



# THE EXHORTER

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***“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40***

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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**John 1:29 "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."**

Jesus is pictured as the sacrificial lamb that was offered for the sins of mankind. The lamb, innocent, pure and without defect, is a mirror to the sinless, perfect Jesus Christ. Often, at the Lord's Supper table the connection is made to our passage today about Jesus offering Himself, the best of Heaven, for the salvation of our souls. John made this public declaration about who Jesus is and what His mission was. He came to take away the sins of the world.

Jesus is the Lamb of God. There are however, differences in the death of the physical lamb and the death in Jesus. The lamb was killed quickly. A sharp knife slit the throat of the lamb and blood was collected. Very soon after that, the lamb died. It may sound horrible in our times to do that, and I know that I would have passed out on the ground if I was there, however, it was clean, quick and efficient. The lamb didn't know what was happening until the last second.

The death of Jesus wasn't like that. The similarities end. Certainly His blood was shed, but it was not clean, quick nor efficient. It was long, painful and tortuous. Since the garden of Eden, for thousands of years, Jesus knew that He was going to be sacrificed. What they did to Jesus up to the cross would have disqualified any sacrificial lamb under the Law. The lamb was to without blemish. He couldn't have injuries. It couldn't have defects. The scourging ripped open the back of Jesus. The pounding of the crown upon His head, caused open wounds. He was struck in the face. Up to the cross, Jesus was beaten and abused. There was no kindness in His death. There was no one to hold his hand. There was no one to say a prayer with Him. There was no one to comfort Him. He died slowly. His death is an illustration of the hatred that many had against Him. There was no sympathy. It was ugly, painful and wrong.

But in the midst of the darkness of man's hatred, there shines the love of God. Jesus was not helpless. In an instant, He could have stopped all of this. With just a word of His mouth, storms ceased, lepers were cleansed, demons fled bodies and the dead returned. And, with just a word of His mouth, the skies could have been filled with angels. The soldiers could have been killed. He could have sprang forth from that cross, picked up that cross and like some super hero movie, swung that cross around and knocked His crucifiers into eternity. That may be the stuff of a great action movie, but it doesn't change our eternal relationship with God. The physical lamb in ancient Israel was helpless. He could not defend himself. He could run, but he'd be caught. The physical lamb was helpless. Jesus wasn't. The physical lamb wasn't a willing participant in it's own sacrifice. It didn't know what was going on. Jesus did. He knew, and He went along.

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The physical lamb was one of thousands and thousands throughout the land. Abraham and Lot had tons of sheep. Job had sheep. David had sheep. Every Jewish holiday, hundreds of lambs were slaughtered. So, it's blood was nothing unique or one of a kind. Again, so unlike Jesus. No one else could do what Jesus did. No one else could save us as Jesus did. The blood of the two thieves dying on either side of Jesus, did nothing for us. Our own blood could not help us.

The physical lamb in Israel did not walk up to the temple itself. It was brought in by someone else. It was the gift and the sacrifice of someone else. It costs someone else. The owner of the sheep is the one who offered the lamb. Jesus was not like that. We didn't offer Jesus. His death didn't cost us anything. It wasn't our sacrifice that we made. It was Heaven's gift for us. It was God's sacrifice. It was God's offering. We'd never think of this on our own. We would have no way of doing this on our own. We benefited from this but it didn't involve us, nor cost us for the sacrifice to take place.

What the sacrifice of the physical lamb accomplished lasted for a year. The next year, another lamb would have to be found, purchased and offered. The next year, yet another lamb. Over and over and over this happened. There was no lasting benefit of a single lamb. It covered but it could not remove sins. The sacrifice of Jesus was once for all times. His blood cleansed those early believers in Acts 2. It cleansed Saul of Tarsus. It cleansed Lydia. It cleansed the Ethiopian. It cleansed the jailer in Philippi. It cleansed the Corinthians. Now, we are getting far from Jerusalem. It cleansed the early believers in Europe. It continues to cleanse, even today in America. The blood of Jesus is still working today, as powerful and as strong as the day it was first shed. It doesn't lose it's power with time. Distance means nothing to the blood of Jesus.

And, the physical lamb that was sacrificed, was cut up and eaten and never again seen. It was gone and gone forever. Three days after the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lord came out of the tomb and continues to reign from Heaven. His death didn't finish Him. His death wasn't the end of the story. He lives on and on and so shall we. And, it is because of His sacrifice and death, that we have changed our lives and our thinking to follow Him. We want to be with Jesus. We want to be like Jesus. His death, changed the world and His death changed eternity.

Behold, the Lamb of God, so special and so different than the lambs running about the hills of Judea.

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)

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