

Peace be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In the past two programs, we saw that Jesus the Messiah was unique in His birth and His character. Concerning **His birth**, we discovered that no one has ever been born like Jesus, because He had no earthly father. He was born of a virgin, by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. Concerning **His character**, Jesus was unique. Never has another been born with a holy nature like His. He had a body like ours, but He did not have our evil nature. Jesus was unstained by sin, because He was the Savior that God sent into the world to bear for us the punishment for our sin.

Today we plan to continue in the Gospel or *Injil*, and hear **what the prophet John**, or *Yahya*, **testified concerning Jesus**. John was the prophet whom God sent to prepare the way before the Messiah.

Reading in the Gospel of John chapter one, the Scripture says:

*Now this was **John's testimony** when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ (the Messiah)." ... Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" ... "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. **He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.**" This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John saw **Jesus** coming toward him and said, "**Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I***

meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'"

Let us pause here and think about the testimony of the prophet John. Did you hear how he referred to the Messiah? Let us listen again to the Scripture. It says: *"John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, **the Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!'"* We have already read how the prophets of God called the Messiah by many names such as the Redeemer, the Savior, the King, the Lord, the Word of God and the Son of God. Now we hear that He was called **"the Lamb of God."** This is a very important title, which deserves clarification.

Why did John call Jesus the Lamb of God? Was Jesus a lamb? No, Jesus was not an actual lamb. Everyone knows clearly that this is only a manner of speech. But why did the prophet John call Jesus **the Lamb of God**? Why would anyone want to be like a lamb? Why did John point to Jesus, and say to his disciples, *"Look! Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*?

To understand what the title *"Lamb of God"* means, we should remember what God decreed after Adam and Eve had sinned. God decreed that the payment for sin is death and hell and that if the blood of a spotless sacrifice is not shed, there would be no forgiveness of sin. Thus, we read how Adam and Eve's second son, Abel, believed God, slaughtered **a lamb** and offered it to God on an altar as a sacrifice to cover his sin. When God saw the blood of the lamb, He annulled the punishment for Abel's sin, and judged him as righteous, because **an innocent lamb had died in his place**. Nevertheless, God also said that the blood of a lamb could not be accepted as a sufficient payment for sin forever, because the value of an animal and the value of a man are not equal. **The lamb was only a shadow and an illustration of the holy**

Redeemer who was to come into the world and shed His blood to deliver sinners from God's righteous judgment.

Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah wrote how the Messiah would be "*led like a lamb to the slaughter*" as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Thus, between the time of Abel and the time of the Messiah, all who believed God respected and participated in the sacrifices of lambs. Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon and all the prophets, and all who believed the Word of God, had the habit of presenting to God sacrifices of spotless lambs. In this way they were all looking ahead to the day when God would send down the final sacrifice, that is, the holy Redeemer, who would shed His blood as a sacrifice that takes away sin forever.

That is why, dear friends, when the prophet John saw Jesus coming toward him, he pointed to Him and said to his disciples, "**Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**" Thus did John make known to his disciples that this Jesus standing before them was the Messiah, "*the Lamb*" which God sent down from heaven, the Perfect Sacrifice of which all the prophets prophesied. Jesus is the holy sacrifice who came into the world to die in the place of the children of Adam so that God can forgive us of our sins forever!

After this, the Scripture says:

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning round, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had

followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah!"... And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter, that is, rock). The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph!" "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

Thus, we see how John's disciples began to follow Jesus. Why did the prophet John's disciples leave him to follow the Lord Jesus? They began to follow Jesus because they believed what John told them when he said that **Jesus was the Messiah and the Lamb of God of whom all of God's prophets prophesied!** Thus, when one of John's disciples, that is, Andrew, recognized that Jesus was the Messiah, he went to find his brother Simon Peter and said to him: **"We have found the Messiah!!!"** And when another disciple by the name of Philip recognized who Jesus was, he was overjoyed and told Nathanael, his friend, **"We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote, Jesus of Nazareth!"**

Yes, Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael rejoiced greatly when they saw Jesus, because they knew that **for thousands of years the prophets had been predicting the coming of the Messiah. Now they were seeing the Messiah with their own eyes!** Praise be to God! The mighty Redeemer of whom all of God's prophets had been prophesying was in their midst! Praise God, at last, the Messiah had come! Thus, these four disciples of John began to follow Jesus, becoming His first disciples.

After that, the Scripture says:

*Going on from there, [Jesus] saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, [saying to them, "**Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**"] And immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him."*

God willing, in the next lesson, we will venture further into the stories that show how the Lord Jesus taught the crowds and how He worked great miracles. We will see that by His words and His works Jesus proved that **He was who He claimed to be**--the Messiah about whom all the prophets had written! However in the remaining time today, we will read ahead to see what happened to **the prophet John**. As we just saw, after John proclaimed that Jesus was the Messiah, John's disciples began to leave him, one by one, so that they might follow **the Lord Jesus**. Did that please John? **Was the prophet John pleased that his disciples had left him to follow Jesus?** What do you think?

Listen to what is written in the Gospel of John, chapter three.

[Thus, some people] came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan, the one you testified about, well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him." To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the

bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less!

What do you think about this? John expressed **great joy** when his disciples left him to follow the Messiah! John's joy was complete, because **he had accomplished his mission**; he had prepared the way before the Messiah. Like **a true prophet of God**, John's only desire was to lead people to **the Messiah**. How different the prophet John was from so many religious leaders today! **A true spiritual leader will always point you to the Lord Jesus, because Jesus is the only One who can get you into the holy presence of God in Paradise.** John knew that there were **many prophets of God**, but only **one Savior**! That is why John said: *"Whoever believes in the Son (Jesus the Messiah) has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him!"*

Concerning the end of John's life, the Scripture says:

"And with many other words John exhorted the people and preached the good news [about the Messiah] to them. But...John rebuked Herod the tetrarch [for marrying Herodias, his brother's wife, and for] all the other evil things he had done."

That is why Herod gave orders to have John arrested, bound and put in prison. In the end, Herod had John beheaded in order to please his wife. (See Mark 6:17,27) Thus, John entered the glory of the presence of God in heaven.

The Scripture tells us that John was a great prophet, even greater than the prophets who came before him. What made John greater than the other prophets? Here is the answer. **All the other prophets** proclaimed: **"The Messiah is going to come! He will come! He will come!"** However, the proclamation of **the prophet John** was: **"The**

Messiah is here! His Name is Jesus! Look! The Lamb of God who will be killed to take away the sin of the world has come! Follow Him!" Thus John accomplished his task as the illustrious prophet who prepared the way for the Messiah.

Thank you for listening. In the will of God, in our next program, we will continue in the holy Gospel and discover why Jesus is called the Great Physician...

May God give you insight into what we have studied today. Nothing is more important than what the prophet John proclaimed concerning Jesus the Messiah, when he said,

"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

If you would like more information about *The Way of Righteousness*, simply visit our website at: TWOR.com. That website again is: TWOR.com.

Or you may email us at: Resources@rockintl.org.