

THE LAMB OF GOD MEDLEY

Commentary and Scripture with a spoken refrain. For three readers.

VERNA'S INTRODUCTION: The Lamb of God Medley consists of four parts of commentary and Scriptures about Jesus as the Lamb of God. The refrain is what John the Baptist said when he introduced his followers to Jesus: *Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*

His disciples would have known that this meant Jesus would be killed, that his blood would be shed, for that is what happened to lambs and other animals used as sin offerings. John could just as truthfully have said, "Look, the miracle worker! Wait 'til you see what he can do!", but he didn't. Instead he focused on the main reason Jesus came, and so will we. When John's disciples left him to follow Jesus, John was thrilled! He had done his job well; he had prepared the way for the Lord!

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REFRAIN (All) – Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Part 1

1 – The prophecies and pictures of Christ in the Old Testament are proof that God's whole plan of salvation, including the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus, was firmly in place before it was needed. Nothing took God by surprise, as we can see in the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

2 – When the first couple sinned by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, the whole chain of guilt, shame, confession, consequences, the sacrifice of innocent animals, grace, mercy, faith, and (above all!) LOVE was activated, and remains in place to this day, except for one thing: the killing of animals as a sacrifice for sin.

1 – That was a temporary measure set up by God until the right time came for God's innocent Son Jesus to die on the cross as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. No more blood needed to be shed. The blood of Jesus Christ takes away the sin of the world and of individuals. There is no other way!

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Part 2

2 – The first prophecy concerning Christ was given by God in the Garden of Eden when he was talking to the devil, who was using the form of a serpent. Listen to these words from Genesis 3:15: *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.* A future battle was being predicted here between the devil and a person who would be the offspring of a woman, without a man involved. Only Jesus fits that description!

3 – When the battle took place, it would be painful for the woman's offspring, as if a serpent kept biting the heel of his foot, but Jesus would give the devil FATAL blows; no one survives a crushed head. The blows were delivered mainly when Jesus allowed himself to be crucified as a sin offering, and when he rose from the dead, proving that God had accepted his sacrifice.

1 – The prophet Isaiah picked up on the theme of the woman's offspring when he wrote in Isaiah 7:14: *The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (which means God with us)*. This verse also lets us know that God would be the father of the child. Then, about 700 years later, this familiar interchange, recorded in Luke 1, took place:

3 – *In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."*

2 – *Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. "How can this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"*

1 – *The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."*

3 – In Matthew 1 this incident is recorded: *An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."* In our minds we could join Mary and Joseph in the stable, all of us looking at the baby in the manger, and truly say with awe:

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Part 3

1 – A clear picture of Christ appears in Genesis 3:21. Listen: *The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them*. Adam and Eve learned right from the start that sin separated them from God, and that if they hoped for reconciliation (which they did!), they had to do things God's way. So they watched as God killed some animals and, with clothing from the skins, allowed God to dress them. If you ever wonder whether sin matters, think of the animal carcasses in the Garden of Eden, a foretaste of what Jesus would suffer for us in his crucifixion.

2 – The prophets who came before Jesus give us a glimpse into God's eternal plan for the death and resurrection of Jesus. Listen to this graphic passage from Isaiah 53, which speaks of both: *Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord*

been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

1 – He was despised and rejected by others, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

2 – But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

1 – He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants?

2 – For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

1 – Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Oh, how much we owe to the One who was CRUCIFIED for us!

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Part 4

3 – Another detailed picture of the death of Jesus and the purpose for his sacrifice is found in the story of Passover, when the Israelites were freed from their slavery in Egypt and started their journey to the Promised Land. Elaborate details were given, especially about the animals that were to be killed. Listen to the story, which is told in Exodus 12:

1 – “The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.

2 – Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the door frames of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.

3 – Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the firehead, legs and inner parts. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.

1 – *This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover.*

2 – *On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn – both people and animals – and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord.*

3 – *The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt."*

1 – Later in the chapter we read an added detail: *Do not break any of the bones.* Why was this detail given? Perhaps so we may marvel when we read this in John 19:

2 – *Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.*

3 – *Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."*

1 – Jesus knew his time had come. He was in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. The big difference is that this time Jesus himself would be the sacrificial lamb. 1 Corinthians 5:7 & 8 says: *Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.*

2 – We celebrate Passover every time we remember and appreciate the fact that *God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him SHALL NOT PERISH but have ETERNAL LIFE.* The death angel passes over all who believe in Christ, without causing us any harm, and our lives are changed forever! PRAISE GOD!

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