

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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Lessons from the Life of Jesus

From Lafayette Heights Devotional

Jesus Declared to be the Lamb of God

John 1:35-42

What we read in v. 36 is the declaration of an inspired, unbiased prophet. He refers to Jesus as "The Lamb of God." Earlier John made the same declaration and added "who takes away the sins of the world." Remember that this statement was made to a Jewish audience that would have received it in the context of their background and religion.

To help understand the effect that the sacrifice of the lamb might have upon a devout Jew and his attitude toward sin, let's go through the steps of the sin offering in detail using Leviticus 4:32-35 as a guide.

After the selection and approval of the lamb, you would carry the animal by yourself to the altar. Imagine bringing a quivering little lamb in your arms to the altar, knowing what violence must come to it. All the while you are reminded that this is necessary because of your sins. Then after laying the animal on the altar, you lay your hands on the innocent, quivering lamb. This indicates the transmission and delegation and implied representation; so that it really points to the substitution of the sacrifice for you. While doing so the following prayer was repeated, "I entreat O Jehovah, I have sinned, I have done perversely, I have rebelled, I have committed sin; but I return in repentance, and let this be for my atonement." (Edersheim, The Temple, page 114)

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Unlike some animals, when a lamb realizes that death is near they do not cry out. Instead, large ears well up in their eyes and they cry silently. So there you are, looking into the tearful eyes of the lamb that is dying for you as you thrust your hands forcibly upon it. You might be tempted to stop, but remember that this is necessary because of your sins.

Then the lamb is killed. Leviticus 4:33 implies that you should kill the lamb yourself. However, by the first century it was customary for the priest to take the knife and cut the throat of the sacrificial lamb. Edersheim gives the following description of this process: "One priest drew forward the windpipe and gullet of the sacrifice, and quickly thrust upwards the knife, while another caught the blood in a golden bowl." (Temple, p. 162) As you see the knife thrust in and up and the lamb jerk as it dies, you are forced to remember that this is necessary because of my sin. Leviticus 4:34 states, "The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour its remaining blood at the base of the altar. The base of the altar must have been a rancid, fly-covered blood drain. As you grimace from the smell you are again forced to remember, this is necessary because of my sin.

Jesus is that innocent, pure Lamb that is destined to go to His death without protest because of my sin. If the entire process of killing a sacrificial lamb does not put a lump in your throat, imagine picking up the knife and thrusting it up and into the windpipe of God's only Son.

My dear friend, sin is serious, ugly, and repulsive.

"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." With these 13 words, John captures the heart and soul of the gospel. This declaration should be at the center of our evangelism and continuing message.

I cannot think of Jesus as the Lamb of God without thinking of the words written by Isaac Watts; "Alas and did my Savior bleed and did my Sovereign die? Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?"

Work To Be Done

By Steve Niemeier

We are embarking on an exciting time doing the Lord's work here at Greenwood. Yes, we continue to support men preaching the gospel here in the states and in Moldova. Yes, we continue to work hard to improve our Bible Classes. Yes, we continue to work to notify the community that we are here doing the work of the Lord. Yes, we continue to worship and work together in the peace and harmony of the Lord. Yet, it is an exciting time as we embark on new territory.

Our first training class for the new curriculum is well under way and the teachers are working hard to have lessons prepared that will challenge the student and assist the student in learning. This is for the youngest student as well as the oldest adult student.

We are already planning our next gospel meeting with Frank Himmel in March of 2010. Plans are being made for our Vacation Bible School which we are looking to conduct in June of 2010. We are concluding our year of getting back to the basics in our Bible Classes and our two full week gospel meetings of 2009 along with the special weekend meeting all strengthened us in the basics.

Now, we are about to embark on the Sierra Leone trip. While I may be the one making the trip I take with me the prayers and the spirit of the congregation here as I represent us in doing the work there. While I am away we will have capable men from the congregation here preaching for us. We are blessed to have these talented men. We are blessed to have our elders. We are blessed to have our deacons. We are blessed to have our members. We are blessed to have the funds to do the work we are doing. **WE ARE BLESSED TO BE A CONGREGATION OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE STRIVING TO DO HIS WORK, HIS WAY!** There is more work to do – let us be about doing it!