

## **THE WORK OF CHRIST**

**John 1:29-34**

**By Andy Manning**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. So far the Gospel of John has focused primarily on the person of Christ – who He is. He is eternal; the Word; the second person of the Trinity; He is God; the creator of all things; the giver of eternal life; He became a human being and dwelt among us; He was seen by eyewitnesses like the disciples, and John the Baptist; He is full of grace and truth; He is at the Father's side.
2. In verse 29 the story of Jesus takes a turn as John moves from the person of Christ, to the work of Christ. In this passage, John the Baptist describes two things that Christ does for us. Christ does more than just two things, but in this passage John mentions two.

### **II. TEXT: John 1:29-34**

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I told you about: 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.' 31 I didn't know him, but I came baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he rested on him. 33 I didn't know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The one you see the Spirit descending and resting on—he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

### **III. CHRIST'S TWO-FOLD WORK**

#### **1. He takes away our sins.**

- i. **John 1:29** "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
- ii. This is the first time in the Bible that Jesus is called the Lamb of God.
  1. In John this title is only used here and in 1:36.
  2. In Revelation John uses this title for Jesus 29 times.
- iii. What does it mean that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world? John may have been referring to one, or all of the following OT images.
  1. The Passover Lamb (Exodus 12). The Passover was an annual holiday in which the Jews celebrated the birth of the nation of Israel and their deliverance from Egypt. It is called the "Passover" for an important reason. On the eve of their Exodus, God sent His death angel to every home in all of Egypt to kill every firstborn son and animal. However, God provided a way of salvation for Jews. Every family was to kill a lamb and wipe its blood on the outside doorframe of the house. If the angel of death saw the blood of the lamb on the door, then he

would pass over the house. John could have been pointing to Jesus as our Passover lamb. Because of our sins, we deserve God's eternal wrath, but if we put our faith in the blood of Jesus that was shed for us on the cross, then God will pass over us, forgiving our sins.

- a. Paul wrote that the Passover was symbol of the sacrifice of Christ's death for our sins. **1 Corinthians 5:7** "For Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed."
  - b. The Passover lamb pointed to Christ in some very specific ways:
    - i. The lamb had to be unblemished. In the same way, Christ was unblemished – without sin (1 John 3:5).
    - ii. They were not to break any of its bones (Ex 12:34). In John 19:31-34, when the Roman soldiers came to break Christ's legs to hasten his death, they found that He was dead, so they only pierced His side with a spear. John says that this was a fulfillment of Scripture.
2. The daily temple sacrifices (Ex 29:38-42). Every day two lambs were sacrificed in the temple – one in the morning, and one in the evening for the sins of the people. Why?
- a. Through this sacrificial system God was teaching several important truths:
    - i. The seriousness of sin. Sin offends God and separates us from God. It must be punished.
    - ii. Sin can only be removed by a blood sacrifice – by death. Sin requires a substitutionary sacrifice. You can only be forgiven if another died in your place. **Hebrews 9:22** "According to the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Not only were two lambs offered daily in the temple, but any time someone sinned against God, they had to confess their sins and offer a sacrifice – either a lamb or a goat – to atone for their sins (Lev 5:5-7).
    - iii. Animal sacrifices were insufficient to remove sin. This is why they had to be offered twice a day. **Isaiah 1:11** "What are all your sacrifices to me?" asks the Lord. "I have had enough of burnt offerings and rams and the fat of well-fed cattle; I have no desire for the blood of bulls, lambs, or male goats." **Hebrews 10:3-4** "3 But in the sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year after

- year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”
- b. John may have been saying that Jesus is the Lamb of God which truly and finally takes away your sins once and for all.
3. The prophetic lamb. Isaiah 53 is a prophecy describing the coming Messiah as a suffering servant who will die for our sins. This Savior is described as a lamb.
    - a. **Isaiah 53:5-6** “But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished him for the iniquity of us all.”
    - b. **Isaiah 53:7** “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth.”
    - c. John could very well have been saying that Jesus is the prophetic lamb, the suffering servant that Isaiah prophesied about, the one who has come to die for our sins.
- iv. **John 1:29** “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”
    1. With this phrase John may have been referring to the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the holiest day of the year for the Jews. The High Priest would make an annual sacrifice to atone for the sins of the entire nation. He would take two goats. The first he would sacrifice, and sprinkle the blood in the Holy of Holies on the Mercy Seat, the place of the temple which was symbolic of God’s presence. Then he would take the second goat, place his hands on its head, confess the sins of the nation, and then it would be driven out into the wilderness, symbolically taking away the nation’s sins. That goat is called the Azazel, or the scapegoat.
    2. Jesus perfectly fulfills the Day of Atonement. Like the first goat, He died for our sins, and like the second goat, He took our sins away.
    3. **1 John 3:5** “You know that he was revealed so that he might take away sins, and there is no sin in him.”
  - v. What does it mean that Jesus takes away the sin “of the world”? It doesn’t mean universalism – that all are automatically saved through the death of Christ. It means that Christ’s death was sufficient for the sins of everyone in the world, but we know from the rest of the Bible that it is only efficacious for those who believe (John 3:16).

- vi. Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He died in our place, for our sins, to reconcile us to God and give us eternal life rather than eternal torment in hell. But we must trust in Him.

## 2. He baptizes us with the Holy Spirit.

- i. **John 1:32-34** And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he rested on him. 33 I didn’t know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The one you see the Spirit descending and resting on—he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”
  - 1. John the Baptist was pointing back to the baptism of Jesus – by John in the Jordan River. This event happened after Christ’s baptism. Christ had already started His ministry by this time.
- ii. John “saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he rested on him.”
  - 1. Three things happened when John baptized Jesus (Mt 3:13-17).
    - a. The heavens opened up for Him.
    - b. The Spirit of God descended like a dove on Him.
    - c. The Father spoke, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased.”
  - 2. The synoptics record that Jesus saw the Spirit descending, but John records that John the Baptist also saw the Spirit. In fact, the primary reason for the Baptism of Christ may have been for John – to confirm that Jesus was the Son of God.
  - 3. God told John to look for this sign. **John 1:33-34** “33 I didn’t know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The one you see the Spirit descending and resting on—he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” When John saw this, he knew that Jesus was the Messiah; the Son of God.
  - 4. The Old Testament prophets said this would happen to the Messiah.
    - a. **Isaiah 11:1-2** “Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him— a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”
    - b. **Isaiah 42:1** “This is my servant; I strengthen him, this is my chosen one; I delight in him. I have put my Spirit on him; he will bring justice to the nations.”
    - c. **Isaiah 61:1** “The Spirit of the Lord God is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has

sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners;”

5. The Spirit descending on Jesus confirmed to John that He was the Son of God.
- iii. **John 1:33** “I didn’t know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The one you see the Spirit descending and resting on—he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”
- iv. John describes a second work of Christ – He baptizes with the Holy Spirit. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
- v. **Definition:** The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the permanent imparting of the Holy Spirit by Christ to the believer the moment of salvation, placing the believer in the body of Christ, and empowering the believer for service.
  1. It is permanent.
    - a. Jesus began baptizing people with the Holy Spirit after He ascended heaven, on the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2. Before His ascension, Jesus told the disciples to stay in Jerusalem to wait for the Father’s promise – the imparting of the Holy Spirit.
    - b. **Acts 1:4-5** 4 While he was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father’s promise. “Which,” he said, “you have heard me speak about; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days.”
    - c. Not long after this, while all the Christians were together in one place, on the day of Pentecost, Jesus baptized them with the Holy Spirit. This was a momentous event, so it was marked by amazing phenomena: a sound like a violent rushing wind came from heaven and filled the house. Tongues like flames of fire separated and rested on each one of them. They all spoke in different languages that they didn’t previously know. There Jews from all over the world visiting Jerusalem for the holiday of Pentecost, and when they heard the noise the drew near, and each of them could hear the gospel proclaimed in their own native language.
    - d. Before this time, the Holy Spirit did not indwell God’s people permanently. He temporarily came on people to empower them for special acts of service. But starting with the day of Pentecost, Jesus baptizes all believers with the Holy Spirit, permanently imparting the Holy Spirit in them.

- e. **1 Corinthians 6:19** “Don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,”
    - i. Paul is writing to the Corinthian Christians who were living in sin. And yet he assured them that the Holy Spirit lived in them.
  - f. You don’t need to be baptized with the Spirit over and over again. It is permanent. When the Holy Spirit indwells you, He never leaves.
  - g. You will need to be filled with the Spirit over again.
    - i. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the permanent imparting of the Holy Spirit to dwell inside of believers.
    - ii. The filling of the Holy Spirit is the believer’s access to the Holy Spirit’s resources in response to obedience and faith. When you live in sin, you grieve and quench God’s Spirit. He lives in You, but you don’t have access to His resources. But when you repent and walk in obedience, the Holy Spirit once again fills you with His power to live the victorious Christian life.
    - iii. You will always have the Holy Spirit. But you will not enjoy all of His resources unless He has all of you.
    - iv. The Bible never commands us to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, but it does command us to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit, and to be led by the Spirit (Eph 5:18; Gal 5:16, 18).
  - h. This is why it is called the “baptism” of the Holy Spirit. Just like water baptism, it is not something that you need to repeat. You only get baptized once. In the same way, you only get baptized with the Holy Spirit once, and then He never leaves.
2. It is the work of Christ.
    - a. The New Testament makes it very clear that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the work of Christ.
    - b. **John 1:33** “he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.”
    - c. All four of the gospels say the same thing.
  3. It occurs the moment of salvation. It is one of the blessings of salvation.
    - a. All believers have the indwelling Holy Spirit. **Romans 8:9** “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.”

- b. If all believers have the indwelling Holy Spirit, then it follows that they receive the Holy Spirit the moment of salvation.
  - c. **Ephesians 1:13-14** “13 In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. 14 The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.”
  - d. Just as water baptism is initiator, occurring at the beginning of your life as a Christian, so is Spirit baptism. It occurs once, at the beginning of your Christian life.
4. It places the believer in the body of Christ.
- a. **1 Corinthians 12:13** “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink.”
  - b. When you get saved, Jesus baptizes you with the Holy Spirit. This experience places you in the body of Christ. It makes you a member of the Church of Christ.
  - c. Every true Christian is a member of the body of Christ.
5. It empowers the believer.
- a. What does the Holy Spirit do when He indwells us?
    - i. Leads you to the truth. (Jn 14:16-17; Jn 16:13)
    - ii. Teaches you everything and reminds you of everything Jesus said. (Jn 14:26)
    - iii. Testifies to you and through you about Jesus. (Jn 15:26)
    - iv. Convicts you of your sin, of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment. (Jn 16: 8)
    - v. Changes your desires so that you want to please God. (Phil 2:13; Gal 5:17))
    - vi. Gives you the power to obey and please God. (Phil 2:13)
    - vii. Transforms you to be like Christ. (Gal 5:22-23)
    - viii. Gives you boldness to be a courageous witness for Christ. (Acts 4)
    - ix. Helps you to pray when you don’t know what to pray for. (Rom 8:26-27)
    - x. Keeps the church unified. (Eph 4:3)
  - b. The Holy Spirit blesses us in many ways, but primarily He indwells us to empower us for service – to be effective witnesses for Jesus.

- c. **Acts 1:8** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

1. Jesus wants to take away your sins and baptize you with the Holy Spirit. He wants to give you eternal life, and abundant life.
2. The Bible calls salvation a gift (Eph 2:8), and it also calls the baptism of the Holy Spirit a gift (Acts 11:17).
3. But just because someone offers you a gift does not mean it is yours. It is not yours until you receive it.
4. How do you receive the gift of salvation and the Holy Spirit? But making the decision to trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior and King.