

The Mystery Hidden. Part five.

It is time now to ‘pull back’ from the Jewish nation and to take a wider look at what God is doing. If Israel was to be ‘a Royal Priesthood’, an Holy Nation, then logically, there had to be somebody else to minister to and that had to be the rest of the Nations. Remember our scripture that we finished with last time? ‘God so loved the WORLD’. For many years, I assumed that the word ‘so’ in that phrase, spoke of the intensity of God’s love, i.e, He loved us so much that He gave, etc; but it seems that was wrong for the word expresses the idea of ‘this is how’ God loved the World. It does nothing to decrease the intensity of that love, but its purpose is to focus upon exactly what His great love for the world, did. **He gave His only begotten Son!!!** That’s what I want to focus upon in this fifth session.

There is a statement that we only find stated twice in the Gospels, and it refers to Jesus, Who is the **Son of the Most High God**, and on both occasions that statement is made by the **Prophet of the Most High God**, John the Baptist. We find both statements recorded in John’s Gospel, the first in 1v29, and I quote: ‘**See, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the WORLD.**’ And again in v36, the next day, ‘**See, the Lamb of God.**’ What’s my point? It’s this. That statement being made by the Prophet of the Most High God – you remember what we saw about that aspect of God – about the Son of the Most High God, really needs to be taken note of. The fact that John made the statement twice establishes it – 2 Cor: 13v1 – and ‘establish’ means basically that the matter now ‘stands’. The Lamb of God was at that time present, on the earth and in the flesh. Try and enter into the import of that. That sin nature that had been the curse of mankind from the time of Eden, was about to be dealt with. The standard of Life that Adam had forfeited because of his transgression, was about to be REDEEMED. That Lamb of God was going to pay Adam’s debt in FULL. There would be nothing standing in the way between God and man. The separation would be over, the gulf would be bridged, man could commune with his God once more. Put another way, with the sin problem dealt with, man could begin to develop his full potential. So the last of the Prophets had pointed to the One Who was the second member of the Godhead, referring to Him as ‘the Lamb of God, and also told the Jews exactly what He would achieve. John made four main points about Jesus, i.e, the One Who would come after John, would be far greater than he, John, was; that the Holy Spirit would remain upon Him; that He was the Son of God, and that He was the Lamb of God.

We must not forget that the life that Adam lost had been sinless. That meant that from that point forward, no man had that standard of blood any more, therefore, no creature upon the earth was able to ‘pay’ back to God a sinless life. Therefore, true Redemption was not possible. We’ll spend some time seeking to find out just what the Jews understood by this term ‘the Lamb of God’. One fact we must understand clearly and that is that ‘**the life of all flesh is in the blood**’ – **Lev17v14**. Once we grasp that fact, we are beginning to come to grips with Calvary. Once an animal or person has lost their blood, they are dead.

The word ‘Lamb’ occurs in the N.T on 31 occasions. Numerically it associates it with the word Cherub, which has a numeric value of 31, which is, of course, a prime number. It is also of interest to note that 27, or 3 x 3, of those 31 times, occur in the book of Revelation.

In order to get some idea of what the term, ‘the Lamb of God’ meant to a Jew, we need to look into the subject of the ‘firstborn’.

A 'firstborn' human was exactly what it says, i.e, the first child born to you, whether that child is male or female, is your firstborn. Two words are taken from the root word, one of which is feminine and the other masculine, respectively referring to daughters and sons. We find the word used for 'sons' occurring about 101 times, that being about fifteen occasions more than the word for daughters is used. In the case of the firstborn sons, the inheritance would pass to them, upon your death, even if they were not a son of your favourite wife. You will remember that Leah produced Reubin quite a few years before Rachel brought Joseph into the world. Despite Jacob's love for Rachel, and his manifest love for Joseph, Gen: 35v23 clearly states that Reubin was Jacob's firstborn.

We come now to another development of this, in which we find a divine principle that is not to be ignored. There is a Hebrew word that is translated in two different ways, namely as MATRIX or WOMB. The first time we find it used is in Gen: 29v31, where God opens Leah's **womb**, whilst Rachel, Jacob's beloved, remains barren. The next time we find the word used is in Gen: 30v22. Leah, by this time, has six sons and one daughter. It's at this point that God opens Rachel's womb. I'd like to take you now to the fourth mention of this word, which you will find in Ex: 13v2. Here we see that the Lord claims **all the firstborn** of the Israelite nation, both of the people and of the beasts. They are all to belong to Him. The children were to be taught that this was done because of what the Lord did to the Egyptians when He delivered the Israelites out of their bondage. It will save time, and you will understand it more clearly, if you read the account of it in Ex 13, particularly vv's 8 – 15. (It is needful to become familiar with all these things, for they all typify what is to happen when the Lamb of God is slain.) Remember here that the bondage in the land of Egypt, typifies the slavery that we serve under before we enter into **our redemption**, Pharaoh being typical of the Devil in our present lives. God = Liberty, the Devil = bondage that gets tougher. Ask any drug addict.

As we see again from Ex34 v 18-20, this all ties in with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which, in turn, is linked with the deliverance of the Nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. It is good to remember the scripture that is found in 1 Cor 10v 6 & 11, and what leads up to these two verses, for it shows how much we have to learn from the experiences of these people.

Another thought that we do well to consider is that from the information that we are able to glean from the Word, it would seem that the head of the family was also the family priest. (We may well look at this at a later date.) This position of priest would be taken over by the 'firstborn' upon the death of the father, and it too may well be a subject worthy of study, as we develop the picture.

It's time now to return to our main theme, regarding 'the Lamb of God'. Ex 12v1 and onwards, gives us an insight into one particular animal, namely a firstborn LAMB. You'll find it defined in v5. It has to be a male, of the first year – not the first year of its life, but of its mother giving birth, i.e. the ewe's firstborn. It would therefore belong to God, but would have been kept by the shepherd amongst the rest of the sheep. Bearing in mind what we read in 1 Cor 10 v1-11, we can begin to see that the life of the Israeli People becomes a series of lessons for us in our endeavours to live to God. An example of this is seen in the account found in Gen 22v7-10, where Abraham takes his 'only son Isaac, whom thou lovest', and heads for the very place where the Lord will be sacrificed many years later. The picture is so graphic, even to the son carrying the wood/cross upon which this obedient father, Abraham, would sacrifice him. I think that we often miss an important point in this picture and that is, the presence of, and the part played by, the father figure, and Who it was that he represented in this high drama. However, God has more to show us in this. First, it wasn't that God wanted

Isaac to be killed, He was finding out if Abraham would obey Him even to those lengths. Yet, it does look as though God had given Abraham some foreknowledge in this matter for when Isaac says to him, 'We've got the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering', Abraham says 'God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.' Once we see this, we realise that when the time of Calvary arrived, there would be no literal lamb being offered. The type, which is what the Lambs were, could not truly redeem mankind, for they didn't have the right quality of Blood to do that. It would take the blood of a Son of God, Who had never sinned, to replace the LIFE that was in Adam before he sinned. Paul refers to 'the first man Adam,' in 1 Cor 15v45, as being 'made a living soul', and then continues 'the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.' I want to also quote the next four verses, for they are so important – read vv's 46-9. Never forget, the LIFE is in the Blood. Redemption comes on a number of levels, as we see when an Israelite had been forced to sell his inheritance for whatever reason. The price he would receive for the property was based upon the time left before the next Jubilee arrived, the point being its relative value, in this particular case how many more years were left before the Jubilee. It was the right of the nearest kinsman to redeem him, i.e. buy the property back and thus set his relative free. There is more, but not necessary now, other than to state that you get some idea of who **you** are, from the standing of the One Who redeemed you!!! Now there's a mind-blower for you.

As we noted earlier, when Adam fell into sin, he found himself naked. He had lost his spiritual life and was now vulnerable. Consequently, when later he begat children they were all 'of the earth, earthy' whereas he himself had been brought into being by the very breath of God. Therefore, neither he, nor any of his children could qualify to redeem humanity, because no one had the life to replace what Adam had lost. As Adam had lost that breath-of-God life, none of his children could inherit it. This, put simply, is why it had to be another Son of God, Who would not yield to the temptations of Satan, and Who would then, in obedience to the Father, lay down His Life in order to open up a way back to God. Hence in one of His many statements, the Lord Jesus referred to Himself as the DOOR. The detail in the account of Abraham and Isaac is so exact that, as Isaac carried the wood that he would be put to death on, so also, Jesus even carried the wood/cross to Calvary. We can take two more facts from this before we move on. The first is that it had to be a 'like for like', for the Lord requires a 'just' measure, as you will quickly see if you study the subject, and therefore, the Redeeming blood shed at Calvary, had to be of the same 'measure', i.e. have the same quality of life in it, as Adam had before he sinned. Yet, at the same time, the life that was being offered, had to be subject to the same temptations that Adam had fallen to, but it must also be on the same level as Adam had been, otherwise the 'justice' of God would not be satisfied. This accounts for why the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary. In that way, Jesus was human via Mary and would have fallen mans feelings, yet at the same time, the 'spark' of life would have come from the Spirit of God. That would, effectively, bring in another Adam, thereby satisfying the just nature of God. This being so, we find that Satan had no complaints that could legally hold up in the courts of heaven. In fact, we find that Satan went in with all guns blazing, for we read a very important statement in Heb 4v15, which says; 'For we have not an High Priest which **cannot** be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; – *He felt it all just as we do* – but was in all points tempted **like as we are**, YET WITHOUT SIN.' It was a JUST conflict, and **Satan lost**. Thank you Lord.

In the Law, the Lambs played an important part in keeping the nation on an even keel. There isn't any need for us to go into all the detail at this stage, but every Israelite would be aware of what 'the Lamb of God' meant. They were crucial in the putting away of sin. The sinner would take the lamb to the priest, lay his hands

upon it's head, so as to identify with it, confess his sins which were then identified with the lamb and its throat was then cut, which shed its blood and therefore its life. Some authorities state that the sinner actually cut the lamb's throat. The lamb's blood atoned for his sin and he walked away free. This they would all know, but whether they picked up the significance of the Lord taking away the sin of the whole world is another story. If they had, they probably wouldn't have been so quick to disown Him.

There is, however, one more point that I'd like to highlight before we leave the subject, and it is this. These laws were given to Israel and applied primarily to that nation. Therefore, if you wanted to sacrifice as per the Jewish law, it had to be an Israeli lamb that was to be used. They had to come from God's People. It was they who were required to 'hand over' these firstborn lambs to God, for His use. So, they must come from the Israel nation. When a firstborn lamb was presented for sacrifice, it was the duty of the priest to examine it to see that it was properly formed and free from all sickness and disease. If it had anything that caused it to fall short of this high standard, it was rejected. The priest therefore carried a heavy responsibility in all of this. If he said that it was not acceptable, then that was the end of the matter. If on the other hand, the priest found no fault, the animal became someone's ATONEMENT for their own personal sin to be forgiven before God. But only when you identified with the lamb.

Therefore, when the Lamb of God came up for His 'trial', there was a wider issue at stake, namely the sin of the whole of mankind. We now see the hand of God has been at work for years, for the priests then had no right to find a man guilty of a capital crime. The Romans had retained that right for themselves. So what will the Priest do? There is only thing that they can do, and that is to bring Him before the Gentile Ruler to be judged. This they do, and an interesting thing occurs, for Pilate wants to set Him free. Having examined Jesus, as a priest would a lamb, making sure that the lamb was perfect in every aspect, he pronounced Jesus to fit to become the Lamb of God, by saying, "I FIND NO FAULT IN HIM. TAKE YE HIM, AND CRUCIFY HIM: FOR I FIND NO FAULT IN HIM. So, the leading man of that nation, in his position of representing the Top man in the Gentile World, pronounced the remarkable fact that the World's Saviour was FAULTLESS and therefore fit to take the sin of the whole human race, from Adam onwards, UPON HIMSELF, and released Him for Calvary. What we do well to remember is that during that 'trial', the High Priest and Co: had renounced Jesus and confessed that they had no king but Caesar. As Caesar ruled the effective world of those days, he spoke for that world, in this case, through his representative Pilate. Thus it was that the mouthpiece of the head of the then world, pronounced Jesus to be faultless. If we can see the hand of God in this remarkable situation, it is no harder to see that Pilate, in despatching Jesus to Calvary, was working right along with the Law of God, rather than that of Rome, for under Roman law, the accused was set free if no fault was found in him, whereas under God's law, when the Lamb was found to be 'perfect' it was then killed to atone for the sin of the one who had presented it to the priests. When you see this, it becomes obvious that neither Pilate nor the Jews obeyed their own laws, yet, despite that, God's will was perfectly fulfilled. The ways of our God are, indeed, past our understanding.

End of session 5. 23/12/09.