

The Progressive Revelation of the Doctrine of the Lamb of God (Part 1)

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[0:00] Jesus. Some of you brought the study notes from last time.

You'll notice on, I think, near the last page, at least where we are, God reveals His sovereign power. And we have already talked about how He has done this first in judgment upon Egypt. We've already covered that ground, and we've covered most of the ground related to B up here. God reveals the sovereign power in deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage.

And on that study guide, where am I? Yeah. On that study guide, well, hold on just a minute. Yeah, that's where I went. Point number one, under in deliverance of Israel from bondage to bondage with Egypt. Again, we've covered most of that ground.

[1:05] We have one more thing to, well, a couple of things really, but tonight we're just going to hit on this one thing. And that is the institution of the Passover and its significance.

Now, there's a lot that we could say about this. The Passover, how God instituted that as part of, or really just prior to, the tenth and final plague, and how God used this not only to judge Pharaoh and Egypt, but also to deliver God's people from bondage.

And what I want to do tonight, and you might see that from your notes, is to just focus upon this one idea or one concept.

And it's thrilling, really. And that is the doctrine of the Lamb. Or what I have called there on your sheet, the progressive revelation of the Lamb of God.

Now, that's a long enough title already. It really needs to be a little longer than that. And I really should have said the progressive revelation of the doctrine of the Lamb of God.

[2:18] But that didn't fit on the page. All right? So, or at least I thought it was too long. I guess I could have made a subtitle or something like that to make it even more complicated, but I decided not to do that.

But let's think for just a moment before we get into this about this whole concept of progressive revelation. How many of you have ever heard of that before? All right?

Several of you, but most of you, either you didn't raise your hand because you weren't sure, or you really have never heard of it. Progressive revelation. And maybe I might even say to you that on the front end, I mean, just the mentioning of it, you might even think, well, that doesn't sound quite right. Progressive revelation. I mean, that sounds a little strange. In fact, maybe that sounds kind of like evolution. But that's not the idea at all.

So, don't get the idea that progressive revelation means evolution. It doesn't mean that. For example, progressive revelation does not mean that the Bible is gradually moving or progressing from error to truth.

[3:30] You know, that maybe the early on in the Old Testament, some of the early Bible writers, they were just writing based on the knowledge they had, and they weren't right about everything.

And over time, you know, they're learning and understanding better. And so, as we go along throughout the Bible, the Bible writers are getting it more right than not, you know, and so forth. And, you know, there have been scholars over the years, and still some today, that have tried to interject the whole theory of evolution into the Bible and into the, quote, revelation of Scripture. And so, the idea is, you know, that, you know, it's changing because we're moving from error, or at least moving from a position where we don't quite know everything or have everything right, to a position of truth.

And that's not what progressive revelation means. Or we could liken this to science, for example. There's no comparison here between science and the progress that has taken place in science.

[4:40] No parallel between that and the revelation of God's Word. I mean, there was a day when science believed the world was flat, you know. Now, that's error.

And so, you know, gradually, as we got a little smarter, and technology, you know, became better, improved, we finally discovered that the earth is actually round, you know.

All it took was Columbus to get in his ship and prove that it wasn't flat. But that's not the same thing as progressive revelation. You know, there was a time when science thought that the world, the sun, rather, revolved around the earth, you know.

Well, that's not true, is it? And we've proven that to be wrong, but at one time, that was the science. That was truth. But that's not the same as progressive revelation.

And also, I would say to you that progressive revelation, as it relates to Scripture, does not mean that God has been evolving. That God is, you know, improving His knowledge about things over time.

[5:50] Now, you know, I shouldn't even have to say that. I doubt there's anybody in this room who would say, well, really? I thought. No, but there are those who think that God is learning just like we're learning.

That God is discovering things just like we are discovering things. Now, He's a lot smarter than us, but He's not omniscient in that sense. But that's not progressive revelation.

God is not learning things and making and changing His plans in response to what man does or in response to events.

You know, like suddenly an event takes place on the planet or with mankind and God says, oh, I'm going to have to change my plan because my original plan is not going to work.

No, that's not God. And that's not what we mean by progressive revelation. God is not progressing. Truth is not progressing in the sense that we're moving from error to truth.

[6:48] So, what is it? Well, progressive revelation means that there is a gradual unfolding of doctrinal truth, the doctrinal truth contained in the Bible, a gradually unfolding of it or revealing of it.

God, on certain issues, on many issues in Scripture, certain doctrines, has chosen not to give us all of it at the beginning. And so, He gives us glimpses of it, and then He moves us along in Scripture, giving us more information, unfolding the truth gradually.

And He does so for His own purposes. There are a number of examples in the Bible. I like the way one theologian put it as he defined progressive revelation. He said that progressive revelation means that God's Word moves from the dim light of the dawn to the brilliance of the noon day. Now, that's pretty full of language there, full of imagery. And that really is it. And God has purposed to do this.

Or, I might put it another way, by God's design, and it's His own design, His own purposes, His own choice, a doctrinal truth begins in obscurity, even mystery, and develops gradually in the Bible, page after page, chapter after chapter, book after book, until finally, somewhere in the New Testament, we see the doctrine fully revealed, or I might add this one little caveat, or as fully as God desires it to be revealed.

[8:36] There are some things that aren't going to be revealed in total to us until we leave this planet, and we get to heaven, and some of those things that continue to be a mystery will suddenly be fully revealed.

And this is God's design. Now, there's not a more exciting example of this, I think, than the progressive revelation of the doctrine of the Lamb.

The doctrine of the Lamb. And we've talked about this before. I'm sure that I mentioned it when we were going through our Genesis study. And I know that I have on a number of other occasions.

So, what I'm going to share with you tonight, though the outline is new, because we've just made it up the last few weeks, the concepts, the ideas, the truth from Scripture. You've probably heard much of this before, but I want us to work through this.

It's very exciting. And the reason why I've chosen to do this is because we have worked our way through the plagues, and all the way through the tenth one, and we've discussed how each one was a judgment against the gods of Egypt.

[9:48] And after having worked through those plagues, we need to spend some time talking about the Passover, the institution of the Passover, where God, you know, He's about to send the destroyer throughout Egypt.

And the only way that God's people would be delivered is if they take a lamb and shed the blood of that lamb and take that lamb's blood and put it on the doorpost lintels of their homes.

And so when the destroyer comes, God said, when I see the blood, I will pass over you. And so the firstborn among Israel were delivered.

And the firstborn of Egypt were destroyed. And this is what, of course, broke Pharaoh's back, at least long enough for him to release God's people.

And so all that's wrapped up in that tenth plague, and it's very crucial, very important. But I want you to know that when we're talking about the progressive revelation of the lamb, Exodus chapter 12, where we have the institution of the Passover, it is part of that progressive revelation.

[11:06] And it doesn't start there, this doctrine of the lamb, but it's part of the chain that really runs all the way through Scripture.

And so that's why I want us to take the time tonight and just put all that together and see this chain that runs through Scripture, this progressive revelation.

All right, here's number one. And by the way, and I know you'll be blessed, all these start with the letter P. All right? I don't know what it is about alliteration that I love so much, but I guess I'm a product of how I was brought up and sitting under Adrian Rogers, who he himself was a slave to alliteration.

And I guess I've just picked that up. But preachers who use alliteration quite often will tell you that P is one of the best letters. You can just practically find anything that fits that starts with the letter P. But alliteration is a good thing. It's a good way to remember things and to conceptualize it. And as long as the alliteration makes sense. I mean, you know, sometimes I've heard some preachers make up words just to get, you know, it starting with the right letter or ending with the right suffix or whatever.

[12:22] All right, here it is. It's the precept of the lamb. What's a precept? It's a doctrinal truth. A truth. This is the truth. And so, right at the beginning of the Bible, in fact, in Genesis chapter 3, we have God's first revelation of the doctrine of the lamb.

And I know we've covered this ground before, but Genesis 3:21 says, The Lord God made garments of skin. By the way, the word skin in the Hebrew is or, and it means animal hides.

Hides. All right, he made, he made actual leather clothing for Adam and Eve, in case you were wondering. And so he made these for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

All right, so God did all this. And you know the occasion, don't you? Let me ask you something, if you remember the story, and I bet you do. What were they wearing before God did this?

Well, yeah, they were wearing nothing, but then they came up with something else. Oh, leaves. All right, yeah, leaves. Big leaves, as it's translated, I think, in the King James.

[13:39] We're not exactly sure what kind of leaves they were. Must have been some pretty outstanding leaves. And I'm not sure if they were just able to take these big leaves and make clothes, hide themselves, or if they had to actually sew them together.

I don't know. It doesn't really matter. But they were wearing fig leaves, right, before God did this, because Adam and Eve had sinned. You know the story. You know it as well as I do.

And when they sinned, their eyes were open, you know, open to their nakedness. But that was just symbolic of their eyes were open to their guilt, their sinfulness, their wickedness before God.

And so they were ashamed. And, you know, when we sin, we want to hide it. And this is exactly what Adam and Eve did. And so they're hiding. You know, there when God is walking through the garden in the cool of the day and they fashioned for themselves some fig leaves so that they could cover up their shame.

They tried to cover their sin. And they tried to do it through human wisdom, ingenuity, more significantly through self-effort, human effort, determination.

[14:50] And so they sewed together some fig leaves. But now, what did God do and why? Well, what did he do? What did God do? He slaughtered some animals, didn't he?

I mean, you can't take the skins of an animal and clothe Adam and Eve without first killing the animals. And there isn't any indication from Scripture that Adam and Eve did this.

It was God who did this. And so he slaughtered some animals, some innocent animals. I think that's the point we ought to get here. And I, for one, and I'm not alone, I'm in pretty good company when I say that I believe they were lambs that God slaughtered.

And why do I say that? There isn't anything in that particular text that tells you what kind of animal it was. But when you consider the unity of Scripture, the consistency of Scripture all the way through, and again, this thread and significance of a lamb that runs all the way from Genesis to Revelation, then it makes, I think, you're on pretty safe ground when you make the assumption that these were lambs that God killed.

He performed the very first animal sacrifice. There were no animal sacrifice prior to this. In fact, there was no death prior to this, prior to Adam and Eve sinning in the garden, because death comes as a result of sin.

[16 : 17] All right, so God did this, and why did He do it? Well, I think it's pretty clear. Human works, which is what the fig leaves represented, human works can never atone for sin.

Never can. self-effort, meritorious kind of works, religion, or anything that you might do, will not atone for sin.

And so God is teaching Adam and Eve, and the entire human race, a very important lesson here, a very important precept, the divine truth. And it's not until we get all the way into the New Testament do we have it actually put in concise words, as Hebrews 9.22, and the Bible says, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

Without the sacrificing of innocent blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. That's the precept that is taught throughout Scripture. Many times it's taught visually, in fact, through most of the Old Testament.

very clearly it is taught visually, and with illustration, and with other methods.

[17 : 33] And then when we get into the New Testament, we're taught this precept in word. Very clear word revelation from God. Alright, so the precept of the Lamb. Excuse me.

Second, the priority of the Lamb. And we see this in the lives of Adam and Eve's boys, sons, Cain and Abel.

And you know this story as well. Genesis chapter 4, verse 1 through 5. And let me read it to you. Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.

And then she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep. He was a shepherd. Cain, a worker of the ground. What did that make him?

A farmer. Anything wrong with being a farmer? Well, no. I think. Anything wrong with being a shepherd? Certainly not. It's not one occupation better than another.

[18 : 38] But this is what they were. Abel was a shepherd. Cain was a farmer. And in the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground. And Abel also brought the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.

And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering. But for Cain and his offering, he had no regard. This is the ESV translation.

I prefer it in this verse. God had no regard for it. He did not recognize it at all. Cain's offering.

So Cain was very angry and his face fell. And that didn't mean he needed a facelift. It means he got pretty angry and his countenance just fell before the Lord.

And we know the rest of the story. Don't we? What happened as a result? Let me ask you a few more questions here. What was this offering for? Have you ever asked that question?

[19 : 36] Wondered about that? Here we have Cain and Abel bringing an offering. It says in the course of time, we're not sure how much time, I think, for one, in the course of time means that when they were old enough to understand, they brought an offering.

And so what was it for? Oh, I thought you were raising your hand. She's going back there. Yes, I see that hand. Well, it was for sin.

It was for sin. It was a sin offering to make an atonement for their sin. And so where did these guys get the idea that God required an offering for sin?

It's a simple answer. From their parents. They got the idea of this from their parents. Their parents had taught this, Adam and Eve. Where did Adam and Eve get the idea? From God.

When did they get the idea? Well, back there when one day God sacrificed some lambs, I believe they were lambs, and took their skins and covered their nakedness.

[20 : 46] And I think symbolic of God's grace in saving them, covering their sin. And accepting a blood sacrifice to atone for their sin.

And so from that point on, that set the precedent. You say, well, this was a long time before God gave this law to Moses. Yeah. But it was already stated and already being done, instituted. That's the word I was trying to get. Long before Moses came along and the Ten Commandments were given and the sacrificial laws were given and so forth. So God taught them. And so how does this help us understand why God had no regard for King's offering? It's really very simple, very logical. Because Cain's offering, or Cain brought, the wrong sacrifice. He didn't bring the right one. He brought a bloodless sacrifice. And that's why God did not have any regard for him. And a lot of people will look at this and say, well, that's just not fair of God. [21:49] I mean, my goodness. God had cut him a little slack. I mean, he did the best he could. Right? I'm sure what Cain said out there before God probably looked like a county fair.

You know, he probably had all kinds of good stuff out there. But Cain knew better because he had been taught. God had already revealed what he required. And Cain revealed his unbelief in that he did not bring a blood sacrifice to make atonement for his sin.

He brought, rather, a sacrifice that represented the work of his own hands. His own self-effort. And remember, human effort, human righteousness can never, ever atone for sin.

Never. All human works, no human work, can ever atone for sin. Because remember, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. Alright, so, we have then the priority of the Lamb. It's the priority. God has revealed this. He's gradually unfolding this. And we're going to get more and more information as we go along. So, number three, we have the provision of the Lamb.

[23:03] We have a provision of it. And we find this out, or it's revealed to us, through Abraham and Isaac. Abraham, of course, and his son Isaac.

And we don't need to really turn to this. I've given you the reference in Genesis chapter 22. And you remember the story.

You know, God commanded Abraham to take his son, Isaac, his son of promise, and take him up to the top of Mount Moriah and sacrifice him unto the Lord.

They just kill him, kill him to death. And so Abraham is going to obey God. And so they're marching up, you know, the side of Mount Moriah.

And, you know, and Isaac has all the wood for the burnt sacrifice. And Abraham has his sharp knife. And you remember Isaac's question, you know, well, we've got the wood and everything, but where's the lamb?

[24:03] And you remember what Abraham said. God will provide. And he did. He did.

It wasn't Isaac, was he? It was a lamb or a ram, but same specie. And so this is God providing. God's providing that lamb.

Now we know, I think, or should know, that God never intended for Abraham to kill his own son. That would be totally inconsistent with the rest of Scripture and the character and nature of God as revealed in Scripture.

So we know that was never his plan. And God didn't change his plan. God knew the outcome. And so what was this all about?

Well, it's another piece in the puzzle. Or maybe puzzle's not the right word. God's not trying to fool us or trick us or confuse us.

[24:59] Another part of the revelation as it's unfolding for us because Abraham said God will provide for himself the lamb.

And by the way, he did provide it for himself. Even Jesus was a provision for God. Now, I understand. I mean, this has semantics, but yeah, the lamb was provided for us as a sacrifice for our sin, but it was a sacrifice to appease the wrath of God, to satisfy his justice.

And so the lamb in that sense was provided for himself. All right, so the provision of the lamb. So we have the precept, the priority, the provision. And number four, the power. The power of the lamb.

You know, there are eight points here, so get pretty close to running out of P words about the time I get with this. But this one really does make sense.

It's not a stretch. We see this through the deliverance, and this is where we get into Exodus chapter 12. We see this in Israel's deliverance from Egypt and through the institution as a result of the institution of the Passover.

[26:14] And you might, let's see, let me look that up real quick because I didn't write that down. Exodus 12 and verse 3.

Let me just start reading there. Speaking to all the congregation of Israel, saying, On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb.

Every man, that is, every head of the household, every house, was to take a lamb. We talk about a whole lot of lambs. Take a lamb according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household, and if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of persons, according to each man's need.

You shall make your account for the lamb, and your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep of the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day.

And by the way, all of this has clear prophetic implications here. We're not going to go into tonight. I have covered this ground before. All these things, all these requirements point to Jesus.

[27 : 26] Jesus was the perfect fulfillment of all of these requirements. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight, and they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.

Then they shall eat the flesh on the night and so forth and so forth. All right, so there it is. And they do and they take the blood and a little later he's going to say, you know, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

That's where, of course, the Jews got the word Passover. The Passover will pass over you and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

All right, so here is another part of the revelation. And what is the emphasis here now? Certainly there's a lamb, the lamb, I mean, that's still consistent.

That's part of the revelation, the lamb. We're going to stick with that all the way through. But here the emphasis shifts away from the animal itself to what?

[28 : 37] It's blood. The blood now is the emphasis. See, this is part of the progression of the revelation. Not that the blood was unimportant, but when we read about God providing skins for Adam and Eve, there's not an emphasis there on the blood, just not mentioned.

That doesn't mean it wasn't important because without shedding blood there's no forgiveness of sin. But the emphasis is not there because he's gradually unfolding this. It's not until we get here in Egypt that there is this strong emphasis on the blood itself because the blood is taken and put on the doorposts and lintels of each home, each home of an Israelite.

And God said, when I see the blood, not the lamb you ate or the lamb that's in your stomach after you ate it, though that's significant. But he says, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

All right, so the power of the lamb is not simply its death, though that's part of it. The power is not just in its sacrifice, though it's important in this overall doctrine of the lamb, but the power is in its blood.

Its blood. The blood of the lamb. A lamb without blemish. And the blood that is put on the doorposts and on the lintel of the houses. And God says, now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are.

[30 : 11] And when I see the blood, I will pass over you. So the power of the lamb is the blood. Let's see if I can get one more here. Number five, the preaching of the lamb.

The preaching of it. And I think we see this really as we go throughout all the rest of the Old Testament. As God first reveals and then we see it practiced the sacrificial system.

And so starting in Leviticus, and we're not going to go to that passage necessarily here tonight. I think it's Leviticus 16. But starting in Leviticus and moving throughout the Old Testament, the high priests of Israel, they were constantly preaching.

not preaching in the traditional sense like I might be preaching here tonight verbally, but preaching nevertheless through the things they were doing.

The performance of their service, their ministry that they've been called to. They were preaching. Preaching a message. Proclaiming a truth. The high priests were doing that all throughout the Old Testament.

[31 : 28] And again, not a verbal sermon, but a visual sermon on the lamb. Because the lamb would then be slain. This would be the duty of the high priest.

And the blood would be captured. You know how this went, how it was prescribed in Scripture. Blood would be captured in the labor. And the high priest then, very carefully, not to spill any of it, very careful, would take that blood and enter through the veil into the Holy of Holies where was the,

eventually would be, the Ark of the Covenant.

You know that box. I mean, you know what it looks like. You've seen Indiana Jones and Raiders of the Lost Ark and you know what it looks like.

That's mostly fantasy and fiction. But anyway, I think they were portraying what it probably looked like. You know, there's that box and the lid and the angels on top and so forth.

And that was inside the Holy of Holies. That lid on the top of the Ark of the Covenant was the mercy seat. And you might remember inside the Ark a few artifacts, a few things.

[32:44] One most significantly would be the tablets that contained the commandments. By the way, all the commandments that we have broken. And there inside the Ark, mercy seats on top.

And what would the priest do with the blood? He would dip his, kind of a weed kind of thing that grew there. Dip it in the blood and sprinkle it on the mercy seat.

And the mercy seat, the blood then would cover the laws that have been broken. And so the symbolic, I think the idea is a covering for sin and atonement for the sin.

Because see, the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant was the place where the unapproachable God, holy God, would meet sinful man. Would be at the mercy seat.

And his sins would be forgiven. This is what the high priest did year after year after year on the Day of Atonement. and all throughout this process and all of the laws that he had to obey in preparing himself and then all that he had to do when he would act out and perform his service.

[34:01] All this was preaching a message of the importance of the Lamb, the doctrine of the Lamb and the blood of the Lamb. And so that's why I say, really, Jesus is preached throughout the Old Testament as the priest was performing his duty.

The sacrificial system was given to Israel as a foreshadowing of the real, which would be Jesus who would one day come.