**“Lamb of God”**

Psalm 40:1-11

Isaiah 49”1-7

1 Corinthians 1”1-9

John 1:29-42a

 Epiphany 2

“The next day [John] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold, the **Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**’”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**1**

“John **bore witness**” the text says. “For **this purpose** I came baptizing with water, that **He (the Lamb of God) might be revealed to Israel**. He ranks before me, because **He was before me**.” “**I saw** the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on Him.” “He who sent me to baptize with water had said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, **this is He** who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And **I have seen** and have **borne witness** that **this is the Son of God**.” So the Son of God **is revealed to Israel**, and **John bore witness** that **He [Jesus] is the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”**

“Sin” (in this case) is not described as “sins” (plural), but singularly as “sin”. Plural, it’s the **acts** **maybe controllable / maybe mistakes**. Singular though (as “sin”), it’s a **condition**, a state of existence, a way that begs to be changed since it’s not a positive thing (but a highly **negative one**), derogatory that condition is, a lacking or illness or corruption … a **nature** **damnable and only damnable**. Lambs were (before **Him**) always the sacrifice for the plurality of “**sins**” (those things of incident) but The Lamb of God had come to be sacrificed to **“take away” (or satisfy, so remove for saved people) all the penalty of “sin” (in the molecules of that** … **its sickness down to the cellular level of it all)**. **WHO** John was given to “**reveal to Israel**” was **WHO every other lamb dying in His name always pointed to**.

**2**

From the beginning (after the fall of Adam and Eve), the stench of the death of lambs for sins was what **had to be in the nostrils** of any wanting to **deal with that**. Bad actions that opened the minds of people to the fact of a **condition of it** was enough to make some want for salvation and a return to something that each knew had to have been much-better intended. Many tried to ignore the **fact of it** until some last moments or avoid thinking about it at all, but no one could ultimately explain-away why physical effects demonstrated **that all was not OK with what we called life**. Crucifixion day (for the Lamb of God, Jesus) was butchering day for the Passover’s sacrificial lambs from the pastures of Bethlehem. The sounds and smells of **sacrificial death** was Jerusalem’s every year reality as blood troughs flowed heavy from the Temple’s altar. Israel’s believers knew that the bloodshed of **lambs** for sins delayed their own, and the faithful looked for a **Final Lamb** (a **Savior**) so that, maybe, the bloody kills might end. John “**revealed [Jesus] to Israel**”: “Behold” (pointing to Jesus) “the Lamb of God, who **takes away** the **SIN** of the world (not just “sins” plural, but the entire problem of “**sin**” and “**sinfulness**”)!”

John (**the apostle**) later saw the **glorified** Lamb of God **obviously, yet, having been slain** enthroned in Heaven, seen sixty years after He was butchered on a cross. The revelation of Him who is God’s Son **satisfied** the sacrificial system as He’s **still bearing the resemblance of that animal**: “between the throne [of the Father in Heaven] and the four living creature and among the elders **I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain**.” The Lamb of God had been **victorious ultimately** …

**3**

… but there’s still a **resemblance of God’s people (Israel) to the blood sacrifice**: “**lamb**” has always been a literal **pet (but descriptive) name** for God’s blessed creation in people, and especially for His own following-believers, “like sheep and **lambs** without a Shepherd”, but the Lord Himself “will tend His flock like a Shepherd, gather the **lambs** in His arms, carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are young” … “the Lord is my Shepherd, I’ll want of nothing because of Him.”

And, as we discussed last weekend (**how that happens to the fullest**), lamb’s behind the Lamb of God must be **sacrificed not totally unlike He was**. **Death through to life** is baptism, and that makes of baptized believers **lambs sacrificed to sin / made alive to Christ**. In other words, we sacrificially died “baptized into Jesus, buried with Him by baptism so that, just as He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” remember. We (the **way** Paul in Romans 6 tells us) **resemble** the One who we follow, “united with Him in a sacrificial death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His”, and “death no longer has dominion over Him”. I had told you that I’m going to keep repeating last weekend’s sermon on Romans 6 until you all can, yourselves, deliver it to others beyond here. **John’s showing us how** by his revealing of Jesus to Israel, but so did a **man named** **Andrew** by himself, simply, **telling it to his brother Simon (and bringing him)**. John **saw and told people**. Andrew **did the same** …

**4**

… and what’s **to also tell people** is that God’s blessed creation in people have always **had** the title “lambs of God” as a **pet (but descriptive) name**. We **resemble** (in other words) “the Lamb of God” by the **specialness of our birth and life**, because “the Lord called me from the womb” Christ spoke through Isaiah, but we can speak that of us; “from the body of my mother He named My name”. That specialness we can speak of ourselves because of Jesus. As a matter of fact, the Father has called every baby from the womb, naming each from while they’re in the body of their mother.

So, **we** **remember**, this week, the epiphany of God’s Son as **the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world**”, and **we** **remember it** because we heard about it through people who’ve bothered to see it and bare witness to it; then it got passed on to us in proclamation, but also brother to brother. **We** **remember, also**, the epiphany of all created people as **lambs of God as well**, some fully through God’s words of promise attached to water where we receive that Good News as Gospel for us, but also all others by creation and the image of God in **each one**, names given them by God in wombs of mothers, each and all particularly formed and **resembling Jesus in that very fact**.

We are in the midst of, both, the Epiphany season and a set-aside Sanctity of Life weekend. How **appropriate it is** to be presented **the epiphany (or revelation) of** **most-precious lambs** (Jesus **first and greatest** as “the Lamb of God” purposed for the rest, and **us all**, lambs baptized and believing and lambs created especially and deliberately, formed (every one of us) to **resemble** the Saving One in Jesus.

Thanks be to God, the Father, for all of it, especially the **forgiveness of sin** bought by the sacrifice of Jesus. In +His’ name. Amen.