



Why Did God Institute Animal Sacrifices?

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*Discovering the light of the character of God which
shines out of darkness in the face of Jesus Christ
(2 Corinthians 4:6)*

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Animal Sacrifices

There are several places throughout the Hebrew Scriptures (commonly known as the Old Testament) where God speaks concerning animal sacrifices: Genesis 4:3-4; Exodus 29:10-14; Leviticus 3; 16:5-11; and Numbers 6:10-11 just to name a few. In Exodus chapter 20, God says:

"An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you." (Exodus 20:24)

What is the meaning behind these sacrifices? According to *Wikipedia*, "Animal sacrifice is the ritual killing and offering of animals, usually as part of a religious ritual or to appease or maintain favour with a deity." And *GotQuestions.org* says:

"God required animal sacrifices to provide a temporary covering of sins and to foreshadow the perfect and complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Leviticus 4:35, 5:10). Animal sacrifice is an important theme found throughout Scripture because 'without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness' (Hebrews 9:22) ... **Animal sacrifices foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice on our behalf.** The only basis on which an animal sacrifice could provide forgiveness of sins is Christ who would sacrifice Himself for our sins, providing the forgiveness that animal sacrifices could only illustrate and foreshadow."

When we combine these two definitions, we see it is generally believed that, for God to be appeased and forgive man, blood needed to be shed. At first, this blood came from an animal which would "provide a temporary covering of sins" until "the perfect and complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ" when He shed His blood on the cross. The "proof" of this idea is given by quoting Hebrews 9:22, which they claim teaches that God demanded "the shedding of blood" in order for Him to grant forgiveness to the sinner.

Behold the Lamb of God

When John the Baptist presents the Messiah to the world, he presents Him as the Lamb of God:

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





The New Testament writers are indeed clear that all the animal sacrifices throughout the Hebrew Scriptures represented Jesus who would die upon the cross to take away our sins.

Even Isaiah prophesied of the coming Messiah 700 years before Jesus' ministry on earth saying, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. ***He was led like a lamb to the slaughter***, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).

In the book of Exodus, God instructs His people saying, "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; you shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats" (Exodus 12:5). This is why the apostle Peter wrote that we were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, ***as of a lamb without blemish and without spot***" (1 Peter 1:19).

However, did the Bible writers actually believe and teach that Jesus' sacrifice was meant to "provide forgiveness"? Many within the "Christian" community say yes. Notice what *Christianity.com* says:

"Rebellion and sin required death. They were not to be taken lightly. **In order for the Israelites to gain forgiveness, something had to die.** It was a painful process, yes. That was the point. Sin led to death. It was serious. In order to avoid their own destruction because of their sin, the Israelites had to offer something innocent to die in their place—in this case, an animal without blemish."

And referring back to the quote from *GotQuestions.org*, we read:

"The only basis on which an animal sacrifice could **provide forgiveness** of sins is Christ who would sacrifice Himself for our sins, **providing the forgiveness** that animal sacrifices could only illustrate and foreshadow."

Their reason again is the belief that "without the shedding of blood" there can be no forgiveness. This popular understanding of the Gospel has a Theological name called, *Penal Substitutionary Atonement (PSA)*:

“The penal substitution theory teaches that Jesus suffered the penalty for mankind’s sins. Penal substitution derives from the idea that divine forgiveness must satisfy divine justice, that is, that **God is not willing or able to simply forgive sin without first requiring a satisfaction for it.**” (*Wikipedia*)

Since the apostle John tells us that “God is love” (1 John 4:8), we as Bible students, desiring to know God’s character, must ask some important questions. Does love require a satisfactory payment before forgiveness can be granted? Were animal sacrifices merely an appetizer until God had the blood of a human sacrifice? How, if at all, does the death of Jesus “provide forgiveness” that God was previously unable to give? Is there another way of understanding Hebrews 9:22, and if so, will that give us a better understanding of why God instituted animal sacrifices and thus a better understanding of the Gospel and why Jesus had to die?

Christ Set Forth to be a Propitiation

I believe one of the reasons why most people misunderstand why God instituted animal sacrifices is due to a misunderstanding of a word we find among most Bible translations— *propitiation*.

*“And He [Jesus] Himself is **the propitiation** for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” (1 John 2:2)*

The Greek word John uses for “propitiation” here is ἱλασμός (*hilasmos*), which *Strong’s Concordance* defines as:

ἱλασμός (hilasmos):

“A propitiation (of an angry god), atoning sacrifice. **The term ‘hilasmos’ refers to the act of appeasing or satisfying the wrath of a deity, specifically through a sacrificial offering.** In the New Testament, it is used to describe the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which **satisfies the righteous demands of God’s justice and turns away His wrath from sinners.** It emphasizes the reconciliation between God and humanity through Christ’s sacrificial death. In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of propitiation was common in religious practices, where offerings were made to appease the gods and avert their wrath. In the Jewish context, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) involved sacrifices to atone for the sins of the people. **The New Testament writers, particularly John, use ‘hilasmos’ to convey the idea that Jesus is the ultimate and final atoning sacrifice, fulfilling and surpassing the Old Testament sacrificial system.**”

If we were to accept this definition of why the New Testament writers use the word “propitiation”, we are forced to believe that Jesus’ “atoning sacrifice” by dying on the cross was meant to satisfy “the righteous demands of God’s justice” which then “turns away His wrath from sinners.” Jon Bloom of *desiringgod.org* explains:

“Jesus, our Propitiator, absorbed the Father’s wrath against our sin and satisfied it in full ... For ‘God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us’ and saved us ‘from the wrath of God’ (Romans 5:8–9).” (*The Wrath of God Was Satisfied*, desiringgod.org)¹

This then would lead us to the conclusion that Jesus’ death was not meant to change anything about *us* but was instead meant to change things about *God*— namely “the righteous demands of God’s justice” and to turn away “His wrath from sinners.” So, when Matthew 1:21 says, “You shall call His name Jesus, for **He will save His people from their SINS**”, should we understand it as, “You shall call His name Jesus, for **He will save His people from THE WRATH OF GOD**”? Likewise, should we understand John 1:29, which says “the Lamb of God” would take away “**the SIN of the world!**”, as Jesus would take [or turn] away **THE WRATH OF GOD!**”?

“Obviously, the Garden changed us, not God. So who then did the cross seek to fix? Did the cross fix us, or did it fix God? If PSA is correct, then the cross dealt with God, not us.” ~ Stephen D. Morrison

Do you doubt that PSA suggests that “the cross dealt with God, not us”? Read carefully the following excerpt written by Mark Mauling:

“God does not punish us who are in Christ! He cannot! Why? **Because all of His anger for our sins was placed on Jesus on His cross.** 1 John 2:1 [actually 1 John 2:2] says, ‘And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins...’ Have we told the Lord lately that we are so glad for our propitiation? Probably not! We may have no idea what that word means. It is a great word and it literally means this. **The anger of God towards us because of our sins was completely satisfied by the death of Jesus on the cross. If all of our Father’s anger for our sins was dealt with on the cross, then He cannot and will not ever get angry with us or punish us again, because He punished Jesus who took all our sins for us ...** We were tried for our crimes of sin and found guilty. Our sentence was death but Jesus took our place and died for us. As a result, we cannot be found guilty again by God for our sins because they are already paid for. God the Father will not ever be angry with us because of our sins, even the ones we have not yet committed.” (*Christian Myth 4 - God Punishes Us*, gracelifeinternational.com, correction in brackets added)

Again, we see the understanding of “propitiation” as being something Christ became in order to change something about *God*— namely “the anger of God towards us.” This author emphatically says, “all of our Father’s

¹ Unfortunately, I believe Mr. Bloom is using a translation that misquotes the Greek of Romans 5:9 saying we are saved “from the wrath of God.” We’ll discuss this in another chapter.

anger for our sins was dealt with on the cross." Notice it again; apparently, Christ did not die on the cross to deal with our *sins*, but to deal with "our Father's *anger* for our sins." Alyssa Roat reiterates:

"God poured out the punishment for sin upon Jesus. 'The LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all' (Isaiah 53:6). The Bible tells us, 'If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved' (Romans 10:9). Therefore, for those who accept Christ as Lord and Savior, the punishment for sin is no longer upon us. **God no longer punishes us for our sin; Jesus took that punishment** ... God does punish us for our sins. His justice is real. However, His desire is to be with us. **This is why He provided Jesus.** Those who accept Christ need not fear punishment." (*Does God Punish Us For Our Sins?*, May 22, 2020, *Christianity.com*)²

Once again, we see the main reason why "He [God] provided Jesus" was to bring a change from within *Himself*. He desired to be with us but apparently couldn't until He punished someone with death. Now that Christ has died, God can be with us and will never again punish us for our sins. In this framework, John 1:29 would be understood as the Lamb (Jesus) would take away, not the actual sin, but **GOD'S PUNISHMENT OF SIN**.

Also within this framework, we have the idea that it was *God Himself* who killed His Son so He would not have to kill us. After asking the question, "Who Killed Jesus?", John Piper explains:

"His Father killed him. ... Just as Abraham lifted the knife over the chest of his son Isaac, but then spared his son because there was a ram in the thicket, so **God the Father lifted his knife over the chest of his own Son, Jesus — but did not spare him**, because he was the ram; he was the substitute." (*Who Killed Jesus?* *Desiringgod.org*)

In another article, John Piper hammers down on this claim:

"The ultimate answer to the question, **Who killed Jesus?** Is: **God did**. It is a staggering thought. Jesus was His Son! But the whole message of the Bible leads to this conclusion." (*Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Had to Die*, p. 11)

Popular theologian, John MacArthur, also explains it the same:

"We must remember, however, that **sin did not kill Jesus; God did**. The suffering servant's death was nothing less than a punishment administered **by God** for sins others had committed. That is what we mean when we speak of penal substitutionary atonement."

Author Clifford Goldstein reiterates the same by stating, "I've always been baffled by those among us who deny the penal substitutionary aspect of

² As we will see in a bit, the conclusion Miss Roat is coming to is a result of a popular misunderstanding of Isaiah 53:6.

Christ's death." He then defines and defends the penal substitutionary theory by saying:

"In short, rather than killing us for violating His law, the Father killed Jesus instead ... to put it crudely, **the Father killed Jesus so that He wouldn't have to kill us.**"
(*The Review*, December 8, 2023)³

Comparing this to what Paul wrote in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death", we are then forced to believe that, since "sin did not kill Jesus; God did", the death everyone faces (including Jesus as our example) does not come naturally from the sin but from *God Himself*.



I don't know about you, but this ideology certainly does not sound like the Gospel (Good News) that God wants us to accept and share with others. It sounds more like a domestic abuse situation. Would you think it was good news to hear that a father's long-time violent anger against

his children's disobedience was finally satisfied by him killing the mother who stepped in to protect her children; then, since the mother absorbed her husband's anger, we can now believe he truly loves his children and will never hurt them ever again so it's perfectly okay for them to live with him? If this were the Gospel, would this really bring true atonement (at-one-ment) between God and us?

Clearly, there must be something we are misunderstanding. Attempting to sort it out, Dr. John R.W. Stott explains:

"In sum, it would be hard to exaggerate the differences between the pagan and the Christian views of propitiation. In the pagan perspective, human beings try to placate their bad-tempered deities with their own paltry offerings. **According to the Christian revelation, God's own great love propitiated [satisfied] his own holy wrath through the gift of his own dear Son, who took our place, bore our sin and died our death. Thus God himself gave himself to save us from himself.**"
(*Why is Propitiation Necessary?* June 14, 2010)

Again, I don't know about you, but I am even more confused. On one hand, God will never be angry with us again because He punished and killed His Son Jesus instead of killing us. On the other hand, God's wrath is now propitiated (satisfied) because He killed *Himself* to save us from *Himself*. So, the so-called Gospel (Good News) we are to give the people is that:

³ Although we will continue to discuss this concept, you may find my book, *Did God Kill Jesus Instead of Killing Us?* extremely helpful. See inside back cover for more details.

"Since 'sin did not kill Jesus; God did', the problem mankind has is not really sin but God Himself who is angry with us. But don't worry, instead of killing us, God killed His Son Jesus (or, somehow killed Himself) on the cross to satisfy His anger and to 'save us from Himself.' Therefore, He cannot and will not ever get angry with us or punish us again."

Thus, in a nutshell, these Christian apologists claim the Gospel is that Jesus came to save us, not from sin, as Matthew 1:21 says, but from God! This is exactly what Don Carson teaches on page 40 of his book, *Romans*:

"It is commonly held that we need to be saved from our sins, but the sobering truth is that we need to be saved from God Himself, for His anger is personal and active."

However, in order to find out what the New Testament writers truly meant by Jesus being the propitiation, let's go to the book of Romans:

*"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom **God set forth as a propitiation** by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (Romans 3:24-26)*

The Greek word for *propitiation* here is ἱλαστήριον (*hilasterion*), which actually means "mercy seat" and is referring to the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. This word is used only one other time where the writer of Hebrews is discussing the mercy seat of the Ark:



*"And over it the cherubim of glory [angelic sculptures] shadowing the **mercyseat; (hilasterion)** of which we cannot now speak particularly." (Hebrews 9:5)*

In other words, "God presented him [Jesus] **as the mercy seat** by his blood, through faith, to demonstrate his righteousness" (Romans 3:25, *Christian Standard Bible*).

Now, *hilasterion* is a derivative of the word ἱλάσκομαι (*hilaskomai*) which means, "be merciful, make reconciliation." One verse that uses *hilaskomai* is Luke 18:13 where the *Young's Literal Translation* says, "God be **propitious [hilaskomai]** to me—the sinner!" However, most other versions, such as the *New King James Version*, translate it as "God, be **merciful [hilaskomai]** to me a sinner."

The only other verse where the word *hilaskomai* is used is Hebrews 2:17 where the *New King James Version* says:

*"Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make **propitiation [hilaskomai]** for the sins of the people."*

Other translations use the words "atonement" or "reconciliation" instead of "propitiation." The meaning therefore is that, by revealing God's *mercy*, Christ would make *reconciliation* between God and man. How did Paul say God presented His mercy through Christ back in Romans 3:24?— "Freely by His grace." And by reading the whole of Psalm chapter 136, we see "His mercy endures forever." Psalm 118:1-4 says:

*"Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For **His mercy endures forever.** Let Israel now say, '**His mercy endures forever.**' Let the house of Aaron now say, '**His mercy endures forever.**' Let those who fear the Lord now say, '**His mercy endures forever.**'"*

Scripture is not trying to tell us that God needed to be appeased, but instead that God presented Jesus as the way and the means to reconcile us to God. Jesus did not die to change *God's mind* about us so that He can now grant us forgiveness. Instead, Jesus lived among us and died to change *our minds* about God so that we will receive His forgiveness that God had already freely granted.

By accepting what Christ revealed about God's true character (that God has FREELY forgiven all) we become reconciled to God through Christ. I believe E.J. Waggoner (1855-1916) gives us the correct view of why Christ became a "propitiation":



"A Propitiation. – A propitiation is a sacrifice. The statement then is simply that Christ is set forth to be a sacrifice for the remission of our sins. 'Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' Hebrews 9:26. **Of course the idea of a propitiation or sacrifice is that there is wrath to be appeased. But take particular notice that it is we who require the sacrifice, and not God. He provides the sacrifice. The idea that God's wrath has to be propitiated**

in order that we may have forgiveness finds no warrant in the Bible. It is the height of absurdity to say that God is so angry with men that he will not forgive them unless something is provided to appease his wrath, and that therefore he himself offers the gift to himself, by which he is appeased.

... The heathen idea [of propitiation], which is too often held by professed Christians, is that men must provide a sacrifice to appease the wrath of their god. All heathen worship is simply a bribe to their gods to be favorable to them. If they thought that their gods were very angry with them, they would provide a greater sacrifice, and so human sacrifices were offered in extreme cases. They thought, as the worshipers of Siva in India do today, that their god was gratified by the sight of blood." (*The Signs of the Times*, Vol. 22, Jan. 23, 1896)

Please do not miss what Waggoner is saying. He is rightly teaching that "Of course the idea of a propitiation or sacrifice is that there is wrath to be appeased" however, "the idea that God's wrath has to be propitiated in order that we may have forgiveness finds no warrant in the Bible."

So, if it wasn't God's wrath being appeased, whose wrath was? Waggoner suggests, "But take particular notice that *it is **we** who require the sacrifice*, and not God." This concept is the complete opposite of what we read from *GotQuestions.org*, which said, "**God** required animal sacrifices to provide a temporary covering of sins." What does Scripture say? "Sacrifice and offering You [God] did not desire ... *Burnt offering and sin offering **You [God] did not require***" (Psalm 40:6).

If there was any wrath/anger to be appeased, ask yourself, "Who was angry and hostile with who?" Paul says that *our* "sinful nature is always hostile to God" (Romans 8:7) while at the same time taught us that God has FREELY forgiven all. Could it be that it was OUR hostility and OUR anger against God that needed to be satisfied and appeased?

*"But they cried, saying, **Crucify Him, crucify Him.** And he [Pilate] said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him: I will therefore chastise Him, and let Him go. And they were instant with loud voices, **requiring that He might be crucified.** And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be **as they required.**"* (Luke 23:21-24, King James Version)

In this framework, the institution of animal sacrifices was to reveal what was in the deceitful and desperately corrupt heart of man (Jeremiah 17:9).

Saved From the Wrath of God?

But doesn't Paul tell us that Jesus' death saved us from the wrath of God? Earlier, we read from Jon Bloom, who wrote, "'God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us' and saved us '*from the wrath of God*' (Romans 5:8–9)." However, the Greek does not say "the wrath of God." It simply says, "from wrath."

*"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be **saved from wrath** through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."* (Romans 5:9-10, New King James Version)

First of all, notice again that it is "we" who were "the enemies." Some translations, as the one Mr. Bloom used, say "sinners." All sinners are

“hostile”, “enemies,” towards God. When Paul says we shall be “saved from wrath”, he is therefore speaking about OUR wrath.

In my article and booklet entitled, *What Is God's Wrath?*, we learn that God's anger is expressed, not by Him lashing out to cause Lawbreakers any harm, but by Him reluctantly giving man over to our own self-destructive desires. One great example of this is when God reluctantly gave Israel what they desired— an earthly king like all the other nations (1 Samuel 8:4-9). Due to their demands, God tearfully said to His prophet Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but **they have rejected Me**, that I should not reign over them” (Verse 7). Because they had rejected God as their King, and willingly stepped out from under His protection, we read:

“O Israel, you have destroyed yourself ... I gave you a king in My anger, and took him away in My wrath.” (Hosea 13:9-11)

In His anger, God gave them Saul as their first king— a man possessing the characteristics they had desired. In His wrath, God took him away, meaning He tearfully gave Israel over to self-destruction (“Israel, you have destroyed yourself”) and did not prevent Saul from committing suicide (1 Chronicles 10:3-6; 13-14). This is what God desires to save us from.



“Heaven's grand machinery is geared especially for saving sinners, not for condemning them (John 3:17). Many people are surprised to learn that the Father has refused to judge anyone, but has turned all judgment over to the Son (John 5:22). The text says that He has washed His hands of all judgment, and put it in Christ's hands, because He is the Son of man. **Therefore you can be certain that the Father will never condemn you.**

You can be equally certain that Christ will not condemn you. He says that He refuses to judge anyone with condemnation [John 8:15]. The only judgment He will pronounce is the vindication, the acquittal, of those who appreciate His cross: ‘If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world’ (John 12:47).

Therefore anyone who is condemned at last will be condemned by his own self-incriminating judgment because he has chosen not to believe the gospel: ‘He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day’ (vs 48).

The ‘wrath’ that the Lord wants to save us from is not ‘God's wrath,’ as some mistaken modern translations render Romans 5:9 (the original language says, ‘we shall be saved from wrath through him;’ cf. TEV, NIV, Goodspeed which insert a phrase that is not in the original). **God would save us from the terrible experience in the last judgment day of our own wrath, of hating ourselves for a lifetime of self-seeking, wasted opportunities, and totally unjustified rebellion against His grace.”** (Robert J. Wieland, *Lightened With His Glory*, p. 30)

Take note that Romans 5:10 says, "We shall be saved by His [Jesus'] **life**." By witnessing, reading, believing and receiving "His life", we who "were enemies" are now reconciled to God and become "friends." Our wrath and condemnation towards Him and others, due to our misapprehension of His character, goes into remission. Again, Paul writes:

"And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled." (Colossians 1:21)

Who has He reconciled us with?—"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:9). Can you see that it was not God who needed to be reconciled to us, but that we needed to be reconciled to Him? God did not require a change of mind, we did! We are the ones who were "alienated and enemies in [our] mind", and now, by seeing and accepting the truth of God's character as revealed by Christ, our minds become reconciled with God. Paul taught:

*"... We all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath**, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ ... For **by grace you have been saved** through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:3-5,8)⁴*

Thus, true justification is an adJUSTment to *OUR* minds and hearts toward God, resulting in reconciliation (atonement). It has nothing to do with Christ making a legal payment to God in order to "provide forgiveness" that God was previously unable to give. I pray you can see how it is wrong to believe that God would ever hold back forgiveness until something, or someone, makes a satisfactory payment. John says that "we love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). God is the One who has made all the initiatives towards reconciliation.

The atonement is the revealing of God's love to such an extent that it touches men's hearts and draws them to Himself. It is not about appeasing God's wrath but learning about His character and discovering it was our wrath that had to be appeased

⁴ Unfortunately, many translations twist the meaning by stating we were all "by nature deserving of God's wrath/anger/punishment", when it is really talking about our inherent and cultivated wrath towards God and others.



“God does not need to be reconciled to man, for, like the mother’s love, His love ever follows us, even when we are in the downward way, seeking to bring us back to Him. But man needs to be reconciled to God. In some way there must be an atonement made. Not that God’s wrath must be satisfied, so that He will look with favor upon offending man, but that God’s love must be so manifest, in spite of the existence of suffering and sin, that men will turn their hearts toward Him, as the flower toward the sun.

... The word ‘atonement’ means at-one-ment. Sin had brought misery, and **misery had brought a misunderstanding of God’s character.** Thus men had come to hate God instead of loving Him; and hating Him, the one Father, men also hated man, their brother. Thus, instead of the one family and the one Father, men were separated from God and from each other, and held apart by hatred and selfishness.

There must be an atonement. **An atonement can be made only by God’s so revealing his love, in spite of sin and sorrow, that men’s hearts will be touched to tenderness; and they, being delivered from Satan’s delusions, may see how fully and terribly they have misunderstood the divine One,** and so have done despite to the Spirit of his grace. Thus they may be led, as returning brethren, to come back to the Father’s house in blissful unity. **The atonement is not to appease God’s wrath so that man dare come to Him but it is to reveal His love so that they WILL come to Him.** It was not Christ reconciling God unto the world, but God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. It is nowhere said that God needed to be reconciled unto us; he says, ‘I have not forsaken you, but you have forsaken me.’” (George Fifeield, *God Is Love*, pp. 46, 48)

The First Animal Sacrifice

“Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.” (Genesis 3:21)

Within the aforementioned article from *GotQuestions.org*, the author states that, because “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”, “when Adam and Eve sinned, *animals were killed by God* to provide clothing for them (Genesis 3:21).” John MacArthur writes:

“This introduces for the first time in Scripture the matter of atonement or covering of the sinner through the death of an innocent substitute. This is the sovereign work of God. God chose the animal; **God killed the animal**; God took the skin of the animal and covered the sinners. **This is the first death in the world, never been death before this. The first death is the death of an animal killed by God to cover sinners** ... the sacrificial system was to picture the necessity of a substitute to take the place of sinners, to be killed, and **to bear the wrath of God.** And, of course, none of the sacrifices ever given in the past could do that, they just pictured the One that was to come, who was Christ.” (*The First Sacrifice*, *gty.org*, November 11, 2012)

However, Scripture never says that God killed animals to provide Adam and Eve clothing. It simply says that God provided them with animal skins for clothing. A much better conclusion would be that, either God simply created some tunics of skin, or Adam and Eve took the life of the animal to reveal that it was *mankind* who would kill Jesus. This is why the book of Revelation says Jesus is "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). The hard truth is, God offered up His Son before the foundation of the world *ALIVE*, giving Him over to us, and we killed Him.



Because Jesus is the only Mediator between God and sinful man (1 Timothy 2:5), we know that it was Jesus (as the Father's representative) who Adam charged with the responsibility of his own selfish actions.

*"And the man said, 'The woman whom **You gave** to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.'" (Genesis 3:12)*

Because of Satan's virus of sin being injected into man, "the carnal mind is hostile against God" (Romans 8:7) and completely selfish. In his attempt to escape death, Adam shifted the blame and poured his wrath of condemnation upon the Son of God and his own wife (Eve). He was willing for Christ or Eve to die in his place as a scapegoat. You see, when God said, "You shall surely die", Adam thought that God's justice demanded death. Sin had tricked him into misinterpreting God's words as being an imposed threat instead of a loving warning. He reasoned, "If anyone was going to die, it should be one of you instead!"

As many do today, Adam failed to realize it is sin itself that *naturally* brings death. When Scripture says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), it is not saying, "The wages of sin is God is going to kill you." The *Weymouth New Testament* expresses it correctly, "For the wages **paid by Sin** are death." Scripture is clear that the natural consequence of sin is death:

*"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and **sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.**" (James 1:14-15)*

*"Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature **will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature.** But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit." (Galatians 6:8)*

Furthermore, sin is toxic and spreads its corruption and destruction not only upon people, but upon the environment around us (Isaiah, 24:4,5; Romans 8:22). Thus, the lamb also symbolizes that sin kills the guilty and the innocent, ourselves and others, including the animals who find our world impossible to live in and are going extinct.

Do you really agree with Mr. MacArthur that “the first death in the world” was caused by God? Referring to Adam, Romans 5:12 tells us:

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned.”
(Christian Standard Bible)

Scripture is clear that sin entered the world by Adam (the representative of humanity) and then “death” came “through sin”— not God! Hebrews 2:14 says that Jesus, “by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil” (Berean Standard Bible). It is the Devil (Satan) who holds the power of death because he is the author of sin and death, which is in opposition to God’s design.

Christ did not come and die to save us from being killed by God, but to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21) because it is sin that brings death (James 1:14-15). In other words, God and His Son are working together to save us from killing OURSELVES

If God were the first being to ever kill, then He would not only have the power of death but would be the author of death. However, God is the Author of life, not death. Paul tells us “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:26). If death were a part of who God is, then He would have to destroy a part of Himself. Besides, would God ever personally use the methods of an enemy? To those who desired to kill Him, Jesus said, “You are of your father **the devil**, and the desires of your father you want to do. **He was a murderer from the beginning...**” (John 8:44). A little later, He explained:

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness.” (John 10:10)

In the Garden, Adam reasoned that blame could be shifted and that another could pay the debt he believed God demanded. Therefore, it was

Adam, *in his wrong state of mind*, who introduced the concept of penal substitution. This is again how Christ became “the Lamb **slain** from the foundation of the world.” The very first animal sacrifice was not only to point *forward* to Christ’s death on the cross, but more importantly to reveal to humanity how we have made Jesus suffer from the very inception of sin. All of the bloody sacrifices throughout the Old Testament represented what Jesus was going through right there and then.

“So were not the sacrifices offered typical of Christ? Yes. But it was typical of Christ present by faith. Was not Christ right there? Was not Christ the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world? Was not Christ a gift of God there before the world was? Then when he called on men from Adam unto all - as long as the sacrifices were offered in that way - when He taught them to offer those sacrifices, what was that but teaching them that that was a token of their appreciation of the great sacrifice that God had already made for them, and of which they were enjoying the benefit by having that gift in the heart which was Jesus Christ? ... Is it not plain, then, that everything that God gave to them in that day was intended to teach them concerning the personal, living Saviour, personally present with them, if they had only received Him? And all they needed to do to receive Him was to believe in Him.” (A.T. Jones, *General Conference Bulletin* 1895, p. 478)



The Real Reason Why God Instituted Animal Sacrifices

In order for Adam and the rest of us to see what was in our heart, God instituted the sacrificial system. The Bible plainly states that God did not require bloody sacrifices in order to forgive man (Psalm 40:6). Furthermore, in Jeremiah 7:22-23 we read:

“For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’”

How can God say that He did not command the children of Israel about burnt offerings and sacrifices when it appears obvious that He did command them to offer the Passover and established the sacrificial system? Is the Bible contradicting itself here? No, **like having an earthly king, the sacrificial system is a reflection of what man is thinking, not what God is thinking.**

God simply wants us to trust and obey Him by trusting in His grace. He did not desire to give man sacrifices, but He had to command that which was in the heart of man to cause our sinfulness to abound. Not so He could condemn us, but that we might finally see our pervertedness and seek His grace which much more abounds (Romans 5:20). We read this concept in the book of Ezekiel:

*"Therefore speak to them, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, **I the LORD will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols, that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols.**'"* (Ezekiel 14:4-5)

Since they became "estranged" (alienated) from God and His ways, their carnal hearts were full of sacrifice and offering in the pagan sense of appeasement. To reveal and help His people see this, God gave them commandments to "seize the house of Israel by their heart", or as *The Septuagint* says, "according to the things in which his [their] mind is entangled." God further states:

*"Moreover, **I gave them statutes that were not good** and rules by which they could not have life."* (Ezekiel 20:25, English Standard Version)

How can it be that God gives things to His people by which they cannot live? He gives them the things that *they* want which are outside of God's design for life. The *New King James Version* translates it correctly by saying, "Therefore I also **gave them up to** statutes that were not good." *Bullinger's Companion Bible* explains that the words "I gave them also statutes" is a Hebrew idiom that means "'I suffered [permitted] others to give them statutes' ... Active verbs in Hebrew were used to express not only the doing of the thing, but the permission of the thing which the agent is said to do. The [Hebrew] verb *nāthan*, to give, is therefore rendered to suffer [permit] in this sense."

God gave them commands on how a king should act and how sacrifices should be done to teach them as much as He could through them, but they remain less than ideal systems which He knew would degrade over time (see the history of Israel's kings).

How far would the human mind travel in distorting the true purpose of why God instituted animal sacrifices? When the temple was being dedicated, "King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep" (2 Chronicles 7:4-5).

Where did God require all these things? The Bible says that God did not desire sacrifice and offering. Men were even willing to sacrifice their own children to please the god they imagined. What does the Scripture say?

*“Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? **He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.**” (Micah 6:7-8)*

As you can see, the implied answer to the question is “no.” God was never pleased nor satiated with bloody sacrifices. Greg Boyd explains:

“The first thing I’d say about animal sacrifices in the Old Testament is that it’s important to know that all Ancient Near Eastern people sacrificed animals as a way of appeasing the gods. In fact, this has been a staple of human religion around the world from the start, as Genesis 4 (with Cain and Abel’s sacrifice) illustrates ... I suspect this reflects the fallen human sense that we are estranged from



God and that he’s angry about it, so we instinctively want to do something to rectify this ... In fact, the way some Old Testament authors refer to the sacrifice as producing ‘a pleasing aroma to God’ reflects the cultural indebtedness of this practice, for we find this same phrase used by other people long before the Israelites. **Since God must relate to people where they are at in order to gradually lead them forward, just as a missionary must do when going to pagan cultures, it seems to me that God accepted this barbaric practice as an accommodation to his fallen, culturally conditioned people.** In fact, Leviticus 17:7 indicates that God commanded animal sacrifices as a way of helping his people to stop worshipping demons. **So, as is often the case with God’s dealings with fallen people, it seems this command doesn’t reflect God’s ideal will. It rather reflects his accommodating will as God must choose between the lesser of two evils.** (I could give hundreds of examples of this in the Old Testament, e.g., why God allowed polygamy and concubines).” (*reknew.org.*)⁵

Without the Shedding of Blood There is no Forgiveness?

*“Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**” (Hebrews 9:22, English Standard Version)*

⁵ Other examples of this type of accommodation are statutes such as stoning, war, and slavery. When Jesus spoke of divorce, He said “Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to your hard hearts, but it was not what God had originally intended” (Matthew 19:8, *New Living Translation*).

First of all, the Greek text of Hebrews 9:22 doesn't say "forgiveness of sins" as the above example wrongly shows. It actually says "there is no remission." The author is describing something going into remission when we (not God) see the shedding of blood. Again, the death of Christ was not meant to change God's mind toward us, but to change *our* minds toward God. Here's how Jeremy Myers explains it:



"The first thing to notice about the context of Hebrews 9:22 is that the author is clearly contrasting the sacrificial system of the Mosaic Law with what Jesus accomplished in His death on the cross. One way to note this is by looking back to Hebrews 9:15, which is the opening statement in the larger context of this discussion about sacrifice and blood. In Hebrews 9:15, the author writes about the 'redemption of the transgressions.'

The word used there is not the normal word for 'sin' in the NT, but is *parabaino* (STR: 3847), and means to overstep or go beyond the boundaries.

The TDNT [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament] says that *parabaino* is closely connected with sin in the New Testament, but **primarily in the sense of using human tradition to disobey the law of God while claiming to be the fulfillment of the law**. In other words, *parabaino* takes place when someone tries to explain and apply the law of God, but actually ends up doing the exact opposite of what the law says. The author of Hebrews indicates that Jesus came to redeem sin, that is, to redeem the *parabaino* type of sin. More specifically still, **Jesus came to redeem the sin of misusing the law**. It is this issue that concerns the author of Hebrews." (*Is the Shedding of Blood Required for the Forgiveness of Sins?*, redeeminggod.org. Words in brackets added)

Therefore, the true reason why Scripture states "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" is because the Law is not only a transcript of God's character but is also a mirror to contrast what is in the human heart. It is human tradition that requires punishment and compensation from those who have done them wrong before they will forgive— and we see this concept in all human cultures; it's called "blood money." Yet, millions believe this is just what God has required.

*"Therefore by the deeds of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for **by the Law is the knowledge of sin.**" (Romans 3:20)*

It is not by the deeds of offering the sacrifices of the Law that men are justified—"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4) —but it is through seeing that offering sacrifices is what is in our nature and then repenting of this sin, recognizing how this whole type of thinking hurts Jesus. The Law brings the seed into the open so that it might be confessed.

It is not God who demands "without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness", but rather it is man who believes this because he can't believe God will forgive him unless he does a sacrifice

Isaiah prophesied that man would wrongly assume that Christ was rejected, punished, and tortured by God for our sins when in fact it was *us* who rejected, punished, and tortured Him:

*"He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; **yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.**"*
(Isaiah 53:3-4)

The New American Standard Version translates that last phrase as, "Yet we ourselves **assumed** that He had been afflicted, struck down by God, and humiliated." Those who will eternally die are those who do not trust and believe in God's FREE forgiveness, thus cutting it off themselves. As a result, since they wrongly believe God killed Jesus instead of killing us, they wrongly believe that God is the One killing them since they rejected the offer. They perceive God pulling away as Him rejecting them, when in reality they have rejected Him and pushed Him away.

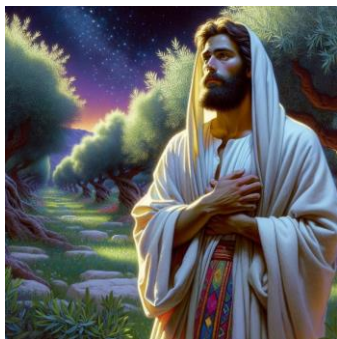
"We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. That was what we thought about it. We said, God is doing all this; God is killing him, punishing him, to satisfy his wrath, in order to let us off. That is the pagan conception of sacrifice."
~ George Fifiield ~

Going back to Hebrews 9:22, the Greek word for "remission" is ἄφεσις (*aphesis*) which, although can carry the meaning of "pardon, complete forgiveness", is actually "Derived from the Greek verb ἀφίημι (*aphiēmi*), meaning 'to send away' or 'to release'" (*Strong's Concordance*). Contrary to popular belief, the death of Christ was not meant to "release" God so He could finally forgive us. No, it is when we saw "the shedding of blood", in accordance with our faulty understanding of the atonement, that we were "released."

In order for God to release man from the curse of false justice, He allowed His Son to satisfy our perceptions of justice. God accommodated Himself to the darkened minds of men to save them. Christ would come down and bear the consequence of sin, which is to be disconnected from His Father, to show us what the *natural consequence* of sin was and open for us an avenue to believe that God was, not only willing to forgive us, but had already forgiven us. God, through His Son, reconciled our false justice to His mercy!

“People always seem to think killing something can liberate them from the effects of sin. Maybe one of the reasons Jesus came was to free us from needing to sacrifice other beings. And it worked. He was the ultimate sacrifice and He ended humanities need for sacrificing either animals or children. Psalm 50 lets us know what God really thinks of sacrifices.”
~ Elizabeth Hensley ~

What amazing love is this! How far has God stooped down to reach us and to save us! He provided for us the sacrifice that we needed. He offered up to us His dearly beloved Son and let us kill Him, so that we could believe in the mercy of God once again.



In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to His Father saying: "I have glorified You on the earth: **I have finished the work that You have given Me to do**" (John 17:4). In completing His Father's work BEFORE dying on the cross, Jesus proved that death was not what God required.

The atoning work He was to do began by glorifying the Father's true character, which He did all throughout His life. Christ showed us that God is tender and loving— not a judgmental Father who needs to see blood when we displease Him. Man on the other hand needed Christ to die; I repeat, Jesus *had* to die, because to us in our natural state (warped thinking) there can be no forgiveness without punishment. For us to accept the forgiveness of God, the human race had to see Jesus die.

True biblical reconciliation will be accomplished when we, through the demonstration of Christ, accept the evidence that we have a tender loving Father who loves us with "an everlasting love" simply because we are His children (Jeremiah 31:3).

"And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns." (Philippians 1:6)



A New and Living Way

"But Samuel replied, 'What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.'" (1 Samuel 15:22, New Living Translation)

Now, as our minds are renewed, we will declare, "there is no more offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18) because the offering of Jesus would "purge [cleanse/release] your conscience from [these] dead works [animal offerings] so that we may serve the living God [His way]" (Hebrews 9:13-14); that is, "by a new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20, words in brackets added).

*"For You do not desire sacrifices; else would I give it: You do not delight in burnt offerings. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.**" (Psalm 51:16-17)*

The Psalmist continues saying:

*"Show favor to Zion in Your good pleasure; and **rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.** Then You will be pleased with pure sacrifices, with burnt offerings, and with whole burnt offerings. **Then they will offer bulls on your altar.**" (Psalm 51:18-19)*

This does not mean that God will one day be pleased with animal offerings. No, verses 16 and 17 already said otherwise. As I explain in my book, *Father of Love*, the setting here is after the rebuilding of "the walls of Jerusalem." Daniel prophesied that the Messiah would arrive 69 prophetic weeks after the decree to "restore and rebuild **Jerusalem** ... the street shall be built again, and **the wall**, even in troublous times" (Daniel 9:25).

After this, the Messiah would “confirm [strengthen] the covenant with many for one week [cf. Matthew 26:27-28; Romans 15:8] and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” from our mindset (Verse 27).⁶ It is because of our Savior’s sacrifice that David’s words, “Then You will be pleased with pure sacrifices”, came to pass.

But if Jesus took away blood sacrifices, what are these “pure sacrifices” of “bulls” that God will be pleased with? The prophet Hosea explains:

*“Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to Him, ‘Completely forgive our iniquity and receive us graciously that we may offer **the praise of the sacrificial bulls of our lips.**’” (Hosea 14:2)*

The author of the book of Hebrews expounds on this verse saying, “Through Him [Jesus] let us continually offer up a **sacrifice of praise** to God, that is, **the fruit of our lips**, giving thanks to His name [merciful character]” (Hebrews 13:15). Peter says, since “you have tasted that the Lord is good”, you will “offer **spiritual sacrifices** that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:3-5). And then Paul concludes:

*“I therefore urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercies, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices** that are holy and pleasing to God, for **this is the reasonable way for you to worship.**” (Romans 12:1)*

Few will object here and point out that Paul seems to participate in animal offerings in Acts 21 to counteract those who were falsely accusing him of teaching against the Law. However, Paul never participated in the sacrifice himself, but only helped fund four individuals who were coming out of their Nazarite vow. This was the only way that the Law allowed one to legally terminate this vow. Natan Lawrence suggests:

“His [Paul’s] paying for the sacrifices of the Nazarites seems to have been a public relations gesture to appease those in the Jewish mob who were slandering him. It is a logical overreach and reading into the text to take Paul’s act of charity as him making a doctrinal statement favoring the continued validity of the sacrificial system after the death of Yeshua [Jesus], especially in light of what the other apostolic writers had to say about Yeshua’s fulfilling that system by his death. Certainly, the writer of Hebrews makes this point abundantly clear.” (*Was Paul Validating the Need for Sacrifices in Acts 21?* Words in brackets added)

⁶ Many believe that Daniel 9:27 is referring to a coming antichrist who will make a 7-year peace treaty (covenant) with the Jews, allowing them to rebuild their temple and reinstate animal sacrifices. Then, in the midst of the seven years, the antichrist will break the covenant and “cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.” However, it is my conviction, as well as many others, that the passage in Daniel is referring to the Messiah who “takes away the first” (referring to animal sacrifices) to establish “the will of God” (see, Hebrews 10:5-9). See also my book, *We Have Inherited Lies*, for more detail.

In Luke 9:23, Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). Clearly, the cross is not about satisfying any penal-legal justice God supposedly demanded, but about the daily walk of denying self to serve, help, and heal others. What happened to Christ on the cross 2,000 years ago was a magnification of what He has been *daily* going through from the moment sin was conceived in the heart of Satan and mankind (Isaiah 63:9).

This was the object-lesson of the sacrificial system. It wasn’t given to show us God needs to be appeased with blood, but to show us how depraved we are in our thinking. It was to give us an intense illustration of our natural hatred towards the Son of God and that we “crucify [murder] the Son of God afresh [daily], and put Him to an open shame” whenever we reject the pleadings of His Holy Spirit (Hebrews 6:6).

Christ's mission to the world was not to die on the cross to pay “God's justice”, but to display the Father's true character as a fulfillment of the Law – completely self-sacrificing, full of service for others, and patiently enduring rejection while calling for His children, allowing them to decide their own relation to Him

If the cross of Christ was to appease God’s wrath and satisfy penal-legal justice, then Jesus is asking us to do the same by commissioning us to take up our crosses daily. Therefore, when Paul counsels us to “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another, even as [or, just like] God in Christ forgave you**” (Ephesians 4:32), then we are to forgive others by demanding that they provide some sort of sacrifice— like maybe killing their cat or some other beloved pet.

You must ask yourself; How did God forgive me? Did He forgive you by demanding that you provide a bloody sacrifice? Or did He forgive you FREELY? Remember, *Christianity.com* says, “In order for the Israelites to **gain forgiveness**, something had to die.” And *GotQuestions.com* says, “The only basis on which an animal sacrifice could **provide forgiveness** of sins is Christ who would sacrifice Himself for our sins, **providing the forgiveness** that animal sacrifices could only illustrate and foreshadow.” If this is true, then you would need to demand the same— you would need someone or something to shed blood in order to **provide** forgiveness.

The literal definition of the word *forgiveness* is “to release a debt.” If God demanded someone to pay the price of sin (death), and Jesus paid that price to God in order for us to go free, then He would have been paid and didn’t really forgive anything. Contrary to popular belief, God did not forgive us *because* Jesus died on the cross due to the fact that the cross does not *achieve* or *provide* God’s forgiveness, it displays it!

With the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, we will forgive others “even as” God in Christ forgave us— FREELY! We will not condemn those who persecute us nor demand a sacrifice from them before we even think about forgiving them. We will selflessly take all the initiatives to placate (appease) our enemies, being ever willing to carry our cross and die for them!

Scripture tells us how Christ truly “bore our sins on the tree [cross]” by absorbing *OUR* sinful enmity (hostility/estrangement) against Him; for when *WE* “hurled insults at Him, **He did not retaliate**; when He suffered, **He made no threats**” (1 Peter 2:23-24). This is what Isaiah means when he says, “The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6); for “He was wounded for **[by]** our transgressions; He was bruised for **[by]** our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5).⁷ This is how Jesus paid for our sins— we surely made Him pay!

“We must never allow anything we find in the Old Testament to compromise or in any way qualify the revelation of God we have in Christ. And Jesus reveals a God who chooses to die on behalf of enemies rather than to use force against them.” ~ Greg Boyd



Yes, Christ was “despised and rejected by *MEN* ... And *WE* hid, as it were, *OUR* faces from Him ... He was oppressed and He was afflicted ... He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, **and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth**” in retaliation against us (Isaiah 53:3,7). Instead, He cried out, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

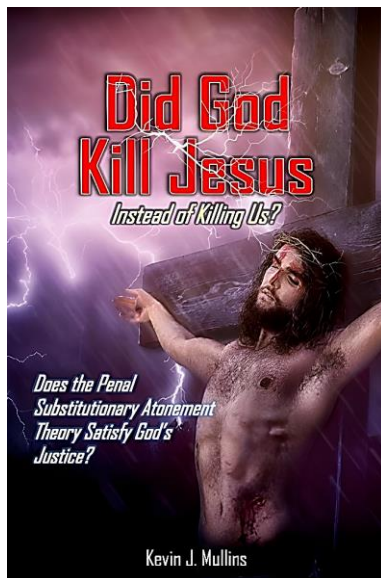
⁷ The Hebrew word translated “for” is *min*, which denotes “from” or “out of.” Therefore, contrary to PSA, Jesus was wounded “from”, “out of”, or “by,” our transgressions, not by God.

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*Everything you thought you knew about the
gospel is about to be turned upside down!*

The Penal Substitutionary Theory is the most popular way of explaining the gospel in Christian circles. It teaches that "God is not willing or able to simply forgive sin without first requiring a satisfaction for it" (*Wikipedia*).

To solve this problem, a popular Christian website called *gotquestions.org* explains: "Jesus' sacrifice on the cross takes the place of the punishment we ought to suffer for our sins. **As a result, God's justice is satisfied, and those who accept Christ can be forgiven and reconciled to God.**"



Another famous theologian, John MacArthur, adds: "The reality of Christ's vicarious, substitutionary death on our behalf is the heart of the gospel according to God ... **We must remember, however, that sin did not kill Jesus; God did.** The suffering servant's death was nothing less than a punishment administered by God for sins others had committed. That is what we mean when we speak of penal substitutionary atonement ... He fully satisfied justice and put away our sin forever through the death of his Son."

And Jon Bloom of *desiringgod.org* writes: "**Jesus was primarily the object of his Father's wrath** — the most just, righteous, and terrible wrath there is."

HOWEVER, is this really the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus came to demonstrate? Did Jesus really come to satisfy God's justice and wrath to save us from being killed by our heavenly Father? Have we been duped by Satan and others to frame the murder of Jesus on God in order to suppress our own wrath and enmity (hostility) towards God, free ourselves from our own guilty conscience, and to satisfy our own sense of justice?



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our online articles that deals with the subject
of God's character**

"An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you." (Exodus 20:24)

Why did God institute these animal sacrifices? An article on the Christian website *Gotquestions.org* explains:

"Animal sacrifice is an important theme found throughout Scripture because 'without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness' (Hebrews 9:22) ... Animal sacrifices foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice on our behalf."

But does Scripture really teach that God required these sacrifices in order to forgive us? The Psalmist wrote:

"Sacrifice and offering You [God] did not desire ... Burnt offering and sin offering You [God] did not require." (Psalm 40:6)

How do we reconcile the fact that God instructed His people about animal sacrifices yet at the same time He did not require them? And, if they were not required, why does Peter teach that we were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19)? Was not Christ's death required in order to redeem us?

In this booklet we'll contrast the traditional view with the biblical. When we discover who really led Christ "as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isaiah 53:7) and why, it just may change your understanding of the everlasting Gospel.

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