

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Quincy, IL
Rev. Martin Eden

Epiphany 2
Saturday, January 17, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 18, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

“The Lamb of God who Takes Away the Sin of the World”

John 1:29-42a

John’s Gospel is different than the other three Gospels. John’s Gospel is organized thematically rather than chronologically – for example, in John chapter 2, we are told of Jesus driving the money-changers out of the Temple, which is Monday of Holy Week. Chronologically completely out of order.

In this part of his Gospel, John tell what happens “the next day,” and then again, “the next day” as we read in our Gospel reading. This leads up to his introduction to the Wedding at Cana where he writes, “On the third day, there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee.” Cana marks a new beginning – the first of Jesus’ miracles where two of the elements of the Sacraments play a key role (water and wine). A new beginning happened on the third day – a clear foreshadowing of the resurrection. This is how John organizes his Gospel.

Our reading today begins with the phrase “the next day.” The next day from what? It is important to know right off the bat that this is surrounding the time in which Jesus was baptized. It is not the next day after he was baptized. This is the day after John the Baptist was asked the question “are you the Christ?” And he answers, “No I am not the Christ, but the one who is stands among you,” that is,

He is already here; He is the One “the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie” [Jn. 1:27].

That is the conversation leading up to today’s Gospel reading. Today’s Gospel tells us that John knows who the Christ is because when he baptized Him he saw the heavens brake and the Holy Spirit come to rest on Jesus.

At this point, Jesus has been baptized and Jesus had spent 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by the devil. None of the four Gospels tell every last event of Jesus’ life and ministry, but when you piece them all together, it is easy to see the actual timeline.

Now Jesus has returned to the region of the Jordan River where John the Baptist is still baptizing and pointed to Jesus and says, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the **sin** [singular] of the world [Greek “cosmos” the universe all that is seen and is unseen].”

I think it is important to focus in on the singular nature of the sin of the world and how Jesus’ atonement goes much deeper than simply covering the guilt of our thoughts, words, and deeds – what the catechism refers to as our “actual sins.”

The real problem that we have is not our sins but our **sin** – our Original Sin. Our sins, the evil thoughts, words and deeds are only the fruit of our **sin** which is our nature we inherited from our father Adam and spread by his headship not only to his children but to the entire creation itself via the curse so that not only all mankind fell in Adam’s fall but the entire cosmos in one sense fell with him so that the ground now bears thorns and animals eat each other, death has entered the world and the entire creation groans in eager expectation longing for the children of God to be resurrected.

Christ died for all people and for all of creation. In our Old Testament reading, we heard the Lord say through Isaiah, “It is too light a thing the you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation my reach to the end of the earth” [Is. 49:6]. This is God the Father speaking of what the Christ is going to do. It is too small a thing to only be the Savior of Israel.

This Lamb of God who takes away the “sin” of the world comes offering life and peace for all. It is a gift received by grace alone through faith, it is a message preached and proclaimed through the Word, it is a gift given in the Sacraments. In Baptism and Holy Communion, you are forgiven and you are saved. God presents Himself in this way.

God presented Himself to you in Baptism and through the witnesses of others who nurtured your faith through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit bringing that message of the Gospel through those Means of Grace – His Word and Sacrament.

John, we are told “bore witness.” John says, “I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.” John will not merely bear witness there on the banks of the Jordan River, but he will bear witness of Christ in the deepest sense of that word. The Greek word for witness is “marturion” from where we get the word “martyr.” A martyr is one who dies for the faith, to testify the truth, to be a martyr is to refuse to say anything less than the truth no matter what the consequences may be. Those called martyrs died rather than change their testimony to something that was not true.

At the next day John was with his disciples and again says, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” Two of John’s disciples were invited by Jesus to come and stay with

Him. One of them was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. Having spent the day hearing Jesus, Andrew seeks out his brother and says, "We have found the Messiah." When we look at the text, in actuality, it was the Messiah who found them, but we understand Andrew's excitement.

Knowing how John's Gospel is organized thematically rather than chronologically, I find it interesting that immediately after it is emphasized that John the Baptist bore witness of Jesus as the Son of God; he bore witness and testified of the Lamb who would be killed for testifying of the truth; I find it interesting that we then hear about Andrew and Simon Peter. Both of these brothers would be crucified. Andrew was crucified on an "X" shaped cross and Peter was crucified upside down.

These men were witnesses. They were martyrs. They would testify of the Truth to the very end. We continually pray for a peaceful and blessed end, that when our time comes, God would graciously take us out of this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven. We look at the death of John the Baptist, Peter, and Andrew – their departure from this life was anything but peaceful, certainly from our perspective.

However, they died as martyrs, as witnesses knowing and proclaiming that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God and is the Lamb of God who takes away the **sin** of the world. Anyone who dies having faith in Christ has been given and peaceful and blessed end. Amen.