

“The Lamb Slain From the Foundation of the World” Revelation 13:8

We read in Revelation 13:8 of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”.

The identity of this “Lamb” is readily ascertained when we read “the Lamb ... is Lord of lords and King of kings” (Revelation 17:14), and that John the Baptist when “looking at Jesus ... said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’” (John 1:36).

What is the meaning of the phrase “from the foundation of the world”?

It sometimes means *since* the creation of the world. This is the meaning of this phrase when Jesus spoke of “the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world” (Luke 11:50).

It also means *before* the creation of the world. When the world was created, this Lamb was already slain.

Both meanings apply to “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”:

- He has been slain *since* the creation of the world in type and shadow, and also in reality.
- And He was slain *before* the creation of the world when He was, in God’s eternal decree, “foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:20).

This “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” has been revealed to us through what is called *progressive revelation*. Progressive revelation describes the manner in which God unveils the truth regarding many Scriptural doctrines. The first revelation of a truth may be very obscure. But that truth is gradually unfolded in subsequent revelations – “Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little” (Isaiah 28:10, 13) – until it is finally revealed in all its fullness. It is for this reason that the *New Testament*, in which is found the final revelation from God, is used to interpret the *Old Testament*.

We here will observe the progressive revelation of God’s “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”: This lamb was:

1. introduced in Eden;
2. prophesied by Abraham;
3. typified by the Passover lamb;
4. characterized by Isaiah;
5. presented by John the Baptist;
6. manifested in time because He was ordained from eternity.

I. This Lamb was introduced in Eden (Genesis 3:21):

“Also for Adam and his wife Jehovah God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.”

Much more is here intimated than said:

- since Adam and Eve were clothed with skin, an animal was slain;
- since this animal’s skin was removed, its blood was shed;
- since this animal had not sinned, it did not deserve to die;
- since this animal did indeed die, and since Adam and Eve continued to live even though they should have died, it died in their place and stead and for their life.

Here is “a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Colossians 2:17). Here is an obscure representation of Jesus Christ the Lamb. Although this animal slain in Eden is not specifically identified as a lamb (as was Abel’s “firstborn of his flock” in Genesis 4:4), it definitely fits the description and typology:

First, like this lamb, Jesus the Lamb was innocent:

- “He is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26);
- “He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15);
- “He knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21);
- “He committed no sin” (1 Peter 2:22);
- “in Him there is no sin” – eternally (1 John 3:5).

Second, like this lamb, Jesus the Lamb did not deserve to die:

- “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23) – but Jesus never earned such wages;
- “the soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20) – but Jesus never sinned.

Third, like this lamb, Jesus the Lamb died as the substitute of others:

- Jehovah says “for the transgressions of *My people* He was stricken” (Isaiah 53:8);
- Jehovah’s people confess “we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement for *our* peace was upon Him” (Isaiah 53:4f).

Fourth, like the blood of this lamb, the blood of Jesus the Lamb was shed for God’s people:

- He tells them that “My blood is shed for you” (Luke 22:20);
- they confess to Him that “You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9).

Fifth, as Adam and Eve lived because of the death of a lamb for them, so do God’s people live because of

Jesus the Lamb's death for them (1 Peter 2:24): "He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree [as our substitute] that we, having died to sins [in our substitute], might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed."

Sixth, as Adam and Eve were clothed in the skin of a lamb, so are God's people clothed in Jesus the Lamb and His righteousness (Philippians 3:9): we pray to "be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith".

II. This Lamb was prophesied by Abraham (Genesis 22:8): "God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt offering."

A "burnt offering" was of a lamb consumed entirely by fire on an altar, which represented the entire dedication of the offerer to God, and by which he was reconciled to God and therefore lived instead of receiving the death he deserved.

Abraham had been commanded by Jehovah to sacrifice his only son as a burnt offering (vv.1f), and he obeyed (Hebrews 11:17), by offering the lamb Jehovah provided that day as the substitute for Isaac.

The physical lamb God provided that day to die as the substitute for Abraham's physical son (see v.1) was also "a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ", who eventually was provided to be the burnt offering for all God's chosen sons.

III. This Lamb was typified by the Passover lamb (Exodus ch.12). This lamb was "without blemish [faultless, perfect], a male of the first year [therefore in the prime of life]" (v.5). It was sacrificed and its blood was applied to the doorways of Israel to identify the houses which God would "pass over" when He struck with death the firstborn of their enemies.

Here again is "a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ": we who purge the "old leaven" of sin from our lives are assured that "indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

IV. This Lamb was characterized by Isaiah (53:7): "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth."

This passage definitely speaks of Christ, for from it Philip the evangelist "preached Jesus" (Acts 8:26-35).

Lambs are "led", not *driven*, to the slaughter; Jesus the Lamb willingly followed those who "led" Him to the place where He was by them slaughtered on Calvary (Matthew 26:57; 27:2, 31).

And sheep are "silent", not *complaining*, when

sheared; Jesus the Lamb, when sheared by His enemies, "kept silent and said nothing" (Mark 14:61; 15:5) – "when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23).

V. This Lamb was presented by John the Baptist (John 1:29): "John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

Jesus, the Lamb provided by God, is the only lamb who removed all the sins of all the people for whom a lamb was sacrificed.

VI. This Lamb was manifested in time because He was ordained from eternity (1 Peter 1:18-21): "you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was *foreordained* before the foundation of the world, but was *manifest* in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

Thusly is presented this progressive revelation regarding "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". He was introduced in Eden, prophesied by Abraham, typified by the Passover lamb, characterized by Isaiah, presented by John the Baptist, manifested as the Redeemer in time on Calvary because He was the foreordained Redeemer in God's decree from eternity.

But note well that Jesus the Lamb was slain to redeem only those "who through Him believe in God" (1 Peter 1:21).

Was Jesus the Lamb slain to redeem you? Or will you die in your sins and without redemption and salvation?

– Daniel E. Parks