



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Jesus the Living Revealer Saves Us from Unbelief

Bible Reading: John 1:29-42

[Watch LIVESTREAM at 10am](#)

SUMMARY:

- They say “Jesus Saves.” But saves from what? When the Baptist identifies Jesus as “God’s Lamb who removes sin,” we echo, “Yes, Christ died from our sins—paying the penalty for our wrongdoings.” That’s true, but that’s not what’s meant here. In John’s unique perspective, singular ‘sin’ means unbelief, a lack of faith—our root problem. John’s ‘Lamb of God’ is the incarnate Word as ‘the Living Revealer’ to resolve our unbelief. God’s Son who’s one with the Father is uniquely qualified to reveal God. Jesus’ life & supremely his death, reveal God’s own being, love & mercy. Salvation is via revelation; it’s not binary, but an ongoing fostering of experiential knowledge. Jesus’ 7 ‘signs’ and 7 ‘I AM’ sayings incrementally unveil God. The charge to “Look, behold” invites our spiritual perception of Jesus’ revelatory life & death & by believing to gain & grow in God’s life.

The Baptist’s Charge—“*Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin...*” (1:29)

A. What’s the source & significance of ‘Lamb of God’?

1. Sources—OT Background & Significance—Jesus, God’s Son as Revealer & Redeemer
 - “The 4th Gospel focuses on Christ as *Revealer and Redeemer*.”—DA. Carson & DJ. Moo

B. Jesus is the Passover Lamb (Jn. 19:36-37)

C. Jesus—the Lamb *provided* by God (Gen. 22:8, Jn. 1:29; 19:36)

D. Abraham offering his ‘only son’ prefigures God the Father offering His only Son (3:16-17)

E. Abraham is not depicted as Judge, but as suffering father

For John there's only one, singular, sin—Unbelief

- John's "predominant use of the word in the singular [–'sin'–] points to the fact that *John understands sin in a general, comprehensive sense: sin is unbelief, lack of faith.*" –Udo Schnelle

A. God's Lamb removes the Sin of Unbelief (Jn. 1:29; 8:24; 16:8-9)

B. Singular 'Sin' in John vs. the Synoptic Gospels

- "The idea of *sin as failure to believe in Jesus*...permeates John's Gospel." –Jeffrey Siker

Jesus, the Living Revealer, brings Saving Revelation (1:18; 12:45; 17:3)

A. Exclusive claims: Jesus' relation to God the Father (1:18; Matt. 11:27)

- "In the light of [Mt. 27:11] & multipl[e]...texts...[in] John, the Church believes that *we have all there is to have of God in Jesus & nowhere else.*" –Frederick Bruner

B. Jesus is the Living Revealer (1:18)

- An "important...theme in John is *the 'living revealer,'* [that's] the meaning of *Logos* ('Word') in Jn. 1:1-18." –Philip Comfort

C. **Jesus is both the Revealer & the Revelation**

- "*Christ is simultaneously the revealer..., the revelation...and the content of revelation.*" –Gerald O'Collins
- Jesus "not only brought revelation from the Father, *he is the revelation.*" –James Dunn

D. God's Son brings Saving Revelation

1. "God's revelation saves humanity *from...unbelief*"

- "John affirms that God saves &...indicat[es]...God's revelation saves humanity *from...unbelief*...The 4th Gospel sees *revelation as the means of salvation and knowledge (...fellowship...) of God as salvation itself*...John constru[es] *salvation as revelation.*" –Anastasia Scrutton

2. "Revelation is the means of salvation" & "knowledge...of God is the substance of salvation" (17:3)

- Through John's Gospel "it becomes clear that *revelation is the means of salvation, and knowledge of God the substance of salvation itself*...Our *experiential knowledge of God in Christ is our salvation.*" –Anastasia Scrutton

3. John's Gospel doesn't focus on Substitutionary Atonement, Repentance, or Forgiveness

4. Christ's Revelation encompasses incarnation & the cross:

5. Jesus' Role as Revealer climaxes in his death on the cross (12:32)

Fulfillment of the Passover Lamb—'The pierced One'—Christ's Crucified (19:33-37)

A. Christ Crucified as the Passover Lamb (19:36; Ex. 12:46, Num. 9:12)

B. Christ Crucified as the Pierced One (19:37; Zech. 12:10)

C. *Inclusio* ('Bookends')—"Look the Lamb of God" (1:29) "Look at the Pierced One" (19:37)

Faith & Unbelief; Darkness & Light—Not Binary Options

Our Response—"Look the Lamb of God" (1:29) "Look at the Pierced One" (19:37) "Come & See" (1:39)

A. "Behold! Look!"—Not mere physical sight, but spiritual perception

B. Believe the Truth-testimony of Eye-witnesses & Scripture (19:35-37) Gather with those who believe—"Come & You'll See" (1:39, 46)

QUESTIONS

- Read the 'exclusive' claims in John 1:18; 14: 6, 9 & Matt. 11:27. In view of these statements how would you respond to:
 - A. Notions validating religious pluralism [many religions—Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.], employ metaphors like:
 - “All rivers flow to the sea and all roads (world religions) lead to God”
 - Various religions are like “blind people around an elephant, each claiming what they touch/describe is the ultimate ‘truth’ about this animal.”
 - How would you evaluate & respond to such notions in view of NT claims about Jesus (Jn. 1:18, etc)?
 - B. Consider the allegation that Christians defending the validity of Jesus’ claims of exclusive insight & unique means of access to the Creator God are “backward, narrow-minded &/or intolerant of other, non-Christian religions”? Discuss.
 - C. Evaluate the statement (by Frederick Bruner) that, based on John’s Gospel, “the Church believes that *we have all there is to have of God in Jesus & [it’s] nowhere else* [i.e., not in other, non-Christian religions].” Discuss.
 - D. Perhaps you’ve heard Jn. 1:29 quoted: “*The Lamb of God...takes away the sins [pl.] of the world*” (1:29). Is the difference between “sins” (plural) & “sin” (singular) trivial, inconsequential? Or, might it be significant? If so how?
 - E. Consider the statement that “[singular] ‘sin’ [in John’s Gospel] *is failure to believe in Jesus, it is unbelief.*”
 - Where do we see this in John’s Gospel?
 - If ‘sin’ is unbelief/lack of faith, (rather than trespasses, unrighteous acts, etc.) how does Jesus Christ save us from this ‘sin’?
 - F. Comfort says “An important theme in John is *the ‘living revealer’.*” How does John 1:18 show us that “*Jesus is the Living Revealer*”?
 - G. If “*Jesus is the Living Revealer*” in John’s Gospel, how does the “*Living Revealer*” save us? Discuss.
 - H. Consider the statements:
 - Jesus “not only brought revelation from the Father, *he is the revelation.*”—James Dunn
 - “*Christ is simultaneously the revealer..., the revelation... & the content of revelation.*”—Gerald O’Collins
 - I. What do you understand from these statements? What are these writers trying to convey? Discuss.
 - J. Consider the statement by Anastasia Scrutton: “*Revelation is the means of salvation, and knowledge of God the substance of salvation itself...Our experiential knowledge of God in Christ is our salvation...*”
 - This scholar uses the 3 terms—“means, substance, is”—in the 3 statements—
 1. “Revelation is the means of salvation,”
 2. “Knowledge of God is *the substance of salvation*”
 3. “Experiential knowledge of God in Christ is our salvation.”
 - What do you understand by these statements in the context of Jesus as the ‘Living Revealer’ in John? Discuss.