John 1:29 29The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

 I think one of the most fascinating characters of the New Testament is none other than John the Baptist. Here is this man of the priestly caste, no doubt as a youth and young man trained in all the finery and legalities of being a priest of the Jewish nation. But because of the unique role God has planned for him in his life, John is not going to enter into the priestly ministry like his father and no doubt his fathers before him. John is going to end up in the wilderness, moved by the Spirit of God to go out there and begin a ministry that would expose and decry the very men and ministry he was brought up among. All of this because John was preparing the way for the Savior, the very reason he was born.

 If you were to ask me why John wore the clothes he did and ate the food he ate, my answer would be rather simple. “Because that is what he could afford!” I am going to guess that as a kind of “rogue” priest John is not getting his monthly allotment of pay that would have been his due. He lives in the wilderness because he disagreed with the work righteous, holier than thou attitude of his priestly family. John, because the Holy Spirit is with him from the womb, knew that the purpose of the law was not salvation but rather was to show us our sins so we could clearly see the need for the Savior. John knew that all the sacrifices made at the Temple were not done to show how good and pious Jewish people were, but were done to remind the people of what God’s Christ would come and accomplish for them. John understood that every single ceremonial law of the Jewish faith was something that pointed to, foreshadowed, and clearly proclaimed the salvation that God would send via the Messiah.

 That’s John’s grasp and understanding of faith was indeed much different than that of his brothers in the Jewish priesthood is clear just in what he preaches and teaches. And there is no doubt that his message is clearly different from what people had been hearing for centuries. John pointed out sin and made it clear that everyone was sinful. John called for repentance, for deep sorrow and sadness because God’s laws were constantly broken in thought, word and deed. It is in this way that John was preparing hearts for the Savior to be revealed. After all, if you don’t believe you have sin and that you constantly and regularly offend the majesty of the Living God, then why do you need a Savior? Why do you need what God has offered and promised, what God has clearly foreshadowed and proclaimed in His Old Testament worship life? John knew the truth and horror of sin. John knew that he was there to prepare for the Savior, the revelation of the Christ to come.

 And that is exactly what John did. Seriously, that is one of the more awesome things that John did. Let’s you and I look at and contemplate exactly what John has proclaimed about the one He has come to reveal. Our theme will be: **TRUTHS OF JESUS REVEALED!**

 One of the things that we sometimes have to wrestle with is the timeline and events of the life of John and Jesus. They were cousins! They knew each other and no doubt both had heard from their families all the history that surrounded their births and entrance into the world. Honestly, do you really think that Mary and Joe, Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of two of the most important figures of the history of salvation, figures whose history said their lives were intertwined in so many ways, do you really think that for the next 20 years or so they just ignored each other? I think Jesus and John saw each other on a rather regular basis. Because of that and all the history told him, John already had a pretty good idea that Jesus was special and unique. Seriously, how could you have a perfect and holy cousin and not take note?

 Yet, God is not going to let anything be to chance. The Holy Spirit is clearly in John’s life. John is in the wilderness because of the Spirit. John is preaching and teaching as he does because of the Holy Spirit. But just as important, listen to what our text said to us. **“The one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.”** In other words, God the Father had clearly communicated with John what he was to look for and what he would see that would tell him without any doubt that he was in the presence of the Messiah.

 Isn’t that exactly what happened at the baptism of Jesus? As your read the Scripture, put the timeline in correct position. I don’t think John started calling Jesus the **“Lamb of God”** until after the baptism of Jesus. Because it was what happened at that baptism of Jesus that revealed to John the absolute greatness and wonder of Jesus. He may have suspected Jesus was the Messiah, but with the event of the heavens opening, literally in Mark, **“the heavens being torn open,”** and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove flying down and landing on Jesus, there was now no doubt at all in the mind of John that Jesus was exactly what he proclaims him, **“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”**

 The power of these words is awesome. So many of the sacrifices of God demanded in the ceremonial law were the sacrifice of the year old, male lamb, flawless and pure. But the most obvious reference is to the lamb sacrificed at the very first Passover that brought the Jewish people freedom from their slavery in Egypt and now made them a people called to serve and proclaim the wonder and hope of God to a sinful world. Did you know that Passover lamb was picked on the tenth day and keep in your household until it was slaughtered on the 14th day. No bones were to be broken. The lamb was to be roasted over a fire. The blood of the lamb was to be spread on the doorposts and lintels of your home. You were to eat that lamb. And when the angel of death came that night, that blood of the lamb caused the angel to pass over your household and all in it. You were saved from death and the ultimate result was that you were freed from your slavery. Can you hear this history and not grasp the utter importance of Jesus being declared the **“Lamb of God.”**

 Jesus would by his death, by the shedding of his blood, free you from death, eternal death, free you from your slavery to sin, and literally free you up to be a child of God, a member of God’s household, a holy people, a royal priesthood, the people of God called to serve and proclaim the wonder of the Lord. All of that is wrapped up in Jesus being the **“Lamb of God.”** He would die for our sins. He would atone for our wrongs and He would grant us the status of forgiven heirs of eternal life. The Lamb would save us. And do note when I say “us” I mean the whole world. Even John knew that. Jesus would **take away the sin of the world.** God would have His Son pay for every sin of every person for all of time. It was the only way it could be done so that we would grasp salvation is by the grace of God and not by our works and goodness. The Lamb of God has come to save. To atone for all and to offer them the wonder of eternal life by grace through faith.

 But I want you to grasp that that is not all that John reveals about Jesus. John reveals the very nature and majesty of Jesus too. Listen to what he says. **“This is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘The one coming after me outranks me because he existed before me.”** Please take a moment and grasp the depth of those words!

 John has just revealed that Jesus, the Christ, of his nature is “eternal.” Sometimes we forget this awesome truth. Jesus always was and always will be. Jesus existed even before his was born into this world. That’s because Jesus in very nature is God. Colossians 2:9 puts this truth in this way: **“For all the fullness of God’s being dwells bodily in Christ.”** Jesus existed, lived and ruled in Heaven with his Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus, when the time was right, came into our world, incarnate, born of the Virgin Mary for just one purpose, to serve as our Savior from sin. The Holy and righteous, pure and powerful ruler of all, the eternal God himself came into our world to redeem us. All of this planned and laid out by the Lord even from the beginning of time. Jesus was before time ever was! In other words, John’s statement makes it clear that John absolutely believes that Jesus is the true and eternal God!

 Now just so you know, John could have learned that truth from the promises concerning the Messiah that are found in the Old Testament. If there is one thing that is made clear in these prophetic promises it is that God himself, God the Son would come and be our Savior. John references that fact when he proclaims of Jesus: **“I saw this myself and have testified that this is the Son of God.”**

 When you put everything together that John proclaims the message is total awesomeness. There is no doubt that John grasped and understood the divinity and the purpose of Jesus. John understood that Jesus was the true and living God who had come to save us from sin. And please note that if you follow the history that is laid out for us here, the simply and clear testimony of John had an impact on his followers. When John proclaims Jesus, **“The Lamb of God,”** two of his disciples immediately follow Jesus.

 By the way, do you get the feeling that we are missing something in this history? I say that because as you read this history and the short dialogue that occurs between Jesus and these two disciples there is just nothing of great theological depth! **“Jesus asked, ‘What are you looking for?’ They said to him, ‘Rabbi, where are you staying?’ He told them, ‘Come, and you will see.’”** That’s it. That is the entire dialogue given to us.

 And yet something else went on. I say that because look at what happens after. Andrew was one of the men. We are told that the very first thing he does after this visit with Jesus is go to his brother Simon Peter and say, **“We have found the Messiah!”** Hey Peter, that guy that John the Baptist kept talking about, that Lamb of God guy, we found Him and there is absolutely no doubt, he is the Messiah!

It makes you wonder what Jesus revealed to them from the time they met at 4 o’clock until the time they left him? Because Andrew simply tells Peter, **We have found the Messiah!** He doesn’t say, Hey, we think we might have found or there’s a guy we think could be or we have this hope about this guy! Nope! It is a straight forward, **“We have found the Messiah!”** We have found the Christ, the Son of God!

 Dear precious souls of the Lord, this is still the very same Jesus. If two of John’s disciples follow Jesus just on the basis of John’s testimony isn’t that good enough for us too? Jesus hasn’t done any miracles yet. It’s coming. The wonder of what Jesus will do in life is coming. What I want you to grasp is that if these men who were there, who heard and who followed believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, then shouldn’t that be our faith?

 I pray you do believe that Jesus is the Christ. They you do grasp that He is the Lamb of God who has indeed come to take away the sins of the world, yes, your sins, my sins, the sins of all. And all that Jesus asks of us is to believe in him.

 Now here is where I think people get all confused. What does it mean to believe in Jesus? It is not just a matter of lip service. You standing there saying, “Yes, I believe in Jesus.” There is action involved too! In John’s case he couldn’t keep his mouth shut about Jesus. He shouted out for all to hear the truth and wonder of the Son of God walking around in our world, walking around and carrying out the redeeming work of his Father just for us. John believed. And John’s disciples believed. They followed him and would follow Jesus the rest of their lives! There is action in faith. It means something and it causes something in our lives.

 Faith therefore means we not only trust what is said of Jesus but trust that Jesus is the Son of God and our Savior from sin. Look at what Paul in our Epistle reading said of this faith. **“You were enriched in him in every way, in all your speaking and all your knowledge, because the testimony about Christ was established in you. As a result, you do not lack any gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also keep you strong until the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

 Faith in Jesus impacts us. We hear. We believe. We follow. Let me illustrate this way. When you join the basketball team, you wear and practice basketball stuff. You don’t go out on the court in hockey pads and skates. You don’t show up in football gear proclaiming you’re a star player. And you certainly don’t join a team so you can tell the coach the way it is going to be and how you are going to play! You do basketball. Do it right or get off the court and get off the team! The same with Jesus. Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. Follow what He says not what you want. That’s the impact of faith.

 God grant you the wonder of Jesus. He is the Lamb of God, the Son of God come to save our very souls and call us to follow Him. Amen.