

THE LAMB OF GOD, WHO TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!

John 1:29 *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" [ESV]*

Thus John the Baptist announced the New Covenant, the coming of the Kingdom of God and the arrival of the Savior of mankind.

Jesus, the Lamb of God not only takes away the sin of the world, but He saves His people, as the angel revealed to Joseph:

Matthew 1:21 *"She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." [NASB]*

And not only His people, but He has the power to atone for all sins:

1 John 2:2 *He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. [ESV]*

Because, we

1 John 3:5 *..... know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. [NASB]*

Yet, we see that sin abounds everywhere in today's world: not only in the eyes of our everyday experience, but in truth as well, according to the Apostle John, who — well into the time of the New Covenant — wrote that:

1 John 5:19b *..... the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. [NASB]*

One may then be confused by the apparent contradiction and perhaps wonder: did Jesus, the Lamb of God, take away the sin of the world or did He not, rather left an abundance of it in a world still in the power of evil?

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It helps to first remember this about sin:

Romans 5:12 *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all men, because all sinned. [HCSB]*

Specifically, the sin of the world was:

Genesis 3:4–6 *The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. [NASB]*

"saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise": that is the original sin of replacing obedience to the Lord with independent judgment, stemming from self-based assessment.

Jesus endowed us with the love demonstrated by submitting Himself to the sacrifice on the Cross at Calvary and enabled us to be again free to love Him.

1 John 4:19 *We love him, because he first loved us. [KJV]*

Then, because of our love for Him, we are now free to obey Him and no longer be in bondage to ourselves, to our own priorities and to sin, since:

John 14:15 *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." [NRSV]*

In sum: by giving us His love, He made it possible for us to love Him and — having thus made us free of the bondage to sin — possible for us to desire to know and obey His priorities rather than ours.

Romans 8:2 *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. [NASB]*

So that:

Romans 6:18 *..... having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. [NKJV]*

Indeed, such freedom from sin is a gift of God: it is not earned for special worthy deeds.

However it is not automatic, rather it is deliberate: the free gift has to be accepted by believing in Christ, as taught by the Apostle Peter in Caesarea:

Acts 10:43 *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. [KJV]*

There is no other way, as also Peter had testified earlier in Jerusalem to the members of the Sanhedrin,

Acts 4:12 *There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved." [NRSV]*

Acceptance of the gift and of the love of God is by placing faith in the One Christ, Son of God, and by receiving His truth, as Jesus remarked when correcting the uncertain and unbelieving Nicodemus:

John 3:11–12 *"Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" [ESV]*

Indeed, the sin of the world was thus taken away from repentant sinners,

1 Peter 2:10 *who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. [NKJV]*

thus they

Luke 13:29 *"..... will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God." [NIV]*

the Kingdom, which Jesus came to preach:

Mark 1:14 *Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, [KJV]*

However, the sin of the world, taken away from repentant sinners, the people of God, is not taken away from the world, since the world does not receive the gift of God; rather it continues to reject the love of God and the way He established for freedom from sin.

In fact, the Kingdom of God, which is free from sin, is not of this world, as Jesus declared when He was delivered to Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea:

John 18:36 *Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." [NLT]*

In the Kingdom there is obedience to the Lord,

Matthew 7:21 *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." [ESV]*

However, the world continues in the power of the evil one — until the end.

1 John 5:19b *..... the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. [NASB]*

The Apostle John here drew a general conclusion from what Jesus, during His earthly ministry, had preached to the Jerusalem leaders and to the unrepentant and unbelieving dwellers of the world:

John 8:23–24 *And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴Therefore I said to*

you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." [NKJV]

Those who will die in their sins in a world lying in the power of evil are not few exceptions, but many, as foretold at the end of the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 7:13–14 *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." [NKJV]*

A consequence of the world continuing to be "in the power of the evil one" is tribulation for the inheritors of the Kingdom, as Barnabas and the Apostle Paul preached in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch:

Acts 14:22 *strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." [NKJV]*

This is also an encouragement for us, as believers, to recognize that we are but sojourners in a sinful world,

1 Peter 2:11 *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, [NKJV]*

to repent,

Acts 3:19 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. [KJV]*

to enter by the narrow gate and to heed the Lord's last request:

Matthew 28:19–20 *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." [NIV]*

Thus the Kingdom of God, where no sin can be found, will be enriched:

Revelation 12:10 *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. [KJV]*

and the believers will be assured to be received in the Kingdom of God and inherit it.