**January 13, 2022**

**BIBLE STUDY**

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

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**“THE LAMB OF GOD”**

**John 1:18-34**

***John 1:18, "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 concludes the prologue to his Gospel by explaining that no one has ever seen God. In our sinfulness, to see God in unfiltered glory and holiness would result in our obliteration. Even Moses saw only the backside of God’s glory. No one can see God’s face on this side of eternity and live (Exodus 33:18-23). But the one and only (i.e., unique) Son who is himself God and is at the Father’s side he has revealed him. In other words, the divine nature of the Father is fully expressed in the Son. Since Jesus is fully God, to know Jesus is to know God. He has perfectly revealed him. The only way to God is through the Son. As Jesus himself told his disciples.

***John 14:6-9***

***6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.***

***7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.***

***8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.***

***9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?***

This statement "no man hath seen God" is correct. That is, no one has ever seen God in all of His essence, since God is Spirit (4:24; 1 Timothy 6:16). Only begotten Son: Some manuscripts read “only begotten God.” He hath declared him: Although no one has seen God in all of His essence, people have at least seen God in Jesus Christ. Many of the apostles had seen visions and had dreams of God. Some had even been in His presence like Moses on the mountain, but the closest Moses ever came to seeing Him was to see His back side as He passed by. Even in Jesus they would not look upon His godhead, but upon His flesh. Of course, Jesus had seen Him, because He had been in heaven with Him. In fact, Father, Word, and the Holy Ghost make up the godhead. Jesus is a reflection of the Father.

***I John 5:7 "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."***

***Hebrews 1:1-4***

***1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,***

***2 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;***

***3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:***

***4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.***

***John 1:19, "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?"***

***John 1:20, "And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ."***

Here the events of the first week are given: John testifies to the Sanhedrin of his experience of baptizing Jesus. These priests and Levites knew that Messiah was promised. This John the Baptist they knew was a very special man. They even thought that perhaps this was Messiah. The only way they can find out is to ask him. John the Baptist knew he was not Messiah; and when he was ministering, he was careful to tell them that he was not the Christ (Messiah).

***John 1:21, "And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No."***

Jesus had said on another occasion that John was that Elijah that was prophesied in Malachi. What He was saying was that John was of the same spirit as of Elijah. Jesus was not speaking of Elijah being reincarnated in John, but that John came in the spirit and power of Elijah. John was the fulfillment of the Scripture in Malachi. Malachi predicts the coming of Elijah in the last two verses of the Old Testament.

***Malachi 4:5-6***

***5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:***

***6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.***

But John says he is not Elijah in the way that the Jews think, that is, as inaugurator of the regime of the Jewish earthly kingdom. Contrast this with what Jesus says in Matthew 11:11–14 and 17:11–13. That prophet refers to the promise in Deuteronomy 18:15 of the Messiah’s coming. He truly did come before Messiah, six months earlier. John was telling them here that he was not in fact Elijah. The problem with those people then and many Christians today is they look at the physical side of everything rather than the spiritual. John the Baptist is come in the spirit of Elijah and thus does fulfill the Malachi prophecy. He is not, in fact, Elijah reincarnated. So, he answers, "No".

***John 1:22, "Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?"***

John is stirring up the whole countryside telling people to repent for Messiah is coming. This word has gotten back to the rulers of the temple, and they have sent someone to find out who this is who is stirring up such a fuss. The big question, "Who are you?"

***John 1:23, "He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias."***

***John 1:24, "And they which were sent were of the Pharisees."***

The prophecy of John the Baptist being "a voice crying in the wilderness" is found in Isaiah 40:3. John was a messenger, but he was much more. He was preparing their hearts to receive the Lord. This wilderness is a physical wilderness but can also be thought of as a wilderness of sin. John tells them, it was told you by the prophet Isaiah and the time is here. I am the voice: When asked who he is, John replies that who he is matters less than what he says. John underscores his message. These Pharisees were supposed to be very knowledgeable of the Bible. They probably already knew of this prophecy in Isaiah and of the one in Malachi.

***John 1:25, "And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"***

It appears from what they said to John, that they expected Elijah to come and cleanse them and get them ready to receive the Messiah. Why baptizest thou: Baptism could only be performed by prophets, or other authorities. It was the rite of Gentile entrance into Judaism. If John was baptizing for this reason, they approved; but if he is not Elijah, they want to know where he got his authority to do this. They wouldn't argue too much with John the Baptist because his father was a priest.

***John 1:26, "John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;"***

***John 1:27, "He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."***

***John 1:28, "These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing."***

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. John answers their question by saying, " I am not Messiah or Elijah, but my baptism is to prepare you to receive Messiah". John recognizes Jesus standing among those listening. He doesn't point Him out yet. He just says, He is here in this crowd. John says, "He is much greater than I am. In fact, I don't feel worthy to kneel down before Him and tie His shoes". Bethabara means house of the desert, so we know this is a desert place near Jordan.

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

The next day, the moment finally came. John saw Jesus and announced, Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! Behind this statement is the Old Testament practice of animal sacrifice in general and the Passover offering of a lamb in particular. God had commanded Israel to sacrifice a lamb so that he might rescue them from Pharaoh before instituting the sacrificial system to atone for their sins. But ultimately the blood of these animals couldn’t “take away sins”. It was a temporary measure (a layaway plan!) that pointed to a permanent means of salvation. Only the sacrifice of Jesus could truly address the sin “of the whole world”. For unbelievers, the problem is not that their sin hasn’t been atoned for; the problem is that they are unwilling to receive the atonement that Jesus has already made.

***Hebrews 10:4 “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”***

***1 John 2:2 “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”***

The sacrificial death of Jesus Christ removes the judicial barrier caused by sin so that all people are savable. Lamb of God: The lamb was used for sacrifice in the Passover (Exodus 12) and the sin offering (Leviticus 4). Some suggest that this may allude to the scapegoat (Leviticus 16), or to the suffering servant.

***Isaiah 53:7 “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.”***

This is a very broad statement here. We know of the sacrificial lamb that was killed, and the blood sprinkled over the door in the time of Moses to save the first born of all the Hebrews when God destroyed the first born of Egypt. We know that the lamb is the Passover animal sacrificed once a year in memory of that night when death passed over the Hebrew homes because of the blood of the lamb. This is saying then "This is your Passover sacrifice" speaking of Jesus. The blood of the animal could do nothing but cover the sin. The precious blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, does away with sin. In fact, not for just that occasion, but for all of eternity. Taketh means to continually take away. It is so interesting how every little word is so important in Scripture. John being filled with the Holy Spirit from before birth looks to Jesus and sees Jesus' own precious blood cleansing all of His people from unrighteousness. Notice sin is singular in this mention here. Jesus took on sin on the cross, and sin (for the believer) died on the cross. Not just covered, but done away with. Animal's or man's blood could never do away with sin. The blood had to be pure from God, Himself.

***Hebrews 9:12, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."***

***John 1:30, "This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me."***

***John 1:31, "And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water."***

This verse 30 here is just saying, "This is the one I was talking about that is the Messiah. He is greater than I am". John knew that Jesus was a relative of his in the flesh, because John's mother and Jesus' mother were cousins. It appears from this Scripture above that John was saying, "I haven't been around Him a lot, and in the flesh, I do not know Him". In the Spirit, John knew that Jesus was the promised Christ (the Messiah). Manifest means, in this instance, to render apparent. John's job is to make the coming of Messiah apparent to His people, Israel. To prepare them for meeting their Messiah, John is baptizing them, cleansing them from their sins. This is not the type of baptism for Christians. When a Christian is baptized, it is not for the remission of sin, but an outward expression of being dead, buried (in water), and resurrected with Jesus Christ our Lord. The Jews had the law and had not kept it. They had to repent for breaking Moses' law.

***John 1:32, "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him."***

At this baptism John is speaking of here, some of the other gospels go into more detail and tell of the voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son", Matthew 3:16-17. The thing John would have us see here is the Spirit remaining. We can see here the Father (voice from heaven), Son of God (Word), and Holy Spirit (dove) present at the baptism of Jesus. They are all in agreement.

***John 1:33, "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."***

***John 1:34, "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."***

Matthew chapter 3 tells a little more about this baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. The reason Jesus was baptized by John here was because His flesh came from Mary, a Jewish woman. When asked, His answer was as if He were setting an example, not because He needed repentance. The baptism of Jesus is the baptism of fire of the Holy Ghost. Not just because of the Holy Spirit descending, or the voice from heaven, but on all knowledge of Jesus and on what God had told him, John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God. How did John recognize Jesus as the Messiah? Divine revelation. Without that, he confessed, I didn’t know him. But the Lord revealed to John that when he saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, he could be certain that the one upon whom the Spirit rested was the one. Jesus is the Son of God who would baptize people with the Holy Spirit.

**QUESTIONS**

1. No \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hath seen God at any time.
2. Who hath declared Him?
3. What was the closest anyone had been to seeing God in the Old Testament?
4. Who make up the godhead?
5. Jesus is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Father.
6. Who did the Jews send to John the Baptist to find out who he was?
7. Who did they believe John might be?
8. What did John the Baptist confess in verse 20?
9. What had Jesus meant when He said John the Baptist was Elijah?
10. Where had it been prophesied that Elijah would come?
11. What answer did John give when they said, then who are you?
12. What had John the Baptist been telling everyone that got them all stirred up?
13. Who had prophesied in the Old Testament about John the Baptist?
14. Where was John ministering?
15. Who are the Pharisees?
16. What did they ask John, seeing that he was not Elijah nor Messiah?
17. What was different about the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus?
18. How does John the Baptist compare his unworthiness to Jesus?
19. John called Jesus what in verse 29?
20. What does Bethabara mean?
21. What does this Lamb do that no lamb can do?
22. Who was Jesus to be made manifest to?
23. What physical tie did John and Jesus have?
24. What was the Spirit symbolized by in verse 32?
25. Who baptizes with the Holy Ghost and fire?