

Gospel Message - Christ Our Substitute



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One day, Jesus went to be baptized in the Jordan River. When John the Baptist recognized him he said, "Look, this is the Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world." (John 1:29) Why did he say that? (*John said this because he knew that Jesus had come to die as our substitute.*)

In the Old Testament, when someone sinned against God, they would sacrifice a lamb for their sin. The lamb would die in their place, taking the punishment they deserved. Of course, the blood of lambs can't really take away sin. Instead, it gives us a picture of how we are saved by Jesus' death on the cross. 2 Corinthians 5:21 explains how this happens.

In this verse, Jesus is the one who knew no sin. Jesus was completely innocent. He never sinned, not even once. But God made him to be sin. In other words, when we trust in Jesus, God treats our sin as if it belongs - not to us - but to Jesus himself. Jesus took our punishment on the cross. He died in our place as our substitute. Why did God make Jesus to be sin? So that in him (Jesus) we might become the righteousness of God. Just as God took all our sin and gave it to Jesus, God has also taken all of Jesus' righteousness and given it to us. All of Jesus' obedience, all his good works, are credited to us. They belong to us through faith.

God did all this for our sake. He did it to save all those who turn away from their sin and who trust in Jesus. Are you trusting in Jesus? If so, an amazing exchange has taken place. God has taken away your sin and given you Jesus' righteousness!

Parents: The ESV Study Bible has an excellent note on 2 Corinthians 5:21.