptist said, “I baptize with water, but He shall baptize with [en, in] the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 3:11; Lk. 3:16).
3. In the early part of Jesus' ministry, He had said that believers were to be “born again...[by] the Spirit” (Jn. 3:3- 4; see 1 Jn. 5:1).
4. During His ministry, Jesus taught that men were to receive the Holy Spirit by prayer (Lk. 11:13).
5. In the Upper Room, Jesus identified the Holy Spirit as a Person (Jn. 14:15-26), and He outlined the work of the Spirit with both unbelievers and believers (Jn. 16:7-15). Significantly, He revealed that He was praying to the Father for the Comforter to come and abide with the disciples (Jn. 14:16-17).
6. After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus appeared to His disciples in the Upper Room. There He symbolically breathed on them, saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn. 20:22). But He insisted they not begin their ministry until they experienced the Spirit actually coming upon them with power (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8).
7. Right before Jesus was to ascend into heaven, He said, “John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5).



8. Then, ten days after Jesus' ascension and after much prayer, the Holy Spirit came upon and filled the whole body of believers at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

There are two events of the Holy Spirit's coming that seem to hold historical significance. These two particular events are very, very special to the church, for both Jewish and Gentile believers were clearly seen to be in God's historical plan. Both Jew and Gentile were baptized by the Holy Spirit, that is, placed into the body of Christ, His Church.

1. At Pentecost: the disciples were "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4).
  - a. This was in fulfilment of the prophecy by Joel. The Spirit was *poured out* upon the believers (Acts 2:16).
  - b. This was in fulfilment of the prophecies by Jesus and John. The Spirit *baptized*, that is, immersed the believers with His own presence (Acts 1:5; 10:44-48; see 11:15-16, esp. 16).
2. At Cornelius' house: the Holy Spirit "came on", had been "poured out", and was "received" by the Gentile believers (Acts 10:44-47).
  - a. Peter said to the Jews who came with him, "They have received the Holy Spirit *just as we have*." (Acts 10:47).
  - b. Peter reported the event to the Jerusalem Church: "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 11:15-16)
  - c. Peter used the experience to support Paul before the great Jerusalem Council:

*Acts 15:8* God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.

In all three instances the idea conveyed is that of an event just like *their own* experience. It is as though Peter pointed to a Gentile Pentecost or at least an extension of Pentecost in Acts 2 to include the Gentiles.

Note two other facts:

1. At Pentecost, the account uses the word *filled*, not *baptized*.
2. At Cornelius' house, the account says the Holy Spirit *came on*, had been *poured out*, and *received*. But in reporting the experience to the Jerusalem Church, Peter used the word *baptized*. He said the Gentile believers were "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:16) "as he had come on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15).

This clearly says that although the word *baptized* is not used in the Pentecost experience, the disciples were baptized or immersed with the Spirit's presence at Pentecost. The words *filled, received, poured, baptized, and came on* are all used interchangeably to describe the Spirit's presence coming into a believer's life. (If believers would heed this, it would eliminate many of the arguments that arise over terminology.)

Other than these two events Acts records only four other times that the Holy Spirit came upon believers.

1. A little prayer band in Jerusalem was "filled" with the Holy Spirit (see Acts 4:8).
2. The Samaritans (half-Jews, half-Gentiles) "received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15-17).
3. Paul was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17).
4. The disciples of John experienced "the Holy Spirit came on them" (Acts 19:6).

One other fact is important. Other than Pentecost and Cornelius' house, the word *baptize* is used in connection with the Holy Spirit only once in the rest of the New Testament. That one reference is 1 Cor. 12:13: "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body." That is, the Holy Spirit takes all believers and baptizes or immerses, places, and positions them into the body of Christ — into the church, the universal church.

In conclusion, what does all this mean?

1. When a man grasps the gospel and believes, really believes, the Holy Spirit enters his life. He *comes upon, falls upon, pours, fills, baptizes* (immerses) Himself into the life of the believer. This is a personal *experience*. This act of the Spirit takes place in the life of the believer. The believer *experiences* the Spirit coming into his life. The believer receives the Spirit *experientially*.
2. When a man grasps the gospel and believes, really believes, the Holy Spirit takes him and *baptizes* or immerses, and places him into the body of Christ, which is God's Church. The believer does not feel or experience this act. It is an act of God that takes place in heaven. The believer is *counted* as a child of God. He is *counted* as a member of the body, of the church. This is a *position*, not an experience, which the believer feels. It happens once-for-all. The believer is adopted as a child of God — irrevocably. It is an eternal *position*, an eternal sonship. The believer becomes a member of God's Church — positionally (1 Cor. 12:13).
3. After a man is saved, he is to be filled and to keep on being "filled with the Spirit" — day by day (Eph. 5:18; see Jn. 14:21, the word "manifest"). The early believers were continually filled (Acts 4:8, 31). □

#### **IV. *John 01: 34 Jesus Christ, the Son of God***

Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

What did John mean by “the Son of God”? Note the definite article. Christ is the Son, not a son of God. He is...

- the *only* Son
- the *one and only* Son
- the one and only Son who came from the very *side* of God, that is, from the deepest part, from the most intimate place, from the most honourable fellowship of God.

Christ was coexistent. He was and is face-to-face with God forever. The word *with* (pros) has the idea of both *being with* and *acting toward*. Jesus Christ (the Word) was both with God and acting with God. He was “with God”: by God’s side, acting, living, and moving in the closest of relationships. Christ had the ideal and perfect relationship *with* God the Father. Their life together — their relationship, communion, fellowship, and connection — was a perfect eternal bond. This is exactly what is said: “*He was with God in the beginning*” (Jn. 1:2).

***1 John 1:1*** *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched — this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.* ■