



BIBLE WORD STUDY

But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. (Isaiah 28:13).

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For the Remission of Sins (Study 3) The Lamb of God

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

2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? (Matthew 11:2-3).

Why did John seem so confident in the first statement and then so doubtful in the second? When John the Baptist baptized "for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4) did he baptize looking toward the cross?

"Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3) does not altogether reject the Lord's authority; John *did ask*. It is a real insight to John's "theology" that he would even consider the possibility of another person. He knew what he was to do as the forerunner but evidently did not know much more. Hearing of the compassionate works of Christ rather than the fiery judgment he expected most likely prompted John's doubt.

John expected a more dramatic, and immediate end of things as usual, rather than one of mercy and grace. (I refer to the general use of grace as in the days of Noah--not the dispensation of grace). As soon as John went into prison, kingdom signs were new and increased: healing; raising the dead; etc. The Lord began His public ministry after the wilderness temptations and with John's imprisonment. (Matthew 4:12-17). Of course, John could only hear of those miracles (Matthew 11:2) while imprisoned.

What brought on the doubt was that he was the forerunner to prepare the way for the King amidst a generation of "vipers" who either must repent or be forcibly removed. The King was to rule over Jerusalem and from there, eventually the whole earth. But now the forerunner is in prison, about to be killed. How could these circumstances fit with a Lamb before whom kings would shut their mouths? (Isaiah 52:15)? I think John believed the kingdom of heaven had suffered enough violence (Matthew 11:12) and now it was time to put down the opposition, not by more delay, but by actively bringing judgment. This was John's dilemma. John's earlier remarks re "I must decrease" had no idea of being killed by Herod or any postponement of the Kingdom---but one of a matter of a lowly

instrument, a voice, preparing the way for the King and after that, the King being all in all.

All of the above strongly indicate there was no knowledge of a delay in the kingdom program, the institution of the church age, or even a hint of how a suffering Messiah could be reconciled with a Messiah who would reign in glory.

The Apostle John *did add* certain inspired remarks of his own in his gospel account. These had to do especially with his theme: the Deity of Christ. But he never twisted original events, statements, or dialogue to make them fit the gospel of grace as preached by Paul. His inspired comments or descriptions, inserted after the death, burial, and resurrection are more like comments found in the Book of Hebrews or in John's epistles, 1st, 2nd 3rd John. (These "editorial comments" are not made by Matthew, Mark, or Luke.) Examples are:

1. John 1:1-5. The prologue connecting Genesis 1:1 with the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. John 1:10-14. The facts stated that Christ is the Creator and Light of all men. Israel rejected their Creator but anyone who accepts Him can be saved.
3. John 1:14 states He was "full of grace and truth." This does not mean He instituted the dispensation of grace at His coming.
4. John 1:17 is a declaration of the fact that He was the embodiment of grace and truth, whereas Moses could only witness to that in type and shadow.
5. John 1:18 declares Christ is the "only begotten Son" as opposed to created sons.
6. John 1:22 comments that only after the resurrection did the disciples understand that event.
7. John 1:24-25 is a statement as to the omniscience of the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. John 3 records the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. After speaking of the need for Israel to be "born again" the Lord includes the universal offer to all men. John 3:16 speaks of that which was prophesied as early as Genesis 12 to Abraham, i.e., all nations would be blessed through his Seed. All of this is consistent with kingdom promises, first to Israel, then to the Gentiles.
9. In John 4, the dealing with the Samaritan woman (part Jew) is again, in line with John's theme, the Deity of Christ and the Light of all men.

In none of the comments or record by the apostle, John, is there a denial, change, or attempt to mix the dispensation of grace into the Lord's earthly ministry. John does emphasize the Deity of Christ and that although He came to Israel first, He never purposed to exclude other men from the Kingdom blessings. John writes his gospel after the conversion of Paul and, most likely, he himself knew some, if not all, of Paul's revelation of the church age. John could show how the basic doctrines of Jesus Christ related to all ages: He is Deity, Creator, and Savior of all men. But in his gospel and three epistles he was not allowed to write as "the apostle to the Gentiles" and supplement or supercede the gospel of the kingdom with the unique doctrines related to this present age of grace. A surface study of his gospel and epistles or *interpreting* events and statements by *looking back* to find Paul's message of grace, may produce similarities of doctrines peculiar to the church age. But these interpretations always break down upon close comparison with Paul's revelation.

I agree that John the Baptist was perplexed. God sent him to preach the baptism of *repentance*—with no knowledge of any delay or mercy. He was probably the most perplexed individual in the Bible in prison and at his death. He was sent to tell Israel the ax was laid to them, the King was present with all the signs, but instead of Israel, John's neck became the target of an ax.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29).

If John referred here to the cross, why was he confused when the judgment ax (Matthew 3:10) was laid to his neck rather than to the nation of Israel? If John understood prolonged suffering as an essential part of the kingdom program, he would never question his imprisonment.

Paul never refers to Jesus as "a lamb" because *this Lamb* is unlike any lamb in the field or imagined by man. The phrase is found 27 times in the Book of Revelation. Have we been devotionalized into blindness by allowing Blake's "little lamb, meek and mild" to be our Christ rather than the mighty Lamb, defined by the Bible, who is a terror to this world?

Many never see the absence of grace (as defined by Paul) in the four gospels--especially the Gospel of John. They see John writing of events *before* the cross but inserting the principles of grace that were revealed through Paul *after* the cross. This method skews doctrine and becomes a kind of puzzle, with statements in the Gospel of John to be interpreted by Paul's later revelation. The hearers of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ are placed into an impossible situation. They are being told doctrine that relates to something that has not been revealed; the language used can mean nothing to them and serves no purpose. Thus John 3:16 "whosoever believeth in him hath everlasting life" is seen to be the same message Paul preached. Those in the Father's and Christ's hand in John 15 become eternally secure--as though that is the same thing as being *the hand*. "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" becomes the same message as Paul's. There are many more assumptions which are too many to list here.

The claim of the gospel of John is that these things were spoken during the earthly ministry of the Lord. How could the apostle, John, insert church age doctrine into kingdom age doctrine without producing a revision of historical doctrines? The answer to such is that the statements were indeed spoken but each statement is totally in harmony with kingdom age doctrine, and no statement is meant to mingle church age doctrine into his gospel account. To force interpretive church doctrine into John's record can only blur both the gospel of grace and the gospel of the kingdom. Indeed, if this is the method of interpreting scripture, how do we know that "Christ died for our sins" might not actually mean something entirely different and that God accepts us on the basis of some unknown act, yet to come? How do we know that "church" might not really mean "Israel"? The editorial comments added by John in his gospel to fit his theme of the Deity of Christ should not be confused with the actual historical events, statements, and doctrine of the kingdom found there. See my previous statements above concerning these.

Christ in suffering was *as* "a lamb" or "a sheep before her shearers" in Isaiah's prophecy—but He was more than that. Could it not be that His total submission and obedience to the will of the Father, as well as His ultimate unveiling as *the Lamb* was in

view rather than as a mere sacrificial lamb? After all, the "lamb" of Isaiah 53 not only will suffer, **He shall divide the spoil with the strong** (Isaiah 53:12). John the Baptist's message omits all suffering of the Lamb (if he is referring to Isaiah 53) at the hands of men, and only refers to the Lamb before whom **the kings shall shut their mouths at him** (Isaiah 52:15) and the Lamb who conquers and spoils the kings of the earth. This is consistent with the Lamb as pictured in Revelation (also written by the apostle, John.) We should pay close attention to the figures of speech noted by "like" and "as" in Isaiah 53. In general, interpreters of Isaiah 53, eager to put church age events into the passage, fail to note the church age is totally absent in Isaiah 53 and that the One who is "like" a lamb before *her* shearers is dumb, is also the One who stops the mouth of kings and divides the spoils of victory over those kings of the earth.

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. (Luke 17:26-27).

The only time this *world* has ever been cleansed was during Noah's flood. The Lord compared events in Noah's day with events surrounding His Second Coming.

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.
2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?
3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.
4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.
5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.
6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.
7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.
8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.
9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;
10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:1-10).

Read what *this Lamb* who is also **the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David**, does. Most think of Christ coming again as a *Lion* but He comes as *The Lamb* no one has ever pictured. He brings judgment, not as a Lion, but as **the Lamb**. No other lamb is like this Lamb in Revelation. Who ever thought a lamb could have wrath!

This Lamb looses judgment upon the world.

6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

6:16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

This Lamb is worshipped by all.

7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

7:10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

This Lamb brought salvation through His suffering and blood but He no longer suffers.

7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

This Lamb is not led by a shepherd—He is the Chief Shepherd and leads His people..

7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

This Lamb presides over judgment.

14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

This Lamb defeats all enemies and is Lord of lords, and King of kings.

17:14 ¶ These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

This Lamb has a wife.

19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

21:9 ¶ And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

This Lamb is equal to the Lord God Almighty.

21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

This Lamb is everlasting, eternal Light.

21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

This Lamb is served for all eternity.

22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

We might also ask, "When did Christ ever take away the sin of the world?" The world remains as evil today as it was in the first century. Just what did John mean by "Lamb of God, which *taketh away* the sin of the world"? When will this world be cleaned up and righteousness rule? Is it not after Revelation 19?

We must interpret Christ as "the Lamb" in the passage contexts where the phrase is found. For example, the Bible declares that Jesus Christ is to be King over Israel. Paul calls him "the King of kings" in 1 Timothy 6:15. Does this mean that Christ's relationship to the church is "King of the church" or that He is now exercising this office on earth? Of course not. The passage refers to a future time when "he will shew" Himself as King of kings. He is "head of the body" but never "King of the body." Likewise, Christ is not "the Lamb" with relation to the church age. Paul avoids use of the term altogether because the sin of this world is not taken away by any means.

Paul's "reconciling the world"(2 Cor 5) is not "taking away the sin of the world." By the death of Christ, God put the whole world into a position whereby any individual in the world could be saved--but, as we know, this is not universal salvation, nor is it taking away the sin of the world. It has to do with saving and taking individuals out of the world, not bringing the world to God (as postmillennialism).

