

Jesus, The Lamb of God

JCV Integrated Text: **John 1:19-34**

John the Baptist's challenge to the priests and Levites, John 1:19-28

And this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?" And he didn't refuse to answer properly but affirmed "I am not the Messiah"

So then they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not."

"Are you the prophet?" and he answered, "No."

So they said to him, "Who are you, that we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' just as Isaiah the prophet said."

Now *those* sent were from the Pharisees.

So they asked him, "Why then do you baptise, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" Answering them John said, "I baptise with water, but among you stands *one* whom you don't know, the *one* who comes after me, whose sandals straps I am not worthy to untie."

These things happened at Bethabara (the Ferry-House) across the Jordan where John was baptising.

John identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God, John 1:29-34

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. That is *the* one of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who has precedence over me, because he was before me.' And I didn't recognise him, even though I came baptising in water in order to reveal Him to Israel."

So John bore witness, saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending like a dove out of heaven, and it remained on him. I didn't recognise him, but the one who sent me to baptise in water, He said to me, 'Whoever you see the Spirit descending on, and remaining on, He is the one who baptises with the Holy Spirit.'

So I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

In this section we reach the climax of John the Baptist's ministry when he testifies to Jesus as 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' and then as 'the Son of God'.

Introduction

This text is drawn exclusively from the **Gospel of John. (John 1:19-34)**

John's Gospel is presented as a supplement to the synoptic Gospels (see the testimony of the Early Church in LTL2: Living the Ministry Years 0.02 – Ancient testimony: How the Gospels got written) so it is not surprising that we find periods where there are large chunks of information from **John** to fill in the gaps in the Synoptic Gospels.

Extra Early Events from John!	
In all Gospels	1. With John the Baptist
Just in John	2. Gathering disciples
	3. Wedding in Cana
	4. Visiting Capernaum
	5. Clearing the Temple, Passover
Just in John	6. Meeting Nicodemus
	7. Baptizing in Judea
	8. Ministry in Samaria
In all Gospels	9. Jesus comes into Galilee

John's Gospel has had a big introduction revealing Jesus as the Word who was with God from the beginning and through whom everything was created and "No man has seen God at any time" (v18). It is worth looking at some of these earlier verses to provide some context as **John** transitions to the detail of the history.

"So the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory as of the **only begotten from the Father**, full of grace and truth

And **John bore witness** of Him and cried out, saying this was He of whom I said 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; Grace and Truth were realised through Jesus Christ.

No man has seen God at any time; the **only begotten God** who is in the bosom of the Father, **He** has explained Him." **John 1: 14-18**

And at the end of the passage which we are looking at **John** says:-

"I **have** seen and have **borne witness** that this is **the son of God**." **John 1: 34**

John the Baptist's challenge to the priests and Levites, John 1:19-28.

John is presenting the questions which we know from the Dead Sea scrolls were part of the dialogue of the Essene community. We know that this community were regularly in conversation about four Messianic figures.

- A Kingly Messiah - Son of David (ben David)
- Suffering Messiah from Joseph - ben Joseph / ben Ephraim
- A Priest-Messiah like Aaron - ben Aaron – anointed priest
- The prophet like Moses (Moses also prophesied a Prophet to come that was 'like him', **Deuteronomy 18:15**)



A single page document found in Cave 4 at Qumran, 4Q175 describing Essene thought on the Messiah

The priests ask John the Baptist to identify himself. He knows his calling: he is the forerunner whose mission was to baptise people to somehow reveal the Messiah to Israel. John confirms that he is neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor The Prophet and explains that he is the messenger crying in the wilderness and preparing the way for the Lord.

A Side note: Elijah (not addressed in the video).

Speaking about the coming messenger, **Malachi/My Messenger** says:

Remember the law of Moses my servant ... See I am going to send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and fearful day of the LORD. **Malachi 4:4-5**

and later Jesus says John was 'Elijah', **Matthew 17:11-12**, **Mark 9:11-12**.

Luke 1:13-17 helps to resolve this by recording Gabriel's explanation to Zechariah that his son 'will go on before him in the spirit and power of Elijah.' Although he wore the same clothes as Elijah (!) (**Mark 1:6**, **Matthew 3:4**) John was not Elijah but he did occupy the same spiritual office.

- Elijah operated on the fringe, but was able to criticise the non-Davidic King of the Northern tribes Ahab and his wife Jezebel. He was both feared and hated by them.
- John operated from the wilderness, but was able to criticise the non-Davidic King of Galilee and his wife Herodias. He was hated and feared by both Herod and Herodias.
- Elijah passed on his ministry to his disciple Elisha who did and said more than twice as much as Elijah. **Note: Elisha means 'God-Jesus'!**

The conversation between John the Baptist and the priests feels like a regular flow of challenge by these priests who are coming out from Jerusalem. We are not sure exactly when this happens – it may have been before Jesus' Baptism or after as I have chosen to put it.

Into this context they ask John the Baptist why he is baptising given he says he is not any of these three Messianic figures. When John responds he speaks in the present tense, talking of Jesus as being amongst them thus suggesting that this is post-Baptism and post-Temptation.

"I baptise with water, but among you stands *one* whom you don't know, the *one* who comes after me, whose sandals straps I am not worthy to untie." **John 1:26,27**

John the Baptist has come to reveal the Messiah.

John identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God, John 1:29-34.

The next day John the Baptist says, 'Look the Lamb of God...'

John explains that God has revealed this to him. John's commission was to baptise with water and God's promise was that he would reveal 'The One' to him by the Spirit descending and remaining on Him at baptism. John witnessed this when he baptised Jesus.

This recognition of Jesus was different from the knowledge of Jesus he had from earlier in his life as a cousin. It was something very specific about Jesus which God had revealed to him supernaturally for the first time at Jesus' baptism.

Now John the Baptist can declare that Jesus is the Son of God (**John 1:34**).

Jesus the Lamb of God

In the old Covenant the sin offering was a baby goat or bull (**Leviticus 4:3,24,28-29**). So when John describes Jesus as 'The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' he is focussing on something particular as the lamb is not part of the everyday sin offering....

Context 1

In **Genesis 22:1-14**, Abraham complies straight away when God asks him to offer his son Isaac for a sacrifice. This is in keeping with the expectation of the people of the day that gods may well ask for the sacrifice of the first-born son. It is a shock to Abraham as it doesn't seem to correlate with his understanding of the character of his God but he complied - not sure exactly how it was going to work out.

In Isaac's question, "Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (**Genesis 22:7**) the word for lamb is not totally clear and can include a baby sheep though could be a

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kid goat. However, when God provides, He provides a ram – an adult sheep – so it is generally understood that this is the first reference to a lamb.

So, the first context of a lamb is that of God providing the sacrifice.

Context 2

At the first Passover (**Exodus 12:1-13**) the lamb is sacrificed and the people eat it together and put blood on the doorposts so that death passes by.

So the second context of a lamb is God releasing and bringing freedom.

Context 3

John the Baptist has just testified that he saw the Spirit come down and heard the declaration ‘This is my Son in whom I am well pleased’. This is a quote from **Isaiah 42:1** which is from the first of the four ‘Songs of the Suffering Servant’, **Isaiah 42:1-4; Isaiah 49:1-6; Isaiah 50:4-7; and Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Isaiah 53:7**. Something about the life of Jesus is being identified with the Suffering Servant and a passage that presents a substitutionary view of the atonement.



There is an overview of atonement models 19 minutes into “Exodus & the Torah—An Overview” see: <https://youtu.be/ar3L2UmGepg>

John the Baptist roots his understanding of Jesus as ‘The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world’ in the Suffering Servant passages in **Isaiah 53**.

“Who has believed our message? ... He is a man of sorrows acquainted with grief. And like one from whom men hid their face. He was despised and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He bore and our sorrows he carried; But we esteemed Him stricken. Smitten of God and afflicted.

He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities... He was oppressed and He was afflicted, but He did not open His mouth

Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, like a sheep that is silent before its shearers. So He did not open His mouth.” **Isaiah 53:1-7**

And it continues

“By oppression and judgment **He was taken away**; ... **cut off** out of the land of the living. **For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due...** Yet He Himself **bore the sin of many...**” **Isaiah 53:8-12**

In these last 4 verses we find the lamb bearing the sin of many but if we look closely at the Hebrew we find many interesting hidden references.....

Note: When searching for the letters, be aware that a Hebrew letter can have a special final form called ‘sofit’, used only at the end of a word. It can look ‘boxier’ than normal or protrude a bit longer below the main body of the letter.

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1. **Verses 8-10** contain the phrase “ישוע שטי” = “Yshua Shmi” = “My name is Jesus” every 20th letter in reverse order.

8	<p>מעצר וממשפט לקח ואת דורו מי ישוחח כי נגזר מארץ חיים מפשע עמי נגע למו</p>
	<p>By oppression and judgement He was taken away and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due.</p>
9	<p>ויתן את רשעים קברו ואת עשיר במתיו על לא חמס עשה ולא מרמה בפיו</p>
	<p>They made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.</p>
10	<p>ויהוה חפץ דכאו החלי--אם תשם אשם נפשו יראה זרע יארך ימים וחפץ יהוה בידו יצלח</p>
	<p>Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him. He has caused him to suffer. When you make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand.</p>

2. **Verses 8-11**, intersecting “Jesus” as in [1] above, we also find the word: “משיח” = “Messiah” spaced out every 42 letters in reverse order....

8	<p>מעצר וממשפט לקח ואת דורו מי ישוחח כי נגזר מארץ חיים מפשע עמי נגע למו</p>
	<p>By oppression and judgement He was taken away and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due.</p>
9	<p>ויתן את רשעים קברו ואת עשיר במתיו על לא חמס עשה ולא מרמה בפיו</p>
	<p>They made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.</p>
10	<p>ויהוה חפץ דכאו החלי--אם תשם אשם נפשו יראה זרע יארך ימים וחפץ יהוה בידו יצלח</p>
	<p>Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him. He has caused him to suffer. When you make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand.</p>
11	<p>מעמל נפשו יראה ישבע--בדעתו יצדיק צדיק עבדי לרבים ועונתם הוא יסבל</p>
	<p>After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light and be satisfied. My righteous servant will justify many by the knowledge of himself; and he will bear their iniquities.</p>

NB: **W** denotes the character ‘ש’ appearing in ‘Jesus’ and in ‘Messiah’

3. **Verses 8-11.** In these same verses we also find the word: **פסח** = "Passover" spaced out every 62 letters in reverse order...

8	<p>מעצר וממשפט לקח ואת דורו מי ישו^ח ח כי נגזר מארץ^ח חיים^ח מפשע עמי נגע למו</p>
	<p>By oppression and judgement He was taken away and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due.</p>
9	<p>ויתן את רשעים קברו ואת עשיר במתיו על לא חמס עשה ולא מרמה בפיו</p>
	<p>They made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.</p>
10	<p>ויהוה חפץ דכאו החלי--אם תשלים אשם נפשו יראה זרע יאר^י ד ימים וחפץ יהוה בידו יצלח</p>
	<p>Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him. He has caused him to suffer. When you make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand.</p>
11	<p>מעמל נפשו יראה ישבע--בדעתו יצדיק עבדי לרבים ועונתם הוא יסבל</p>
	<p>After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light and be satisfied. My righteous servant will justify many by the knowledge of himself; and he will bear their iniquities.</p>

So, we find three key concepts concentrated in these **verses 8-11**:

- **ישוע שטי** = "Yshua Shmi" = "My name is Jesus"
- **משיח** = "Messiah"
- **פסח** = "Passover"

But as we move on we find more...!

4. **Verses 8-12.** We also find mixed in with these verses the names of others who were at the Cross:

- i. **מרים** = "Mary" appears **three** times joined to the word for 'Prolong' => 'Resurrection'.

It is spread at 6, 23 and 44 letter spacings... one is joined to the word Messiah too!

Remember that there are **three Marys at the cross** :

- Mary the mother of Jesus
- Mary Magdalene
- 'the other Mary' (Mary married to Clopas, the disciple who Jesus met on the road to Emmaus).

8	מעצר וממשפט לקח ואת דורו מי ישוחח כי נגזר מארץ חיים מפשע עמי נגע למו
	By oppression and judgement He was taken away and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due.
9	ויתן את רשעים קברו ואת עשיר במתיו על לא חמס עשה ולא מרמה בפיו
	They made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.
10	ויהוה חפץ דכאו החל--אם תשים אשם נפשו יראה זרע יאריך ימים וחפץ יהוה בידו יצלח
	Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him. He has caused him to suffer. When you make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand.
11	עמל נפשו יראה ישבע--בדעתו צדיק צדיק עבדי לרבים ועונתם הוא יסבל
	After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light and be satisfied. My righteous servant will justify many by the knowledge of himself; and he will bear their iniquities.
12	לכן אחלק לו ברבים ואת עצומים יחלק שלל תחת אשר הערה למות נפשו ואת פשעים נמנה והוא חטא רבים נשא ולפשעים יפגיע
	Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

NB:  denotes the character 'מ' appearing in 'Mary' and in 'Messiah'

- ii. **יוחנן** = "John" appears every 28 letters starting with the same letter as the hidden 'Jesus'!

John was the only disciple at the cross!

8	<p>מעצר וממשפט לקח ואת דורו מי ישוחח כי נגזר מארץ חיים מפשע עמי נגע למו</p> <p>By oppression and judgement He was taken away and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due.</p>
9	<p>ויתן את רשעים קברו ואת עשיר במתיו על לא חמס עשה ולא מרמה בפיו</p> <p>They made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.</p>
10	<p>ויהוה חפץ דכא החלי--אם תשים אשם נפשו יראה זרע אהרן ימים וחפץ יהוה בידו יצלח</p> <p>Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him. He has caused him to suffer. When you make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand.</p>
11	<p>מעמל נפשו יראה ישבע--בדעתו צדיק צדיק עבדי לרבים ועונתם הוא יסבל</p> <p>After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light and be satisfied. My righteous servant will justify many by the knowledge of himself; and he will bear their iniquities.</p>
12	<p>לכן אחלק לו ברבי ואת עצומים יחלק שלל תחת אשר הערה למות נפשו ואת פשעים נמנה והוא חטא רבים נשא ולפשעים יפגיע</p> <p>Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.</p>

NB: **י** denotes the character **י** 'appearing in 'John' and 'Jesus'

So hidden in the Hebrew in **Isaiah 53:8-12** are these who were all at the cross :

- **ישוע שמי** = "Yshua Shmi" = "My name is Jesus"
- **משיח** = "Messiah"
- **פסח** = "Passover" / "Passover Lamb"
- **מרים** = "Mary" (3 times)
- **יוחנן** = "John"

If we look wider in **Isaiah 52-53** we can find the names of **Caiaphas, Annas, Peter and other disciples!**

This seems to show the ‘fingerprint’ of God on this passage!

Conclusion

John the Baptist has understood the nature of who Jesus is. Based on the reported words ‘in whom I am well pleased’ which speaks of the Suffering Servant of **Isaiah 53**, he is now identifying Jesus as the Messiah, ‘The Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world’.

“He was pierced through for our transgressions... “ **Isaiah 53:5**

“Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter ...” **Isaiah 53:7**

“For the transgression of my people for whom the stroke was due!” **Isaiah 53:8**

Jesus, the Lamb of God, is to some extent related to Abraham saying the God would provide the sacrifice in answer to Isaac’s question ‘Where is the lamb?’ in **Genesis 22:7** and to some extent related to Passover in the text of **Isaiah 53**.

However, very specifically, **John has prophesied something new**. It is not part of regular Messianic thinking. **Jesus has come to suffer and He is the One who takes away the sins of the world**. It will be painful and something is being satisfied in the heart of God.

It is interesting to note that this declaration by John the Baptist, who stands for all of the Old Testament prophets, is the first of 7 people making 8 declarations about the Divinity of Jesus through the **Gospel of John**.

1. **John 1:29-34 : John the Baptist**
2. **John 1:48 : Nathanael**
3. **John 6:69 : Peter**
4. **John 9:35-38 : Man born blind**
5. **John 11:27 : Martha**
6. **John 20:28 : Thomas**
- 7/8. **John 5:25 & 10:26 - Jesus Himself**

Remember that in the Old Testament 7 normally promises something 8th! The Hebrew word for 7 in its original form (without vowel markers) is the same as the word for Sabbath or promise / covenant oath. So things that come in 7s are almost always promising something bigger, something 8th. For example:

- 7 lights on Menorah promises the Light of the World
- 7 days of the week promises the Day of the Lord
- Etc....

John is at the climax of his ministry with his great prophecy, 'Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world'. Jesus is the Son of God who makes the Father known.

From this point we begin to see a shift as John says that 'He must increase and I must decrease.' The focus moves from John the Baptist to Jesus and we begin to see Jesus' ministry grow.

Interesting Postscript!

In **Acts 8:32-33**, Philip meets the eunuch who is reading **Isaiah 53:7,8** on his way home from Jerusalem. At the eunuch's request, Philip explains the passage to him and then the eunuch asked to be baptised.

On the face of it there is no obvious link between Isaiah 53 and Baptism... perhaps it could be that Philip's explanation of how this points to Jesus has started with this testimony of John the Baptist which would lead naturally on to a discussion about Baptism as a sign of Grace and Truth bringing Salvation through Judgement.

Note: For detailed notes on the biblical text translation and integration please download the associated text translation file.

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