The Lamb of God

"John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
—John 1: 29

DURING THIS MEMORIAL season "Treasures of the Truth" will focus on the most precious treasure the world has ever known—God's unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ as the antitypical 'Lamb of God.' Because of disobedience to the Divine law, mankind remains under the penalty of death since the time that sin was introduced to the world by our first parents, Adam and Eve. Jesus' sacrificial death provided the ransom price for sin at his First Advent, and he will accomplish the removal of all sin under the administration of his future kingdom. This is the will of our loving Heavenly Father and his plan of reconciliation to take away the sin of the world.—I Cor. 15:22

THE SCRIPTURAL RECORD

In the context of our selected scripture, the Apostle John spoke of John the Baptist, who made clear to the inquiring Jewish priests and Levites that he was neither the promised Christ nor Elijah. He also explained to them that he was not the foretold

prophet of which Moses had written, and that the Father would one day raise up in their midst.—Deut. 18:15; John 1:19-21

John the Baptist did say, however, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness," (vs. 23) and when pressed further by the Pharisees, "John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." (vss. 26,27) Again, "John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost [Spirit—Greek, *pneuma*]. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." (vss. 32-34) What a marvelous witness and testimony that John the Baptist gave on behalf of the everlasting love and providence of Almighty God.

THE LAMB OF SACRIFICE

Our precious Lord Jesus had left his spiritual home and fellowship with the great God of the universe to take the place of the typical lamb of sacrifice according to the will of his Father. The scriptural record is presented in the second book of Moses, where it is written, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." (Exod. 12:2) The Jewish month Abib was changed to Nisan which gave it particular significance. Nisan, as the beginning of

months, thus established the importance and significance as the first month of the sacred Jewish New Year. Further we read, "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house." (vs.3) The typical lamb of sacrifice was to be selected on the tenth day of Nisan. This foreshadowed the time when our Lord Jesus would present himself to the people of Jerusalem as the season of Passover drew near. (Matt. 21:1-11) This meaningful incident had been foretold by the Prophet Zechariah over five hundred years earlier.—Zech. 9:9

The Exodus account indicates that neighbors were privileged to share a lamb between themselves in the event that some households were too small. (Exod. 12:4) Nevertheless, God's instructions were very specific, "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." (vss. 5,6) Thus is foreshadowed the Lord Jesus taking the place of the typical lamb on the 14th day of Nisan. Paul said, "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." (Heb.7: 26) To the brethren at Corinth, he said, "Even Christ our passover is sacrificed [slain, *Marginal Translation*] for us."—I Cor. 5:7

Further instructions were, "They shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on

the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it." (Exod. 12:7) This confirmed the importance and significance of blood. The lamb's blood represented the life of our Lord Jesus as a perfect man. The shedding of that blood illustrated his sacrificial death, and its sprinkling symbolized the merit of his sacrifice being presented on behalf of the household of faith during this present age of sacrifice (Heb. 9:24), and for the whole world of mankind during Christ's future kingdom. (I Cor. 15:22) The door posts and upper posts of the houses illustrate the hearts of his individual followers, the household of faith. This detail takes on deeper spiritual significance as emphasized by the apostle. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."—Heb. 10:22

When the Passover was instituted, the commandment was given, "They shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire." (Exod. 12:8-10) The Passover lamb provided for the Israelites' deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but points also to the household of faith being delivered from Satan's yoke of bondage to sin and death during this present Gospel Age. "The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."—Rom. 8:21

INSTITUTION OF THE MEMORIAL

When Jesus celebrated the Passover supper with his disciples the last night of his earthly ministry and life on earth, the typical lamb represented his own sacrificed life which would shortly be consummated on the cross. It was given on behalf of the sins of his people, as well as the whole world, to be testified in due time. Eating the lamb also suggested the strength of his life as given to his faithful followers during this age of sacrifice.

The symbolic Memorial of Jesus' death that he instituted in the upper room that night related to the Jewish Passover, although not directly a part of it. The instructions to his apostles were given, "As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." (Matt. 26:26) He was thus teaching his followers that the bread represented himself as the antitypical lamb, and his own flesh which they were to partake of in remembrance of him. "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it." (vs. 27) The cup represented his shed blood given on behalf of the world. Blood was necessary to seal the New Covenant, as he further explained, "This is my blood of the New Testament [Covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins."—vs. 28

The provisions of the New Covenant will offer life to all mankind who are obedient to the Divine law during Christ's kingdom. The Apostle Paul gives further significant information concerning the followers of Jesus who partake of these emblems (I Cor. 10:16,17), and, by so doing, we share with our Lord Jesus in communion, or participation, in his

sacrificial death. (Rom. 6:3-8) With a deep sense of reverence and appreciation, may we partake of these sacred emblems once again this year in remembrance of him.

JESUS: FIRSTBORN OF ALL CREATION

Our finite minds are little able to grasp the full meaning of the power, wisdom, and design of Almighty God, as revealed in the words of the psalmist, who wrote, "LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Ps. 90:1,2) We know from this scripture and others that our Heavenly Father never had a beginning, and will never have an end. We know, too, that he existed alone for ages of time before setting in motion the wonderful creative works of his Divine purpose.

In the message to the Laodicean brethren, the revelator said, "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." (Rev. 3:14) Our Lord Jesus was the beginning of God's Creation; and concerning this Paul wrote, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."—Col. 1:14,15

From another perspective, we see that Jesus was not only the 'firstborn' of all Creation, but also the only begotten Son of God. All other creative works were shared with the Son by the Father. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," and again, "The LORD God said, Behold, the man

is become as one of us, to know good and evil." (Gen. 1:26; 3:22) The Apostle John points to the only begotten Son and explains, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."—John 1:17,18

JESUS: AS THE LOGOS

The Apostle John provides a relevant and very important account of Jesus' creation as the firstborn and only begotten Son of the most high God. He writes, "In the Beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God." (John 1:1, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) The word 'Logos' is a title ascribed to Jesus during his prehuman existence that suggests his capacity and service as the 'Word' of God. He was the spokesman of his Heavenly Father and conveyed information and messages for him.

Logos is a New Testament word that has been left untranslated from the Greek, as are the names Jesus and Christ. An important distinction is also noted in the *Diaglott Interlineary Translation* between Almighty God which is rendered "the God" and his son as the "Logos," or Word.

Continuing, we read, "This was in the Beginning with God [the God, *WED, Interlinear*]. Through it every thing was done; and without it not even one thing was done, which has been done. In it was life; and the life was the light of men." (vss. 2-4, *WED*) The Apostle Paul points to this time and the work in which the Logos shared with his Father, who, "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,

whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." (Heb. 1:2) Thus we see the Son sharing with the Father in the wonderful works of creation.

On another occasion, Jesus referred to this relationship with his Heavenly Father when he said, "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."—John 12:49,50

A similar position is noted between Moses and Aaron. "Thou [Moses] shalt speak unto him [Aaron], and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God."—Exod. 4:15,16

ANCIENT ORIGINS

The Prophet Micah provides a unique and interesting reference to the Logos in the dawning days of antiquity, when he wrote, "Thou, Beth-lechem Ephratah, the least (though) thou be among the thousands of Judah, (yet) out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from olden times, from most ancient days."—Mic. 5:1, *Leeser Translation*

'Ephratah' was the ancient name for Bethlehem, as referenced in the account of Rachel's death, and her place of burial. (Gen. 35:19) The little town of Bethlehem also has the distinct honor of being

connected with Jesus' birth (John 7:40-42); and, of further significance, is the prophet's reference to Jesus' ancient origins.

JESUS: THE FATHER'S DAILY DELIGHT

In Solomon's collective writings, he includes an interesting account of the Logos even from before the earliest creative works of the Heavenly Father began. We read, "I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." (Prov. 8:30) This text reveals that the Logos enjoyed a very warm and loving relationship with his Father. Continuing we read, "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." (vss. 22,23) Here we have a marvelous account of the beginnings of Creation as witnessed by the firstborn and only begotten Son of the most high God.—vss. 24-31

THE LOGOS MADE FLESH

We read in John's gospel, "The Logos became Flesh, and dwelt among us,—and we beheld his glory, a Glory as of an Only-begotten from a Father,—full of Favor and Truth." (John 1:14, *WED*) Paul attests to this, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. 8:3) In his letter to Timothy, he wrote, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."—I Tim. 3:16

After the miraculous conception, Jesus was born in Bethlehem to Mary, a Jewish woman. "The angel

said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."—Luke 2:10-12

We know nothing of Jesus' early childhood from the time of his circumcision, eight days after his birth, until he was twelve years of age, except for the brief statement in Luke's gospel—"The child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in [becoming full of, *Marginal Translation*] wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke 2:40, *New American Standard Bible*) As a boy possessing human perfection and wisdom, Jesus went about filling his mind with matters of importance and he, being perfect, had the ability to retain what he learned.

THE BOY JESUS

When he was twelve years old, a series of remarkable events took place that provide an important glimpse into the young mind of Jesus, and the degree of dedication he possessed in carrying out his Father's will and purpose for him. At that time, he accompanied his mother Mary and her husband Joseph as they traveled to Jerusalem to attend the feast. After the feast days were over his earthly parents set out to make their return journey home. As it was customary for many people to travel together in those days, they had gone a full day's journey before realizing that the young boy Jesus had been left behind.—Luke 2:41-45

JESUS' FIRST RECORDED WORDS

Mary and Joseph turned back to find the boy Jesus. "It came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." (vss. 46-48) Jesus responded to his earthly parents inquiry. "He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (vs. 49) Jesus made it clear that his Heavenly Father's will for him was of utmost importance, as suggested by his reference to the doing of his Father's business. This answers his reason to be in the Temple, and in discussion with the doctors of the Law. We thus have the first recorded words ever spoken by our Lord Jesus at twelve years of age. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."—vs. 52

RECALL OF FORMER TIMES

During his earthly ministry, Jesus occasionally reflected on his prehuman existence. One time he said, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (John 6:62) He had been giving his disciples spiritual food and it was difficult for them to accept his teachings. He explained, "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."—vs. 65

He said, "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." (chap. 8:18,19) The Pharisees, however, were not ready to accept him, and "He said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world." (vs. 23) And again, "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." (vs. 42) The Jews were unable to understand Jesus teachings, and when asked whether he believed himself to be greater than their father Abraham, he answered, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham, was I am." (vss. 56-58) Another time he said, "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."—John 17:5

THE LAMB IS SLAUGHTERED

From the perspective of the worldly-wise and others who gave little or no attention to him, Isaiah's prophetic words speak to the fact that Jesus had no outward comeliness or form of beauty to be found in him. He was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isa. 53:1-4) "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement

of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."—vss. 5,6

John the Baptist had proclaimed "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and the prophets of old had foretold his sufferings. (John 1:29) To fulfill the Divine purpose of his becoming a perfect man, and to pay the corresponding price for sin, it was necessary for Jesus to die. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."—Isa. 53:7

JESUS' LAST WORDS

The scriptural account of Jesus' six hours on the cross is recorded in all four gospels. However, each author wrote from different perspectives and gave varying aspects of the execution as they saw them unfold. The Lamb of God was crucified under the inscription "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS" which was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.—John 19:19,20

The Master was crucified at the third hour of the day. (Mark 15:25) During the three hours between 9:00 A.M. and 12:00 M., his words, in probable order, included first his conversation with one of the thieves who was on a cross beside him. The man asked Jesus to remember him when he set up his kingdom. "He said unto him—Verily I say unto thee this day: With me shalt thou be in Paradise." (Luke 23:43, *Rotherham Translation*) Jesus thus

assured the man that he would be blessed when his future kingdom would be established.

Two more occurrences followed in close order when Jesus' mother, her sister, and Mary Magdalene stood by the cross. There was also one of his disciples standing nearby. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!" (John 19:26) A moment later he called to the disciple and said, "Behold thy mother!"—vs. 27

Between the hours of 12:00 M. and 3:00 P.M., darkness settled over the earth, as stated in the scriptural record. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." (Matt. 27:45) "About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (vs. 46) Jesus had borne the contradiction of sinners, Judas' betrayal, Peter's denial, and the abandonment of his disciples that night, but when he thought for a brief moment that he had been forsaken by his Heavenly Father he cried out in despair.

"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." (John 19:28) He knew that the time of his death was drawing near. "When therefore, Jesus took the vinegar, he said, It has been finished! And inclining his head, he expired."—John 19:30, *WED*

'John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' ■