



*“Mary had a little lamb its fleece was white as snow and everywhere that Mary went the lamb was sure to go.”*

I find that there are three sides to Jesus. Not him alone, but in how we view him. One side wants to show his power and God-like miracles. Another says He is the teacher and prophet. Most Muslims want Jesus to be human where in Christian circles they need him to be God and powerful. Then we have this third side. They wish Jesus to be meek, gentle, companionate, and non-violent. He is the perfect picture of the Lamb of God. Have you ever seen the picture of Jesus coming over the green pasture hills holding a very white lamb? This is the gentle Jesus that could not and would not hurt a fly. Which Jesus (the lamb) is he? The answer is all of the above.

In the Old Testament of the Bible there are two distinct references to the lamb. This first is found in Exodus 12 where God told the Israelites to kill a lamb and paint the blood over the door frames. That night God came for the first born of Egypt but spared any house with blood on it. It's called the Passover. The lamb was sacrificed to spare their lives. The second is found in Leviticus 4 and 5. An animal sacrifice is needed for sin offerings to God. At one stage it's a female lamb that is asked for. In Leviticus 5 is an offering of two doves which is what Mary offered at the temple for the birth of Jesus unto God in Luke 2. The New Testament paints Jesus as both the savior lamb and the sacrificed one.

Here are a few things I find interesting about this narrative. The first is the sacrifice. In Genesis 4 the brothers Cain and Abel brought sacrifices to the Lord. Ables sacrifice were the fat portions of an animal. How did he know what to cut out and sacrifice? The law of sacrifice was

not given for (most-likely) thousands of years. I can assume God gave them instructions but we just don't know. I bring this up only to show that sacrifice of an animal has always been near to God. Secondly, we see God providing an animal sacrifice instead of his first-born son Isaac in Genesis 22. Calling Jesus, the Lamb of God meant something to the Jewish readers.

How would the Jewish readers interpret Jesus being called the lamb of God? Was John the Baptist saying that Jesus was the sacrifice for their sin? How would he know that about Jesus as a sacrifice? I just feel that John did not know Jesus that well. Was the Holy Spirit working through John prophetically? Secondly, were the readers seeing Jesus as a sacrifice so that God would not judge them like in the Passover? It seems a stretch because Jesus was not accused or crucified yet. On top of that was this rumor that Jesus was the long-awaited savior of the Jews. The Messiah or Christ of God. That person was not a sacrifice but a commander and victor in their eyes.

1 Corinthians 5:7 *“Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed.”* Paul is referencing the Passover lamb and the sacrificed lamb for (the old yeast) our sin nature. To Jews the blood of the lamb purifies and saves them from the wrath of God.

Revelation 5:8 *“When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”* Clearly, John is pointing out that Jesus is the Lamb of God before these men as their God.

Revelation 7:17 *“for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”*

As I said last week, a shepherd can also be described as the first sheep or lead sheep (commander, Messiah, Christ). The writer was making a direct point about Jesus being in control of the flock.

So, who is Jesus? The lamb in the Bible is many things. To some it is symbolic of sacrifice, sins, salvation, and kindness. I tend to believe that each writer saw a little of each in Jesus. He is the sacrifice of the world. The last sacrifice God required for sin. Jesus blood is symbolic of the door frame. John 14:6 says " *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* On the flip side Jesus can be a gentle lamb. Matthew 11:29 "*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*" I suspect in the end Jesus is the gentle, fierce, and sacrificed lamb of God. The Bible writers interpreted that from their Old Testament writings and tradition. They saw Jesus (the lamb) pretty clear.