

# Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

For reply: Email: [truthfortoday@aol.com](mailto:truthfortoday@aol.com)

**Broadcast Date:** 6 January 2002

**No.** T0196

**Speaker:** Mr. Douglas Pettman

## Gospel Messages on "Little things": A Little Lamb - Revelation 5:6-12

Illustration is a powerful language tool. As we try to express ourselves, we often find that an illustration brings home to our listener the meaning we are anxious to convey. Sometimes we use animals or birds as the object. For instance, you may remember someone speaking of a person as an ostrich who buries his head in the sand. Such a person is not ready to face up to the challenges or difficulties he faces. Similarly, someone else may be described as catty, always wanting get her claws into others.

The Bible is no exception. In 1 Peter 5:8 the Devil is described as "a roaring lion ... seeking whom he may devour". The Lord Jesus spoke of Herod as "that fox", Luke 13:32, and in Matthew 7:15 He speaks of the false prophets "which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves".

Our purpose today is to speak of "a lamb". This animal is little when born but is still a lamb as it grows towards maturity. The Bible uses the lamb as an illustration to bring to us characteristics which apply to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is wonderful to read the verses in Revelation 5, which describe the early gathering in heaven before the final judgments of the world. There was great sadness that no one was found worthy to act with authority in undertaking to carry through these judgements described in "the book". Then One comes. The apostle John writes of the One who is worthy, "The lion of the tribe of Judah". As John continues, he speaks of the One who becomes the centre of worship by all in heaven. Who is this who appears? John does not see the lion in all His strength but, he says, "in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb..." Here is the One who takes all the attention of heaven at the moment - The Lamb. Perhaps we may have thought that we should have read in this chapter of Revelation of "The Son of God" coming or even of "Jesus", using His earthly name. John speaks of the "Lamb".

A lamb reminds us of meekness. It is not aggressive; when seen among the flock it is dependent and yet it was always available to Israel for a sacrifice. In their need Israel had learned that the only means of covering their sin and of bringing worship to God, lay in a sacrifice. John speaks of the lamb to remind us of the great fact that the Lord Jesus Christ became the only sacrifice for the sin of mankind required by God. It is noteworthy that throughout Revelation 5, the word "Lamb" might be better translated "little Lamb". "Little Lamb" He may be, but His work of salvation is great and mighty. So let us look at the Bible and gather what is said concerning the Lord Jesus as the "little Lamb". As we do so, we will see more detail appearing as to the quality of the lamb.

### APPOINTED IN THE PAST ETERNITY

First we can note that He was appointed in the past eternity. Listen to the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 1:18-20, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world..." The Apostle underlines the thought which runs through Scripture of the lamb as a sacrifice for sin. In this case he applies it to the Lord Jesus Christ. We also learn that the plan was made so early on. Also, the Lamb of God was totally pure, without blemish and without spot. The Lord Jesus met every requirement of a holy God.

The Apostle Paul tells the Ephesians in Ephesians 1:4 that "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world". Paul also underlines what Peter has said. Here was the infinite plan of a Creator God for every believer. It was an amazing plan for salvation of the sinners which existed "before the foundation of the world."

This is supported in Revelation 13:8, concerning those who follow Satan. Their fate is clear because their "names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". So long ago the plan existed, only for those who accept salvation. That plan was known to God when the world was first formed.

Do we rely upon a work of salvation which was hastily arranged after the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, from which time all men were born sinners? Never! God knew before ever man was created, that he would fall and a Saviour would be necessary. That Saviour could not come from men as "all have sinned". So the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb without blemish, was appointed before time began. Oh, the love of God to have such a plan in place!

As we proceed through the Bible, God, in His wisdom, reveals more concerning the sacrifice.

### **APPLIED IN HISTORY**

The next thing we note is that this truth is applied in history. Illustrations are many and we refer to only a few. We learn that there is satisfaction for God. Genesis 3:15 tells us that the woman's seed will bruise the serpent's head. The work of the Cross wonderfully satisfies God Himself. Satan is dealt the severest blow.

Covering the sin of Adam was God's own provision. Genesis 3:21, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins and clothed them". Here is the first indication of a sacrifice in Scripture. An animal died at God's hand to provide a covering. A sacrifice for man was required.

Then in Genesis 22 we read of the lovely incident where God tests Abraham. Abraham is questioned by his own son concerning the missing lamb for sacrifice. He replies in verse 8, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering". In this first Bible reference to a lamb, we learn that God provides Himself. How amazing is the extent of God's provision!

But this incident brings out a further lesson. Abraham's offering of his son was not allowed by God. God substituted His own offering for Abraham to sacrifice. You and I could not bring our own offering to satisfy God nor by our death is our punishment cleared. God needed to substitute His Son, the Lamb to meet our need.

Let us select just one more illustration from history, that of Exodus 12. By it we have the clearest detail so far of the need for a sacrifice and the quality of the offering demanded by God. This chapter tells us of the great method by which Israel was to be released from slavery in Egypt and brought to the land God had promised to them. It is by the sacrifice of a lamb. How many lessons we learn from this chapter. Let us see some of them.

- Verse 3 They were to take "every man a lamb". The sacrifice was readily available. No one would go without who desired to be covered by the blood.
- Verse 3 The sacrifice was to meet, of each individual, the need. There was not one national offering. The man in each household had his own lamb.
- Verse 4 The sacrifice was sufficient for all. We read, "if the household be too little for the lamb". There would never be a case where the household was too great!
- Verse 5 The lamb had to be "without blemish, a male of the first year". Nothing other than a perfect lamb would do to satisfy God. It had little time to be caught up with the thorns and traps of the world into which it had been born and so be scarred.
- Verse 6 "The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it". Everyone who desired to be covered must act, must put his trust in that sacrifice if judgement was to pass. Here was a sacrifice which was totally satisfying for all.

When God introduces His Lamb to us through the Scriptures what perfect illustrations we have. The Lamb of God fully satisfies God. He meets our individual need and He is alone sufficient for this. Only He could be sufficiently pure and our only course is to take His work as being sufficient if we would avoid the judgement of God against sinners.

### **ANNOUNCED IN DUE TIME**

The next thing we can notice is that this Lamb was announced in due time. We have now reached the point in the Bible where we are to learn of the Person whom the Lamb represents. In due time, this Lamb is announced to the world through John the Baptist. The whole purpose of the coming of John was to bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, Gospel of John 1. So we read in this chapter, verse 29, "John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world". John was totally convinced, through the Holy Spirit, as to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and ascribes this title "Lamb of God" because He would be the ultimate sacrifice for the sin of the world. He alone could deal with the consequences of sin and would suffer the punishment for your sin and mine. To John, and to us, this was a tremendous work. Here is God's announcement through John that the Lord Jesus is the Lamb of God.

"The next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" verses 35 and 36. There was something far greater to John than to express the work of the Lord Jesus; it was a vision and understanding of His Person. John gazed at Him, thrilled with the thought that here was the Son of God in Person, who was to become the Lamb. Does the thought of this divine Person thrill you today?

All the types, or pictures, of the lamb in the Old Testament, of which we have been speaking, are now revealed in this wonderful Person who came into the world to bear away our sin. Look at Him today, praise Him again and again and the day is coming when this praise will be, not just in faith, but face to face.

### **ABANDONED BY MAN AND BY GOD**

We come now to a further stage in the purpose of God. The Lamb was abandoned by man and by God. Yes, we speak of the Cross. But the Bible gives us further glimpses of the quality of the lamb as it applies to the Lord Jesus Himself. We must turn to Isaiah 53:7 where the prophet speaks of His work. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth". The Lord Jesus was just like that lamb - not a word in His own defence, not a word of condemnation of others. He opened not His mouth. How clearly we see His ready acceptance, in meekness, of the work He was going to do when He went to the Cross.

Those who gathered at the mock trial abandoned Him. Luke 23:18 tells us, "They cried out all at once, saying, Away with this Man". Not one would take up His cause.

The disciples were utterly scared at events which were taking place. What could they do? Peter's feeble effort in striking the servant of the high priest was all wrong and we read in Mark 14:50, "They all forsook Him and fled". They abandoned Him!

Then in John 19:18 we read of the work of the soldiers, "They crucified Him..." Apart from two rebels, murderers crucified with Him, not one stood with Him. This was the hour of the sacrifice of the lamb. The hymn writer wrote, "Alone He bore the Cross, Alone its grief sustained".

Last of all, God forsook Him. Matthew records in chapter 27:46, the Lord Jesus cried out with a loud voice, in utter loneliness, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Never before had that communion been broken. What a terrible scene was then taking place on the Cross. In all this, when God "made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin", 2 Corinthians 5:21, the holiness of God demanded that the Lord Jesus be totally abandoned as He endured our punishment so that the work of salvation would be complete. The Lamb of God was being sacrificed. That great work, planned before the foundation of the world, was taking place there at Calvary and He was totally alone.

Perhaps we can add, reading in Philippians 2:8, "[He] became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross", that He abandoned Himself for you and me. What a Saviour!

### **ACCLAIMED FOREVER**

We come now to our last point. He is acclaimed forever. No illustration will display this. The first great fact is that "God...raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory", 1 Peter 1:21. All the authority of God was exercised in raising Him that third day and what glory has been His ever since. The apostle Peter indicates that the whole point of this was "that your faith and hope might be in God". His resurrection proves that "God is satisfied with Jesus, we are satisfied as well", as the hymn writer assures us. Are you rejoicing in the power of His work today?

Stephen, the first martyr, had a glimpse of this glory in the heavens, as he was being stoned. He called out, Acts 7:56, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God". Yes, He is there! "The highest place that heaven affords is His by sovereign right". The One who was sacrificed for sin now enjoys total exaltation.

Let us return to the point from which we started today, Revelation 5:6. "I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain". What took the writer's attention? Not the strength of the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" but the wonderful sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus Christ as a "little Lamb" who stood before them. Our version of the Bible adds, "as it had been slain". This really means, as a freshly slain Lamb. All the freshness of the work of Christ as the slain Lamb impressed itself on the whole of that heavenly congregation.

When you and I first come face to face with that Person in heaven we will realise, as we have never done before, all the worth of the sacrifice at Calvary, the sacrifice of the Lamb for our sins. What a commencement of all eternity that will be! No wonder the following verses bring to our attention the full sense of praise being offered. This is continued through the following verses. So in verse 12, we read that the angels join in with all present "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing". All those things which were denied Him in this world are accorded to Him in that day to come. What a crescendo of praise arises to the Lamb that was slain. His sacrificial work becomes the central theme of all heaven. We read on that "every creature" joins in that tremendous act of worship. Every voice will be in tune; the song will be loud and clear to the Lamb that was slain.

Let us briefly go on to Revelation 19:7. To the listener, it seemed as if a great multitude was speaking and saying, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready". Who is this bride, the Lamb's wife? She is made up of all those who, since the sacrifice of the Lamb on the Cross, have trusted Him as their Saviour. He delights to bring each one who has personally come into the blessing of salvation, into the closest communion of "wife". What does this imply? His sacrifice brings us to this glorious point of complete unity with Him. What closeness, what harmony, what adoration of the Lamb then!

Finally, in the last chapter of the Bible, eternity is described. We learn there that "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it", verse 3. The Lamb, the Son of God and His sacrificial work, will be paramount in eternity to come.

Does this subject fill and thrill your heart now as you look forward to that coming time? We can offer no greater praise than to worship the Lamb that was slain. Let us look up, for the moment is coming when the Lord Himself will come and we shall be with Him for evermore. Let us praise Him continually for all the worth of His sacrificial work as the little Lamb.

Prayer.

Lord Jesus, Lamb of God, this morning we worship Thee for all that has been done for us. Nothing is left. The work is complete and we shall one day give Thee eternal praise. We worship Thee again now. Amen.

---

**Please Note:**

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1. Large Print copies of this document are also available upon request.