

The Gospel of John - 1.g

29On the morrow John sees Jesus coming to him, and said, “Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.

Chrysostom: “For it is obvious that one pure enough to wash away the sins of others does not come to confess his sins but to give an opportunity to that marvelous herald (John) to impress what he had said more definitely on those who heard his former words.”

Origen: “It is the lamb however, we find offered in the perpetual sacrifices...According to the Father’s love for humanity, he also submitted to slaughter on behalf of the world...He who led this lamb to the sacrifice was God in man, the great High Priest, who reveals this through the saying, ‘No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.’”

Theodore of Mopsuestia: “Instead, he calls him ‘lamb’ and with this name he signifies his passion. In fact, he was called lamb and sheep to signify his death when he washed away sin. Since the sin reigned in our mortality, and death was gaining strength in us because of sin, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, came and remitted all these things to us. And after destroying death through His death, he also destroyed the sin rooted in our nature because of mortality. Through His promise He made us immortal...”

Fr. John Behr: On Jesus as the Lamb of God

“Jesus is being presented by John as the Paschal lamb. But despite the Baptist’s identification of Jesus as ‘the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world’ the slaying of the paschal lamb was not a sacrifice for the purpose of atoning for sin or a sacrifice of expiation...The blood of lambs marking the doors of the houses is the sign for the Lord ‘to pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to enter your house and slay you. He (the evangelist) does not speak of Christ laying down His life on account of sin, but rather ‘for the life of the world (6:51)’, so that we are given the heavenly bread, His flesh to eat...and most particularly this act of laying down His life is an act of love, for ‘Greater loves has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (15:13),’ and it is for this act that he is loved by the Father...It is exactly this same way that God has shown His love ‘For God loved the world in this way that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (3:16). (John Behr, John the Theologian and his Paschal Gospel, pg. 192).”

“The life-giving death of Christ on the Cross...is not understood by John as a response to sin but rather as principally deriving from the love of God Himself is (1 John 4:8) and has for the world (3:14-16) (Behr, pg. 192).”

“It is precisely this love, shown in this way, that has liberated human beings from the condition of being slaves to that of being friends (15:15), members of the household of God, enthroned in the Temple of sons alongside the Son, and the commandment that Jesus gives as his own is simply ‘that you love one another as I have loved you’ (15:12) (Behr, pg. 192).”

³⁰“This is He concerning Whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man Who has come to be before me, for He was before me.’ ³¹“And I knew Him not; but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore I came baptizing in the water.”

Christ is Betrothed to the Church at his baptism – married on the Cross.

- Ephrem the Syrian: “The meeting of ones’ bride took place at wells, Eliazar gave Rebecca at a well of water Gen 24:1-67); Jacob did the same for Rachel (Gen 29:1-20) and Moses met Zipporah at a well (Ex 2:16-21). All of these were types (foreshadowing) of our Lord, who betrothed His church through John’s baptism.”

Did John not know Jesus before this?

- It is not uncommon of cousins never to have meet
- John grew up in the wilderness not a town but it protects from people saying John proclaimed him as Messiah because of his being related to him. (Theodore of Mopsuestia)
- ‘I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me? (Matt 3:14), Actually proves that he knew him very well. Yet he did not know him before, or at least for that long...Jesus was unknown to all...(Chrysostom)
- During the baptism of Christ, through a revelation, he became known to John (Bp. Gerasimos of Abydos, The Gospel of John)

Jesus has no need for baptism but given to prepare all others a way to faith in Christ (Chrysostom)

³²And John bore witness, saying, “I have beheld the Spirit descending out of heaven as a dove, and He abode upon Him. ³³“And I knew Him not, but the *One* Who sent me to baptize in water, that One said to me, ‘Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him, this is the *One* Who baptizes in *the* Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴“And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

Augustine: “For here He (Christ) condescends to prefigure his body, that is, his church, in which preeminently the baptized received the Holy Spirit...For it would be most absurd to believe that he received the Holy Spirit when he was nearly thirty years old.”

“The descent of the Holy Spirit confirms that Jesus of Nazareth is the expected Messiah, that He is the one who baptizes with the Spirit because He is the permanent bearer of the Holy Spirit. He through the Cross, the Resurrection and Pentecost will later send the Spirit to the Church, where he will activate the rebirth of the faithful into the new life in Christ. (Bp. Gerasimos of Abydos, The Gospel of John)

¹⁷“And it shall be in the last days,’ saith God, ‘I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸“and even upon My bondmen and upon My bondwomen in those days I will pour out of My Spirit,’ and they shall prophesy. [Acts 2:17,18]

- The descent of the Holy Spirit took place only for the purpose of making Christ known (Chrysostom)
- Only John sees the Spirit descending upon Christ (Theodore of Mopsuestia)