

**In my mind, if John the Baptist was expecting the Messiah to come and reign, there would be no suffering. So how could he declare, 'This is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world'?**

That is a very perceptive question, because you'd have thought he'd have sensed by that that the Lord had to suffer, for how could the Lamb take away the sin of the world without being sacrificed.

Well, I can't answer for John the Baptist. I say this seriously, you'll have to ask him when you get to heaven. He may rebuke you for listening to that fellow Gooding, and give you another interpretation! He may not have seen that the judgment had to wait until after the sacrifice. The two on the road to Emmaus had read the Scriptures talking about the future judgment and the victories that the Messiah would bring (see Luke 24). They hadn't quite got it that the Messiah must first suffer and enter his glory. And the prophets, so Peter tells us so diligently, were sure the Messiah was coming, but they searched at what time, and what kind of a time, the Spirit of Christ that was in them had indicated when he spoke of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow (see 1 Peter 1:11). It wasn't always clear to the Jews the order that those events must take.

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**DAVID W. GOODING (1925-2019)** was Professor of Old Testament Greek at Queen's University Belfast and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He taught the Bible internationally and lectured on both its authenticity and its relevance to philosophy, world religions and daily life. He published scholarly articles on the Septuagint and Old Testament narratives, as well as expositions of Luke, John, Acts, Hebrews, the New Testament's use of the Old Testament, and several books addressing arguments against the Bible and the Christian faith. His analysis of the Bible and our world continues to shape the thinking of scholars, teachers and students alike.