

Behold the Christ!

Many are searching for a solution for their sin sickness, which leads to death, and yet they are looking the wrong way. Therefore this exclamation, the call to behold the Christ deserves further examination.

John 1:29 (NKJV)

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" "

John 1:36 (NKJV)

"And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" "

John the Baptist uttered these words in awe of Jesus of Whom the Spirit had told him: "This is the Anointed". Now it is important to look at the depth of the meaning of beholding the Lamb of God, slain for our sins. What does it mean? For this we shall turn to the history of the people of Israel.

Numbers 21:4-9 (NKJV)

"Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived."

Five main points can be taken from this story.

1. Conviction of sin.
2. A reverence for God, for His holiness.
3. Repentance that leads to an absolute outcry for redemption.
4. The need for a mediator.
5. God's provision by facilitating a way out through the work of the mediator.

If we keep these five points in the back of our minds we will better understand the following words Jesus Christ spoke to Nicodemus.

John 3:14-21 (NKJV)

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

Probably one of the most quoted verses in history is: “For God so loved the world (...)”. That “so” is a reference to “as”, a preceding description: the lifting up of the Son of Man. He is the One that we need to behold for salvation. But since our hearts are deceitful we need to ask the question: “How?”

Taking the five points from the story of the Israelites we can see in what manner He is to be beheld.

1. Conviction of sin.

This is not to be confused with having a guilty conscience that we sear by telling ourselves we are victims, denying our responsibility and turning to ourselves for a sense of comparative self-righteousness. No, we need the second point to support the conviction.

2. A reverence for God, for His holiness.

This heartfelt realization drives us to come to Him with a humble attitude.

3. Repentance that leads to an absolute outcry for redemption.

It is a godly sorrow that leads someone to real repentance. This is the opposite of a sorrow that only hits surface. That kind of repentance, shiny counterfeit, is focused on escaping punishment for the sake of continuing a life of sin. True repentance however, changes the focus from “me” to Him.

4. The need for a mediator.

Christ is the Mediator and becomes the focus, not only for a moment, yet He continues to be. He remains in the centre of our lives.

5. God’s provision by facilitating a way out through the work of the mediator.

Contrary to the limitation found in Moses and the serpent, the work of Christ is complete. The salvation in Christ is more than a temporary solution. Gods work through Jesus is eternal. When a sinner comes to Christ by the conviction of the Holy Spirit, Jesus:

- a. Forgives sins and also justifies by imputation of His righteousness. A once in a life-time event.
- b. Sanctifies through the working and leading of the Holy Spirit. A daily, continuous event of repentance, forgiveness and becoming more Christ-like.
- c. Will glorify. A future event.

This is the eternal, everlasting life Jesus talks about.

If you feel the words piercing your heart, listen to the Holy Spirit.

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