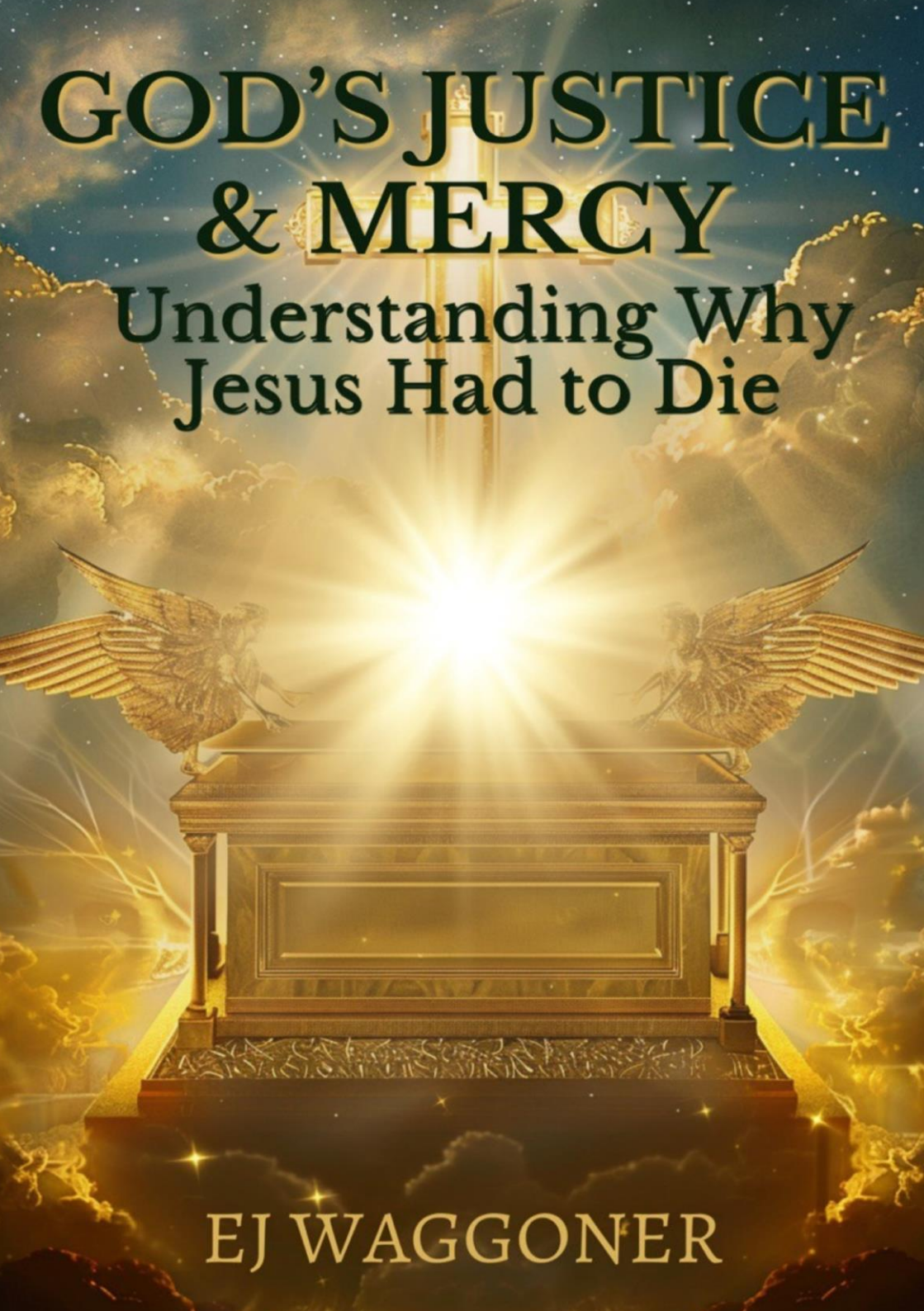


GOD'S JUSTICE & MERCY



Understanding Why
Jesus Had to Die

EJ WAGGONER

God's Justice and Mercy
Understanding Why Jesus Had to Die

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Introduction (From the Publishers)

One online article at tabletalkmagazine.com explains God's justice like this:

“Because God cannot cease to be either merciful or just, **His justice requires that each and every one of our sins we have committed against His infinite majesty be punished with temporal and eternal punishments of soul and body.** We hear that **threat** in the garden: ‘In the day that you eat of [the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil] you shall surely die’ (Gen. 2:17). We hear that **threat** in the New Testament: ‘The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Rom. 6:23).” (Daniel R. Hyde, *Why Must God's Justice Be Satisfied?*)

Is it true that these quoted statements from God are “threats”? Is God threatening the sinner that if they do not change, they will suffer His strict justice upon them? Will God not be “satisfied” until His legal justice system be meted out by legal imposed punishments as the title of the above article suggests?

In February of 1893, E.J. Waggoner penned the following article in the UK on the subject of justice and mercy. Using the text from Psalm 89:14, Waggoner expresses the principle that true biblical justice is to do the right thing, and the right thing to do is show mercy.

*“Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: **mercy** and truth shall go before thy face.” (Psalm 89:14)*

In this verse we see Hebraic parallelism where “Justice” parallels “mercy” and “judgment” parallels “truth.” However, often the phrase is heard, “God is merciful, **but** He is also just.” For example, J. I. Packer writes:

“To an age which has unashamedly sold itself to the gods of greed, pride, sex, and self-will, the church mumbles on about God's kindness, **but** says virtually nothing about his judgment.” (*Knowing God*, p. 148)

The word “but” suggests opposite characteristics. In this case, “God's kindness” is in opposition to “His judgment”. In other words, God may be

kind to those who love and serve Him but is unkind to those who do not. This directly contradicts what Jesus taught concerning His Father:

*“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: **for he [the Highest/God] is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.** Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” (Lk. 6:35-36)*

In another online article called, *God’s Judgment*, Mike Sullivan expresses his understanding that God’s law and justice operates the same as human law and justice:

“Our built-in sense of justice demands that wrongdoers be held accountable. God operates the same way. He sees sin and insists that something be done ... Is God supposed to just look the other way and act like nothing is going on? God won't do that ... God will act. God will judge. And when he does, it won't be random. It will be because his moral law has been broken. His judgment is a consistent, predictable, and well-deserved response to human sin.” (*dwellcc.org*)

There’s no argument that the Bible speaks of God’s judgments. It’s *how* these judgments are meted out that is the key issue. In reading the following article from E.J. Waggoner, you will find that justice and mercy are not opposed to each other. God does not express mercy in one case, but then change to show justice in another. Waggoner builds beautifully upon the harmony of justice and mercy in the subject of the Ark of the Covenant within the Sanctuary. The law of God was placed inside the Ark, while the lid of the Ark covering the law is called the mercy seat. This represents God’s throne. Justice and mercy are unified upon the same throne at the same time. He then goes on to show that God does not actively use His power to *impose judgments* upon sinners. Instead, He *removes* His power (i.e., hides His face), leaving the sinner free to choose thus giving them over to the *natural consequences* of sin (Deut. 31:17-18; Jas. 1:14-15). As the Psalmist confirms:

“The LORD is known by the judgment [or justice] He executes; The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.” (Psalm 9:16, New King James Version)

Justice and Mercy

There is a strange idea prevalent in the world, and even in the professed Christian world, that justice and mercy are opposite qualities, and that they cannot be manifested in the same person at the same time. We remember a hymn long ago, in praise of “charity,” one line of which said, “Justice hath in thee no part.” This expresses the prevalent idea, that justice is harsh and cruel, and that in order to exercise mercy God has to lay aside His justice, and that when He exercises justice, He lays aside mercy.

This is a most unfortunate idea. It represents God as changeable. But the fact is that He cannot deny Himself, and He changes not. “For I am the Lord, I change not.” Mal. 3:6.

“Justice and judgment are the habitation [or foundation] of Thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before Thy face.” Ps. 89:14.

These are words of the man by whom the Holy Ghost spake. The psalm begins,

*“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever; with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; Thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens.”
[Psalm 89:1-2]*

And again, “O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever.” Ps. 136:1. God is from everlasting to everlasting; both justice and mercy are parts of His character; He cannot change; therefore both the justice and the mercy of the Lord must endure for ever, unchanged.

Justice no less than mercy is manifest in the plan of redemption. Thus we read:

*“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being **justified** freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through*

the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Rom. 3:23-26.

Here we are told that God does not lay aside His justice in saving men, but in the very act of redemption He displays His justice.

In the tabernacle which the Lord told Moses to build, and the pattern of which He showed him in the mount, the chief article of furniture was the ark. In this ark the tables of the law were placed. The cover of the ark was called the mercy-seat, and upon this cover were the figures of two cherubim, one at each end, facing each other. See Ex. 25:10-21.

Of this the Lord said,

“And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.” Ex. 25:22.

“God does not lay aside His justice in saving men, but in the very act of redemption He displays His justice”



“And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim; and He spake unto him.” Num. 7:89.

From this we learn that as the tabernacle represented the dwelling place of God, corresponding to the temple of God in heaven (see Ex. 25:8; Heb. 9:23,24; Ps. 11:4), so the ark represented the throne of God. Thus the law of God forms the foundation of His throne, yet the throne itself is the seat of mercy.

In the throne of God “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” Ps. 85:10. His throne is a throne of grace, where we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Heb. 4:16.

But some reader doubtless thinks that we have not yet touched the real question at issue. The following texts are doubtless in his mind:

*“But **the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him**, and His righteousness unto children’s children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them.” Ps. 103:17,18.*

*“For He shall have judgment **without mercy**, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.” James 2:13.*

Doesn’t this seem to indicate that God’s mercy endures forever only for those who fear Him, and that there will come a time when His mercy will cease, at least as far as the wicked are concerned? Let us see.

God the Source of all Things

God is the Creator of all things. It is common to say that He created all things from nothing. That is true, in so far as it means that His word formed the worlds where there was nothing; but they really came from His word. His word is filled with His own life; so it is true that all creation came into existence through the very life of God. Everything sprang from Him, so that in the creation of the worlds there is the mystery of reproduction. This idea is

given in the words of the Psalmist, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art of God." Ps. 90:1, 2. Read also the following familiar texts:

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; ... for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." Acts 17:24-29.

"For with Thee is the Fountain of Life." Ps. 36:9. "All things come of Thee." 1 Chron. 29:14.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." Rev. 4:11.

Not only has God, through Christ, created all things, but their continued existence depends upon Him alone. We have redemption through the blood of Christ,

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Col. 1:16,17.

Christ, who is the fullness of the Godhead, is the life of everything; He is the force that is manifested in all matter.

“Christ, who is the fullness of the Godhead, is the life of everything; He is the force that is manifested in all matter”

Necessity of Agreement with God

This being the case, it is evident that the continued existence of all things depends upon their harmony with the will of God, and their submission to it. This is not a mere arbitrary demand on the part of God, He does not require that all things shall be subject to Him, simply to gratify His love of power, as would be the case with man, but because only as all things are dependent on Him can they exist.

“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Micah 6:8.

“Apart from God there can be no life. It is only in Him that we live, and move, and have our being”

Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. Man cannot walk and dwell with God unless they are in union with Him; but their very existence depends upon their union with God. Apart from God there can be no life. It is only in Him that we live, and move, and have our being.

So far as the earth itself is concerned, there is no difficulty. The creation was made subject to vanity, “not willingly.” Rom. 8:20. It is passive in the hands of God, although it is marred with the sins of men. It has been cursed for the sake of man,¹ and for a little season it groans and travails in pain, waiting for the deliverance which will surely come to it. For “the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.” Rom. 8:21. But man has allied himself with Satan and his angels in rebellion against the Almighty. His natural mind is

¹ Not that God Himself cursed the earth, but that God has permitted the curse through man’s rebellion. The KJV of Genesis 4:13 states, “cursed is the ground for thy sake” however, a more accurate translation would be “the ground is cursed because of you” (NLT).

now enmity against God; “for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Rom. 8:7.

Yet through the mercy of God, man has existence continued to him. “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.” Lam. 3:22. This longsuffering of God is for the salvation of man. Although they have forfeited all claim upon Him, having rebelled against His love, and chosen death, He is loth [unwilling] to leave them, and so has provided means that “His banished be not expelled from Him.” 2 Sam. 14:14. The great love of God is shown in this. He “gave Himself for us.” “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Rom. 5:8. He did this while we were “dead in trespasses and sins,” solely “For His great love wherewith He loved us,” because He “is rich in mercy.” Eph. 2:4,5. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Cor. 5:19.

“And this love for men, and the desire that they may have everlasting life, is daily shown in the fact that as an act of grace He keeps rebellious men alive, in order that they may listen to His loving invitation, and be reconciled to Him”

In giving Himself for rebellious men, that thus they might be reconciled to Himself, God shows how greatly He desired that all men should have everlasting life, for as we have seen, only in union with Him is there a life.

And this love for men, and the desire that they may have everlasting life, is daily shown in the fact that as an act of grace He keeps rebellious men alive, in order that they may listen to His loving invitation, and be reconciled to Him. He says, "I am inquired of by them that asked not for Me; I am found of them that sought Me not; I said, Behold Me, behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My name. I have stretched out My hands all the day unto a rebellious people, and walketh in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts." Isa. 65:1,2.

The Justice of Mercy

But in this mercy the justice of God appears. He has made man in His own image, with faculties capable of the highest enjoyment, for He has given him the freedom to choose his own way, and has set everything before him. The highest possible enjoyment is found in the most perfect freedom; and this

“[God’s] strict justice is shown in His not interfering with man’s personal right of choice as to what he will have”

God has given to man, in giving him the utmost liberty to choose whatever he will. In this choice there is absolutely no restriction put upon man by the Lord. His strict justice is shown in His not interfering with man’s personal right of choice as to what he will have.

God knows that only in Him can man find his highest good, and therefore He places Himself before man in the most attractive light, and pleads with him to accept Him; but He will not intrude His presence where it is not wanted. He will not coerce the will of man. He has in making man guaranteed to him perfect liberty, and He Himself respects the rights which He has bestowed on man. To attempt to compel men to accept His ways, perfect though they be, would be

to deprive him of that liberty which is inseparable from God; and so it would be to defeat His own purpose.²

“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him; for He is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” Deut. 30:19,20.

Whoever chooses God will have life; for God Himself is life. When the man has yielded to the persuasion of the Lord, so far as to indicate his preference for Him, then the Lord Himself gladly comes in and supplies all his need. He gives him the power

to do right, or rather, He Himself lives His own righteous will in the man. As long as the man continues to yield to God, so long will he have life, even to all eternity. God has promised that He will never forsake the man who puts his trust in Him and therefore that man must continue to live as long as God lives. That man will find that God’s plan for him is the very best thing possible for him. In the presence of God, there is fullness of joy.

*“Whoever chooses
God will have life; for
God Himself is life”*

Giving Men Their Own Way

But what of those who will not have Christ to reign over them? What of them who persist in their rebellion against the Lord? Here is the answer:

*“For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of My counsel; they despised all My reproof; **therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.** For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.” Prov. 1:29-32.*

² God never threatens by saying, “Obey Me or I will kill you!” for that is extortion!

They resist the Spirit of the Lord, refusing all its pleadings, until it is useless to strive longer with them. They utterly refuse to have anything to do with the Lord, and so He lets them have their own way, which is destruction.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. 14:12.

Such ones are self-condemned. Their condemnation to death is not merely the decision of a Judge, but is the natural result of their own course. They have hated the Lord, have resisted all His advances, and have shown their desire to have nothing to do with Him. Since they positively refuse to live with Him, He has no other alternative but to leave them to themselves; and as they have no means of self-existence, they necessarily suffer destruction.

In addition to that text quoted in the preceding paragraph, which showed this to be the case, read the following:



"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and

doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds." Rom. 2:1-6.

The same love has been bestowed upon the wicked that has been bestowed upon the righteous.

It is common for people to say that God has been very good to such and such a person. This is true, but it is not all the truth, and it may convey a wrong impression. The fact is that the Lord is good to everybody. “The Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works.” Ps. 145:9. The Lord is goodness itself. He is love. **He cannot at any time be any other than He is, and therefore He is just as good to one person as He is to another.**

He is equally good to everybody and just as good as He can be all the time.³ Therefore it is not because they have not been drawn by the love of God, that some are destroyed. It is because they have despised that love. Having hardened their hearts against God’s love, the more He manifested His love to them, the harder they became. It is a trite saying that the same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay.⁴

“[God] is equally good to everybody and just as good as He can be all the time”

The Fate of the Wicked

One question more ought to be considered in this connection, and that is, What is the fate of those who reject the Lord? It is clear enough that it is separation from Him, for that is what they have chosen. They were naturally separated from the Lord by their sins. God, however, would not let them go without an effort to induce them to accept His ways. **But their refusal of His**

³ Remember Luke 6:35-36— “for he [the Highest/God] is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”

⁴ Please keep in mind that it’s not the sun that is the cause of the melting or hardening. It’s the ingredients of the wax and clay reacting to the sun. It all depends on how we react/view God (see, 2 Cor. 2:15-16).

kind offers showed their determination to be for ever separated from Him, and He is at last compelled to give them up to their own choice.⁵

Now the question is, Where can they exist separate from God? Read the words of the Psalmist:

“It is evident, therefore, that those who are left to their own choice to be eternally separate from the Lord, have no place left them but utter extinction”

“Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee.” Ps. 139:7-12.

God is everywhere. It is His presence, and that only, that upholds the universe. It is evident, therefore, that those who are left to their own choice to be eternally separate from the Lord, have no place left them but utter extinction. **There is no place in the universe where men can exist separate from the presence of the Lord.**⁶ And this is just what the Lord says shall be their fate.

“For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For

⁵ God’s justice and wrath is not displayed by His exercise of power, but by His removal of it. See, Prov. 8:36; Rom. 1:24,26,28.

⁶ If sinners suffer eternal punishing, screaming in endless agony, then God’s sustaining Spirit would have to be forcibly present keeping them alive for the sole purpose of torturing them. Is this the God you love and serve? Is this true justice?

*as ye have drunk upon My holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and **they shall be as though they had not been.**" Obadiah 15, 16.*

This is reaping the fruit of their own way, namely, rejecting the presence of the Spirit of God.

Everlasting Punishment

"But," says some reader, "doesn't the Bible say that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment?" Yes, it does say that, Let us read the text. It is the close of our Saviour's great discourse to His disciples just before His crucifixion. Having described the wicked, He says, "And they shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. 25:46.

But does that mean that the wicked are to remain alive eternally? Not necessarily. It depends upon what their punishment will be. Now in Rom. 6:23 we have a parallel text.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Then since that is the punishment of the sinners, and they are to go into everlasting punishment, it follows that they go away into everlasting death. That is as plain as words can make it. And it is further corroborated by the inspired statement that the righteous shall have rest "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey

“Since [death] is the punishment of the sinners, and they are to go into everlasting punishment, it follows that they go away into everlasting death”

not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;⁷ who shall be punished with **everlasting destruction**⁸ from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.” 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

Unquenchable Fire

“But then we are told that the fire that burns the wicked shall not be quenched.” Very true; and the reason why it shall not be quenched is that it is unquenchable.

“He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Matt. 3:12.

“The fact that the fire is unquenchable does not show that what is cast into it must exist forever. Quite the contrary”

Unquenchable indeed it must be, because it is the fire of the glory of the Lord. When the Lord comes the wicked will be consumed with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of His coming. See 2 Thess. 2:8. That fire must exist as long as God exists; but while it is death to the enemies of the Lord, it is light and life to those that love Him. It is as in the case of ancient Israel; that which was light to the Israelites, was confusion and destruction to the Egyptians.

But the fact that the fire is unquenchable does not show that what is cast into it must exist forever. Quite the contrary.

⁷ Again, this is speaking of God’s removal of His protective presence from the persistent sinner who wants nothing to do with Him.

⁸ To teach that the lost (the unbeliever) will experience everlasting life in a place of torture is to teach contrary to Jesus (see, Jn. 3:16).

If a fire breaks out in a building, and the firemen are not able to quench it, the inevitable result is that the building is utterly consumed. So it is with those who shall be cast into the unquenchable fires of the last day. The text says that they shall be “burned up” with unquenchable fire. The wicked are called chaff, indicating the case with which they may be consumed.

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” Mal. 4:1.

Eternal Fire

What has been said about the unquenchable fire has cleared up the trouble that some would have had over the term “eternal fire,” into which the wicked are to be sent.

“Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Matt. 25:41.

As we have already seen, the effect of such a fire must be to utterly consume and destroy every vestige of that which is thrown into it.

But we have given us an example of the effect of the eternal fire. The apostle Jude writes about the judgment reserved for the devil and his angels, together with those who have served him, and presents this likeness:

“As we have already seen, the effect of such a fire must be to utterly consume and destroy every vestige of that which is thrown into it”

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” Jude 7.

The fire that destroyed the cities is the same fire that will at the last day destroy all the wicked.⁹ It is eternal fire, yet notice its effect upon those cities:

“For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of My people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her.” Lam. 4:6.¹⁰

God to be All in All

There are other texts that might occur to one, but these are sufficient to show what the Scripture teaches as to the destiny of the wicked. The statements are plain, and there can be no contradiction in the Bible.

And now let us once more return to the original thought about the mercy of God in connection with His justice. **His mercy endures even to the midst in the execution of His judgments.**

*“O give thanks to the Lord; for ever ...To Him that smote Egypt in their firstborn; for **His mercy endureth for ever**; ... to Him which divided the Red sea into parts, for **His mercy endureth for ever**; and made Israel to pass through the midst of it; for **His mercy endureth for ever**; but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea; for **His mercy endureth for ever**.” Ps. 136:1,10,13-15.*

⁹ Comparing what Peter says about Sodom and Gomorrah with what Jude says concerning the “eternal fire” we see that that the cities were burned to “ashes” and became “an example unto those who after should live ungodly” (2 Pet. 2:6). Malachi clearly tells us that “they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet” (Mal. 4:3). For more info concerning hellfire and the fate of the lost, please see the book, *The Lake of Fire and the Second Death*, available for free at lastmessageofmercy.com.

¹⁰ In the Darby Bible, the phrase “no hands were stayed on her” is translated as, “no hands were violently laid upon her.” This suggests a different understanding to the traditional teaching that God Himself directly burned the cities and her inhabitants. For more info, see *Did God Send Angels to Kill the Inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah?* in the Q&A section at lastmessageofmercy.com.

God's mercies endure for ever, even though there are some who will have none of it. In His mercy He bears long with them, but God could not tolerate rebellion forever in His dominions and be just to His loyal subjects.

So in justice no less than mercy to those who willingly yield to His control, He must let the wicked suffer the punishment which they have worked for. Indeed, it would be doing the wicked an injustice not to give them that for which they have so long and diligently laboured. They have taken counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." All their desire has been to be left to themselves and now God gives them their desire. But as there is no place in the universe where God is not, the only thing for them is extinction.

So we read,

"For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." Ps. 37:9, 10.

Then will be fulfilled the purpose of God, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." Eph. 1:10. Then will Christ have accomplished the purpose for which He ascended to heaven, namely, "that He might fill all things." Eph. 4:10. "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." 1 Cor. 15:28. And then from "every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them," will be heard with one voice, "Unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever." Rev. 5:13.



Part 2

Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

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Introduction (From the Publishers)

In the seventh and eighth chapters of Daniel, we read of a power that arises from the Roman Empire under the description of a ferocious looking ten-horned beast. In Daniel 7:25 this power is said to “think to change times and laws.” In the *New Living Translation*, it says it this way:

“He will defy the Most High and oppress the holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws, and they will be placed under his control for a time, times, and half a time.” Daniel 7:25

This goes beyond merely changing things in God’s law. It is about the actual belief in thinking God’s law can be changed without any natural adverse consequences. As we saw in Part One, biblically, God’s justice is not about imposing punishments on lawbreakers (sinners), but giving the persistent sinner over to the *natural consequences* of stepping outside the boundaries of God’s law (Ps. 9:16). Scripture is clear that *sin* directly and naturally kills the sinner, not God:

*“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and **sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**” James 1:14-15*

*“For the one who sows to his own flesh will **reap destruction from the flesh**, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.” Galatians 6:8, New American Standard Bible*

*“**Evil shall slay the wicked:** and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.” Psalm 34:21*

However, due to the change in thinking concerning how God’s law operates, the Roman Catholic Church was built upon the *imperial law model*. Thus, the church of the Dark Ages taught that sin angers the Lawgiver and He, in divine justice, must directly impose punishments upon offenders of His law. This evolved into the teaching of Purgatory, where conscious souls receive “temporal punishment” before entering heaven. According to the church, a

member could purchase indulgences for a loved one in Purgatory that would lessen their temporal punishment.

During the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther proposed a different view. Although Luther still held on to the view that God's law and justice required imposed punishments from the Lawgiver, this view taught that, while on the cross, all sins, from all time, were placed upon Christ and *punished by God*, thus negating the need for the doctrine of Purgatory.

These ideas concerning the death of Christ, justice, and the atonement had been framed, nurtured, and developed by the Roman Catholic Power, yet spurred forward under the Protestant theology in the form of *Penal Substitution*.

“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*)

On page 11 of his book, *Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Had to Die*, Baptist theologian John Piper writes:

“The most important question of the twenty-first century is: Why did Jesus Christ come and die? To see this importance we must look beyond human causes. 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.”

If we were to believe anything Mr. Piper wrote above it would be that the thought of God being the One who killed Jesus is definitely “a staggering thought.”

To answer the question of why Jesus had to die, most Christian theologians suggest it was not only to satisfy *God's justice*, but also to absorb *His wrath*. On pages 20 and 21 of the above-mentioned book, John Piper continues his teaching:

“If God were not just, there would be no demand for his Son to suffer and die. And if God were not loving, there would be no willingness for his Son to suffer and die. But God is both just and loving. Therefore his love is willing to meet the demands of **his justice.**”

“Since God is just, he does not sweep these crimes under the rug of the universe. He feels a holy wrath against them. They deserve to be punished, and he has made this clear: ‘For the wages of sin is death’ (Romans 6:23). ‘The soul who sins shall die’ (Ezekiel 18:4). There is a holy curse hanging over all sin. Not to punish would be unjust ... But the love of God does not rest with the curse that hangs over all sinful humanity. He is not content to show wrath, no matter how holy it is. **Therefore God sends his own Son to absorb his wrath** and bear the curse for all who trust him.”

Instead of adhering to the *biblical view* of God’s law being a *law of design* upon which life operates and anything outside of that design jeopardizes life through natural cause and effect, Mr. Piper views God’s law through a *legal lens*, labelling sins as “crimes” against God’s justice that “deserve to be punished.” This is why there was a divine “**demand** for his Son to suffer and die.” Holding a warped understanding of Romans 6:23 and Ezekiel 18:4 of which he quotes, Mr. Piper’s legal view rejects the idea that *sin itself* is the cause of pain, suffering, and death. Thus, he projects the idea that sin offends and angers the *Lawgiver* who in turn must execute His divine justice through *imposed punishments* such as pain, suffering, death and even torture.

Continuing on page 22 of his book, Mr. Piper explains that it was our heavenly Father who was angry and ready to slay us with His whip:

“Jesus did not wrestle **his angry Father** to the floor of heaven and take **the whip out of his hand**. He did not force him to be merciful to humanity. His death was not the begrudging consent of God to be lenient to sinners. No, what Jesus did when he suffered and died was **the Father’s idea.**”

Also referring to penal substitution, the Christian website, *gotquestions.org*, follows the Piper (pun intended) by stating that, once “God’s justice is satisfied” by “Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross” THEN “those who accept Christ can be forgiven and reconciled to God.”

In an article on *faithward.org* entitled, *Why did Jesus Have to Die For Us?*, published by the *Reformed Church Press*, it states:

“God’s justice requires that there be a price for our sin ... By sacrificing himself for us on the cross, he took the punishment for all of our sins at once. This made him the ultimate sacrifice —once and for all satisfying the demands God’s justice required.”

As you can see, the Christian doctrine of righteousness by faith is built upon the following premises:

1. Jesus came to die in order to save us from God, our angry Father.
2. God’s justice needed to be satisfied with death. Blood needed to flow from an innocent substitute equal with God.
3. Instead of killing us, God poured His wrath upon His Son.
4. Those who express faith in this substitute are said to be forgiven and thus righteous by faith.

In order to counter this view, we have collected here three articles from E.J. Waggoner from the years 1893 and 1894. In these articles you will find some of the purest principles of righteousness by faith. **But the key theme coming through in them is diametrically opposed to the Christian doctrine of satisfied justice.** Waggoner openly challenges the common Christian teaching of the death of Christ satisfying God’s justice. He reveals that the true “everlasting gospel”, which is to be proclaimed “unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” in the last days (Revelation 14:6), cannot be preached within the current Protestant framework because that faith system is built upon appeasement theology derived from the principles of **paganism**.

These three articles by Waggoner need to be studied carefully and absorbed. May you go through these line by line and pray for the light to connect together in your mind. They will provide the perfect foundation for the Last Message of Mercy now being presented by the Father of Love movement.

Why Did Jesus Have to Die? - Present Truth UK, September 21, 1893

The fact that this question has been asked in all seriousness by an active Christian is sufficient reason for considering it, apart from the fact that it touches the very core of Christianity. It shows that the fundamental principles of the Gospel are not so generally understood as people are wont to imagine. This is not because they are so obscure and complex as to be beyond ordinary comprehension, but because they have been so thickly enveloped in the fog of theological terms. Those terms are the intention of men, and have nothing to do with the Scriptures. **If we are content with the simple statements of the Bible, we shall see how quickly its light dispels the fog of theological speculation.**

“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” 1 Peter 3:18. That is a sufficient answer, but we will read further. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” 1 Tim. 1:15. “Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin.” 1 John 3:5. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7.

Read again:

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Rom. 5:6-10

Once more: “And you, that were sometime enemies, and alienated in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.” Col. 1:21, 22.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” 2 Cor. 5:17-19

All men have sinned. Rom. 3:23; v. 12. **Sin is enmity against God.** “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Rom. 8:7. In one of the texts above quoted, we read that men need reconciliation, because they are enemies in their minds by wicked works. Therefore since all men have sinned, it follows that all men are by nature the enemies of God; and that also is what we read in Rom. 5:10, above quoted.

“Since all men have sinned, it follows that all men are by nature the enemies of God”

But sin is death. “To be carnally minded is death.” Rom. 8:6. “By one man sin came into the world, and death by sin.” Rom. 5:12. Death came in by sin, because it carries death concealed within it. “The sting of death is sin.” 1 Cor. 15:56. Sin when it is full grown bringeth forth death. James 1:15.

Sin is death, for the reason that it is enmity against God. God is “the living God.” With Him is “the fountain of life.” Ps. 36:9. Christ is called the “Author of life.” Acts 3:15, margin. Life is the grand characteristic of God. “He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.” Acts 17:25. “In Him we live, and move, and have our being;” “for we are also His offspring.” Verse 28.

The life of God is the source of every created thing; and apart from Him there can be no life.

But righteousness, as well as life, is the grand characteristic of God. “There is no unrighteousness in Him.” Ps. 92:15. “As for God, His way is perfect.” Ps. 18:30.

“It is not by an arbitrary decree that the wages of sin is death. That [death] results from the very nature of things”

Since the life of God is the source of all life, and all depend on Him, it follows that His righteousness is the standard of righteousness of all intelligent beings; for God’s life is nothing but righteousness. Therefore life and righteousness are inseparable. “To be spiritually minded is life.” Rom. 8:6.

Now since God’s life is the standard of righteousness, it is evident that everything that is different from the life of God is unrighteousness; and “all unrighteousness is sin.” [1 Jn. 5:17]. But if the life of any being is different from the life of God, it must be because His life is not allowed free course through that being. But where God’s life is not, there is death.

Whoever is out of harmony with God—enmity against Him—has death working in him, and death for his inevitable portion. So it is not by an arbitrary decree that the wages of sin is death. That [death] results from the very nature of things. Sin is opposition to God,—rebellion against Him,—and is utterly foreign to His being. It is separation from God, and separation from God is death, because there is no life outside of Him. All that hate Him, love death. [Prov. 8:36].



Let us now sum up the case of the relation between the natural man and God. (1) All have sinned. (2) Sin is enmity against God; it is rebellion. (3) Sin is alienation from God; men are alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works. Col. 1:21. (4) Sinners are “alienated from the life of God.” Eph. 4:18. But **God in Christ is the only source of life for the universe, and therefore all who are thus alienated from His righteous life are by the very nature of things doomed to death.** “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” 1 John 5:12.

Reconciliation

From all that has preceded it is very evident that **the only object that Christ could have in coming to earth and dying for men, was the reconciliation of man to God, so that he might have life.** “I am come that they might have life.” John 10:10. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Cor. 5:19. “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight.” Col. 1:21, 22. Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, “that He might bring us to God.” 1 Peter 3:18. “If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Rom. 5:10.

“The Scriptures . . . while they have much to say about the necessity for man to be reconciled to God, they never once hint of such a thing as the necessity for God to be reconciled to man”

“But,” someone will say, “You have made the reconciliation all on the part of men; I have always been taught that the death of Christ reconciled God to man; that Christ died to satisfy God’s justice, and to appease Him.” Well, we have left the matter of reconciliation just where the Scriptures have put it; and while they have much to say about the necessity for man to be reconciled to God, they never once hint of such a thing as the necessity for God to be reconciled to man. To intimate the necessity for such a thing is to bring a grave charge against the character of God. The idea has come into the Christian Church from the Papacy, which in turn brought it from Paganism, in which the only idea of God was of a being whose wrath must be appeased by a sacrifice.

Stop a moment, and think what reconciliation means. The existence of enmity is the only necessity for reconciliation. Where there is no enmity, there is no necessity for reconciliation. **Man is by nature alienated from God; he is a rebel, full of enmity. Therefore, man needs to be reconciled—to have his enmity taken away. But God has no enmity in His being. “God is love.” Consequently, there is no necessity for Him to be reconciled; there is no possibility of such a thing, for there can be no reconciliation where there has been no enmity.**

Again: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. Surely, they who say that the death of Christ reconciled God to men, have forgotten this blessed text. They would separate the Father and the Son, making the former the enemy, and the latter the friend, of man. But God’s heart was so overflowing with love to fallen man, that He “spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all;” and in so doing He gave Himself, for “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.”

The Apostle Paul speaks of “the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.” Acts 10:28. This effectually disposes of the idea that there was any enmity toward man on the part of God, so that He needed to be reconciled. The death of Christ was the expression of God’s wonderful love for sinners. Consider further what reconciliation means. It means a change on the part of the one reconciled. If one has enmity in His heart towards another, a radical change must take place in him before he is reconciled. This is the case with man.

“They who say that the death of Christ reconciled God to men . . . separate the Father and the Son, making the former the enemy, and the latter the friend, of man”

“If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. 5:17,18

But to speak of the necessity for God to be reconciled to man, is not only to say that He cherished enmity in His heart, but to say that God was partially in the wrong, and that a change had to take place in Him as well as in man.

If it were not in the innocence of ignorance that men talked about God’s having been reconciled to men, it would be blasphemy. That is one of the “great things and blasphemies” that the Papacy has spoken against God. [Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:5]. Let us not echo it.

“Instead of [God] having to change and be reconciled to sinful man, in order that they might be saved, the only hope for their salvation is the fact that He never changes, but is everlasting love”

God is. He could not be other than He is, and be God. He is absolute and unchangeable perfection. He cannot change. Hear Him: “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” Mal. 3:6. Instead of having to change and be reconciled to sinful man, in order that they might be saved, the only hope for their salvation is the fact that He never changes, but is everlasting love. He is the source of life, and the standard of life. When any beings are unlike Him, the difference is on their part, and not on His. He is the fixed standard, to which all must conform, if they would live. God cannot change to accommodate the desires of sinful men, but simply because such a

change would lower His dignity, and make His Government unstable, but because He cannot be other than He is, “He that cometh to God must believe that He is.” [Heb. 11:6].

Just a thought concerning the idea that Christ's death was necessary to satisfy outraged justice. **Christ's death was necessary to satisfy the love of God.** "God commendeth [demonstrated] His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." Justice would have been met by the summary death of the sinful race.¹¹ But God's love could not suffer that. So we are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Through faith in His blood, God's righteousness—which is His life—is declared upon us, and thus He is just, and at the same time the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Rom. 3:21-26. The reason why it was necessary that Christ should die, in order that men might be saved, will be considered in the next edition of this article.

“If God ever had any enmity in His heart against men, there would always arise the torturing thought, ‘Perhaps He is not yet sufficiently appeased to accept Me; surely He cannot love so guilty a being as I am.’ And the more one realised his guilt, the greater would be his doubt”

Why have we dwelt so long upon the fact that man must be reconciled to God, and not God to man? Because in that alone is man's hope. If God ever had any enmity in His heart against men, there would always arise the torturing thought, "Perhaps He is not yet sufficiently appeased to accept Me; surely He cannot love so guilty a being as I am." And the more one realised his guilt, the greater would be his doubt.

¹¹ Although God's justice is always healing and restorative, He would not be just to force the sinner's choice. Therefore, if healing and restoration is rejected, He, in justice, gives the persistent sinner over to reap the natural consequences of sin—death.

But when we know that God never had any enmity towards us, but that He has loved us with an everlasting love, and that He has loved us so much that He gave Himself for us, that we might be reconciled to Him, we can joyfully exclaim, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" [Rom. 8:31].

Remission

Freedom from sin, or at least from its consequences, is what men have been seeking ever since the fall. **Sad to say, however, the great majority have**

“It was with a lie against the character of God, that Satan caused the first sin, and he has been vigorously engaged in trying to induce people to believe that lie ever since”

sought it in the wrong way. It was with a lie against the character of God, that Satan caused the first sin, and he has been vigorously engaged in trying to induce people to believe that lie ever since. **So successful has he been, that the mass of mankind regard God as stern and unsympathetic, a being who regards man with a coldly critical eye, and who would much rather destroy than save. In short, Satan has largely succeeded in putting himself in the place of God, in the minds of men.**

Thus it is that much of the worship of the heathen is, and always has been, devil-worship. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." 1 Cor. 10:20. Consequently, **all heathen worship springs from the idea that a sacrifice must be made to appease the wrath of their God.** Sometimes this sacrifice is in the shape of property, but often it is of the person. Thus arose the great hordes of monks and hermits among the heathen, and **later among the**

professed Christians, who borrowed their ideas of God from the heathen. These thought to gain the favour of God by scourging and torturing themselves.

The prophets of Baal cut themselves with knives, “till the blood gushed out upon them” (1 Kings 18:28), hoping thereby to induce their god to listen to them. With the same idea of God, thousands of so-called Christians have worn hair shirts, walked barefoot on glass, made pilgrimages on their knees, slept on the hard floor, or the ground, and scourged themselves with thorns, starved themselves nearly to death, and set themselves the most impossible tasks. But nobody ever found peace in any of those ways, because no man could get out of himself that which was not in him, and righteousness and peace are not in man.

Sometimes this idea of propitiating the wrath of God has taken an easier form, that is, easier for the worshippers. Instead of sacrificing themselves, they have sacrificed others.

“Wherever there is religious persecution to any degree, it springs from the mistaken idea that God demands a victim”

Human sacrifices have always been to a greater or lesser extent connected with heathenism.

Men shudder as they read of the human sacrifices offered by the ancient inhabitants of Mexico and Peru, and by the Druids; but professed (not real) Christianity has its awful list. Even so-called Christian England has made hundreds of burnt offerings of men, for the purpose of turning away the wrath of God from the country. Wherever there is religious persecution to any degree, it springs from the mistaken idea that God demands a victim. This is shown by the words of Christ to His disciples: “The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.” John 16:2. **All such worship has been devil worship, and not worship of the true God.**

Just here somebody has remembered that it is said in Heb. 9:22, “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission;” and this makes him think that after all God did demand a sacrifice before He would pardon man. **It is very difficult for the mind to rid itself of the idea received as a legacy from Paganism, through the Papacy, that God was so angry at man for having sinned, that He could not be mollified without seeing blood flow, but that it made no difference to Him whose blood it was, if only somebody was killed; and that since Christ’s life was worth more than the lives of all men, He accepted Him as a substitute for them.** This is almost a brutal way of stating the case, but it is the only way that the case can be truly presented.

“The heathen conception of God is a brutal one, as dishonouring to God as it is discouraging to man; and this heathen idea has been allowed to colour too many texts of Scripture”

The heathen conception of God is a brutal one, as dishonouring to God as it is discouraging to man; and this heathen idea has been allowed to colour too many texts of Scripture.

It is sad to think how greatly men who really loved the Lord, have given occasion to His enemies to blaspheme.

“Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.” What is remission? It means simply “sending away.” What is to be remitted, or sent away? Our sins, for we read that “through faith in Christ’s blood the righteousness of God is declared for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” Rom. 3:20. So we learn that apart from the shedding of blood there is no sending away of sins.

What blood is it that takes away sins? Only the blood of Christ, “for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be

saved.” “Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.” 1 John 3:5.

“Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver and gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ.” 1 Peter 1:18, 19

“If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7.

But how is it that the shedding of blood, even the blood of Christ, can take away sins? **Simply because the blood is the life.** “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.” Lev. 17:11. So when we read that apart from the shedding of **blood** there is no remission, we know it means that no sins can be taken away except by the **life** of Christ. In Him is no sin; therefore when He imparts His life to a soul, that soul is at once cleansed from sin.

“No sins can be taken away except by the life of Christ”

Remember that Christ is God. “The Word was God,” “and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” [Jn. 1:1, 14]. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” God gave Himself in Christ for men, for we have read of “the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.” The Son of man [the Messiah], in whom was the life of God, came to minister, “and to give His life a ransom for many.” Matt. 20:28.

The case, therefore, stands thus: All have sinned. Sin is enmity against God, because it is a condition of alienation from the life of God. Therefore sin is death. The one thing, then, that man stood in need of was life, and this is the one thing that Christ came to give. In Him was life that sin could not touch, and that could triumph over death. His life is the light of men. A single light

“Christ came to impart the life of God to man, for it is that that they lack”

may make ten thousand other lights, and still not be diminished. No matter how much sunlight any person receives, there is just as much for everybody else; and if there were a hundred times as many people on earth as there are, there would be no less sunlight for each one than there is now. So with the Sun of Righteousness. He can give His life to all, and still have as much left.

Christ came to impart the life of God to man, for it is that that they lack. **The lives of all the angels in heaven could not have met the demands of the case; not because God was so inexorable, but because they could not have imparted any life to man.** They had no life in themselves, but only the life that Christ imparted to them. But God was in Christ, and in Him God’s everlasting life could be given to everyone who would receive it.

Remember that in giving His Son, God gave Himself, and you will see that a sacrifice was not demanded to satisfy God’s outraged feelings, but that, on the contrary, God’s inexpressible love led Him to sacrifice Himself, in order to break down man’s enmity, and reconcile us to Himself.

“But why could He not give us His life without dying?” That is to say, Why could He not give us His life, and still not give it? We needed life, and Christ alone had life to give; but the giving of life is dying. His death reconciles us to God, provided we make it our own by faith. We are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, because in dying He gave up His life, and He gave it to us. Being made partakers of the life of God, through faith in Christ’s death, we are at peace with Him, because one life is in us both. Then we are “saved by His life.”¹² Christ died, but He still lives, and His life in us keeps us united to

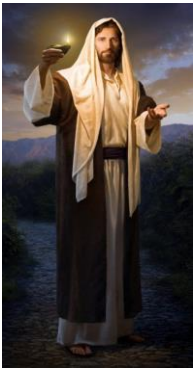
¹² With the life of Christ living in us, all lies about God are stripped away for Christ alone knows the Father’s true character. His faith (His trust) in His Father becomes our faith and we no longer have enmity towards God but are now reconciled— atoned = at-one with Him.

[at-one with] God [Gal. 4:6]. The imparting of His life to us frees us from sin and the continuing of it in us, keeps us from sin.

“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.” John 1:4. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John 8:12. Now we can understand how it is that if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” His light is His life; walking in the light is walking in His life; and when we thus walk, His life is flowing through us, a living stream, cleanses from all sin. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” [2 Cor. 9:15]. His life is light, and will dispel all earth’s darkness. In His light (life) we shall see light. Only as we consider hard questions in the light of His life, can we understand them.

“His life is light, and will dispel all earth’s darkness”

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Rom. 8:31,32. Let the weak and fearful sinner take courage, and trust in the Lord.



We have not a God who demands a sacrifice from man, but one who in His love has offered Himself a sacrifice.¹³

We owe to God a life perfectly in harmony with His law; but since our life is just the opposite of that, God in Christ has substituted His own life for ours, and so we can offer up “spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” [1 Pet. 2:5]. Then “let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.” Ps. 130:7, 8.

¹³ “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire ... burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I [Christ] Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psalm 40:6-8, cf. Heb. 10:5-10).

Propitiation - The Present Truth UK, November 9, 1893

“And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” [1 Jon. 2:2]. If men would allow the Bible to explain itself, instead of trying to explain it, much difficulty would be saved.

All the logical definitions are derived from Paganism, since theology is principally the study of heathen philosophy. Men have looked into the human heart in order to find God, instead of looking into His word and His works. **Accordingly, they have thought of God as a being whose wrath against men must be appeased by sacrifice; and the history of religion in the world is largely a history of the attempts of men to devise some sacrifice that would “appease the Divine justice, and conciliate the Divine favour.”** Men have punished themselves almost to death, and have persecuted others quite to death, because they thought that God demanded it of them as the price of His favour. **This is the human idea of propitiation, but it is not God’s.**

*“Let it be remembered that God Himself
has provided the sacrifice, or the
propitiation . . . Then since God provides
the sacrifice for sin, it surely cannot be
that He has enmity against sinners”*

If instead of the long word, “propitiation,” we read “sacrifice,” we shall simplify matters a great deal, because the shorter word is more common. Then let it be remembered that God Himself has provided the sacrifice, or the propitiation. Thus we read:

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” Rom. 3:23-25

Notice that it is God who has set forth Christ as the propitiation or sacrifice. Then since God provides the sacrifice for sin, it surely cannot be that He has enmity against sinners. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. “God is love” (1 John 4:16); but “the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Rom. 8:7. **The enmity that is to be appeased is all on the part of men, and God, who is sinned against, provides the means of reconciliation.**¹⁴ Of Christ we read:

“For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.” Col. 1:19-22

*“God
Himself has
made the
sacrifice for
us”*



Now remember that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself,” and you will see that God Himself has made the sacrifice for us. It is by the death of Christ that we are reconciled, and God was in Christ reconciling the world. The Word that was made flesh, and that was offered upon the cross, was God. It would be impossible for man to make a sacrifice that would atone for sin.

¹⁴ Simply put: Paganism = Man providing a sacrifice to appease God’s wrath against man. The true Gospel = God providing a sacrifice to appease man’s wrath against God.

“Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Micah 6:6-8.

Even a human sacrifice would not avail, not because God requires something more valuable, but because it cannot remove sin. The sacrifice which God provides, and which He alone can provide, is one that will remove sin, and thus destroy the enmity that is in man’s heart against God. God gives to us His life in Christ, and that life can take away sin, as has been demonstrated by the fact that it has conquered death. “There is none good but one, that is God.” [Matt. 19:17].

Therefore, the only way in which man can become good is to be filled with the life of God, and this He gives us freely in Christ.

“The sacrifice which God provides, and which He alone can provide, is one that will remove sin, and thus destroy the enmity that is in man’s heart against God”

Why will not men believe the Lord, and take Him just as He reveals Himself? The only reason is, as stated before, that they take counsel of their own hearts, and not of God. They do not come close enough to the Lord to get acquainted with Him. To Him belongs power, but His mercy is equal to His power. “God is love,” and therefore the more we learn of His power, the more powerful must we know His love to be. **When we taste, and continue to taste, and see that the Lord is good, we shall turn a deaf ear to all the insinuations of Satan, no matter in what guise they come.**

The Justice of Mercy
-Rom. 3:23-26- Present Truth UK
Aug 30, 1894

... Since all men are declared guilty by the law, there can be no righteousness in the law for any man, and that, as a consequence, if men were left alone with the law there would be no hope for any. The law is only the written statement of the righteousness of God, and therefore can impart no righteousness; but God is a living God, and His righteousness is a living righteousness; His Spirit has all-pervading power, and therefore He can put His own righteousness into and upon all that believe; for faith is the reception of God into the heart. In the reception of this righteousness “there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” [Rom. 3:22-26].

*“Faith is the
reception of God
into the heart”*

Questioning the Text

“No Difference.”—In what is there no difference? There is no difference in the way in which men receive righteousness. And why is no difference made in the manner of justifying men? Because “all have sinned.” Peter, in relating to the Jews his experience in first preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, said, “God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” Acts 15:8, 9. “Out of the heart of men,” not of one class of men, but of all men, “proceed evil thoughts,” etc. Mark 7:21.

God knows the hearts of all men, that all are alike sinful, and therefore He makes no difference in the Gospel to different men.

“One Blood.”—This lesson is one of the most important to be learned by the missionary, whether laboring at home or abroad. Since the Gospel is based on a principle that there is no difference in men, it is absolutely essential that the Gospel worker should recognise the fact, and always keep it in mind. God “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.” Acts 17:26. Not only are all men of one blood, but they are also “one kind of flesh.” 1 Cor. 15:39. The great burden of the epistle to the Romans, as has appeared up to this point, is to show that so far as sin and salvation therefore are concerned, there is absolutely no difference between men of all races and conditions in life. The same Gospel is to be preached to the Jew and to the Gentile, to the slave and to the freeman, to the prince and to the peasant.

“The same Gospel is to be preached to the Jew and to the Gentile, to the slave and to the freeman, to the prince and to the peasant”

“Come Short.”—People are fond of imagining that what are called “shortcomings” are not so bad as real sins. So it is much easier for them to confess that they have “come short” than that they have sinned and done wickedly. But since God requires perfection, it is evident that “shortcomings” are sins. It may sound pleasanter to say that a bookkeeper is “short” in his accounts, but people know that the reason for it is that he has been taking that which is not his,

or stealing. When perfection is the standard, it makes no difference in the result, how much or how little one comes short, so long as he comes short. The primary meaning of sin is “to miss the mark.” And in an archery contest, the man who has not strength to send his arrow to the target, even though his aim is good, is a loser just as surely as he who shoots wide of the mark.

“The Glory of God.”—From the text we learn that the glory of God is His righteousness. Notice, the reason why all have come short of the glory of God is that all have sinned. The fact is plain that if they had not sinned they would not have come short of it. The coming short of the glory itself consists in sin. Man in the beginning was “crowned with glory and honour” (Heb. 2:7) because he was upright. In the fall he lost the glory, and therefore now he must “seek for glory and honour and immortality.” [Rom. 2:7]. Christ could say to the Father, “The glory which thou gavest Me, I have given them,” [Jn. 17:22] because in Him is the righteousness of God which He has given as a free gift to every man. It is the part of wisdom to receive righteousness; and “they that be wise shall shine.” [Dan. 12:3].

*“Whosoever will,
let him take the
water of life freely.
That is, let him take
it as a gift”*

“Being Justified.”—In other words, being made righteous. To justify means to make righteous. God supplies just what the sinner lacks. Let no reader forget the simple meaning of justification. Some people have the idea that there is a much higher condition for the Christian to occupy than to be justified. That is to say, that there is a higher condition for one to occupy than to be clothed within and without with the righteousness of God. That cannot be.

“Freely.”—“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” [Rev. 22:17]. That is, let him take it as a gift.¹⁵ So in Isaiah 55:1: “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” It was the epistle to the Romans that accomplished the Reformation in Germany. Men had been taught to believe that the way to get righteousness was to purchase it either by hard work or by the payment of money.

¹⁵ If Jesus paid God off by appeasing His wrath or satisfying His justice, then God didn't really forgive anyone.

The idea that men may purchase it with money is not so common now as then; but there are very many who are not Catholics who think that some work must be done in order to obtain it.

Making Prayer to Be a Work.—The writer was once talking with a man in regard to righteousness as the free gift of God, the man maintaining that we could not get anything from the Lord without doing something for it. When asked what we must do to win forgiveness of sins, he replied that we must pray for it. It is with this idea of prayer that the Roman or Hindu devotee

“True prayer is simply the thankful acceptance of God’s free gifts”

“says” so many prayers a day, putting in an extra number some days to make up for omissions. But the man who “says” a prayer, does not pray. Heathen prayer, as for instance when the prophets of Baal leaped and cut themselves (1 Kings 28:26-28), is work; but true prayer is not. A man comes to me and says that he is starving.

Afterwards he is asked if anything was given him, and he says that he received some dinner, but that I made him work for it. When asked what he had to do for it, he replies that he asked for it. He could hardly make any one believe that he worked for his dinner! True prayer is simply the thankful acceptance of God’s free gifts.

“Redemption That is in Christ Jesus.”—We are made righteous “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” That is, through the purchasing power that is in Christ Jesus, or “through the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Eph. 3:8. This is the reason why it comes to us as a gift. Someone may say that everlasting life in the kingdom of God is too great a thing to be given to us for nothing. So it is, and therefore it had to be purchased, but since we had nothing that could buy it, Christ has purchased it for us and He gives it to us freely, in Himself.¹⁶ But if we had to purchase it from Him, we might as well

¹⁶ Again, Jesus did not pay God off, He paid sin and death off with His very own life so we wouldn’t have to.

have bought it in the first place, and saved Him the task. “If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Gal. 2:21. “Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ.” 1 Peter 1:18,19. The blood is the life. Lev. 17:17. Therefore, the redemption that is in Christ Jesus is His own life.

“Christ Set Forth.”—Christ is the one whom God has set forth to declare His righteousness. Now since the only righteousness that is real righteousness is the righteousness of God, and Christ is the only one who has been ordained of God to declare it upon men, it is evident that it cannot be obtained except through Him. “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12.

“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.” Heb. 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. [Ps. 40:6-8]. 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. “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by

“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”

wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death.” Col.1:21, 22.

Heathen and Christian Propitiation.—The Christian idea of propitiation is that set forth above. The heathen idea, 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 persecution that was carried on in so-called Christian countries in times past and is to some extent even now, is but the outcropping of this heathen idea of propitiation. Ecclesiastical leaders imagine that salvation is by works and that men by works can atone for sin, and so they offer the one whom they think rebellious as a sacrifice to their god not to the true God, because He is not pleased with such sacrifices.

“The heathen idea, which is too often held by professed Christians, is that men must provide a sacrifice to appease the wrath of their god”

“To Declare His Righteousness.”—To declare righteousness is to speak righteousness. God speaks righteousness to man, and then he is righteous. The method is the same as in the creation in the beginning. “He spake, and it was.” [Ps. 33:9]. “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Eph. 2:10.

God’s Justice In Redemption.—Christ is set forth to declare God’s righteousness for the remission of sins, in order that He might be just and at

the same time the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. God justifies sinners, for they are the only ones who need justification. The justice of declaring a sinner to be righteous lies in the fact that he is actually made righteous. Whatever God declares to be so, is so. And then he is made righteous by the life of God given him in Christ. The sin is against God, and if He is willing to forgive it, He has the right to do so. No unbeliever would deny the right of a man to overlook a trespass against him. But God does not simply overlook the trespass; He gives his life as a forfeit. Thus He upholds the majesty of the law, and is just in declaring that man righteous who was before a sinner. Sin is remitted, sent away from the sinner, because sin and righteousness cannot exist together, and God puts His own righteous life into the believer. **So God is merciful in His justice, and just in His mercy.**

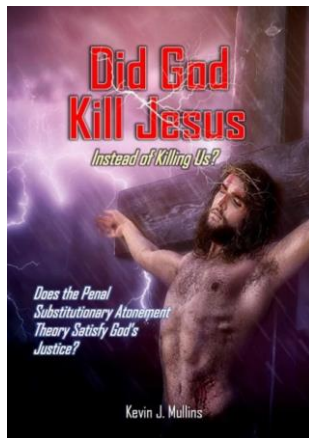
“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There’s a kindness in His justice,
That is more than liberty.”

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DID GOD KILL JESUS INSTEAD OF KILLING US?

By Kevin J. Mullins

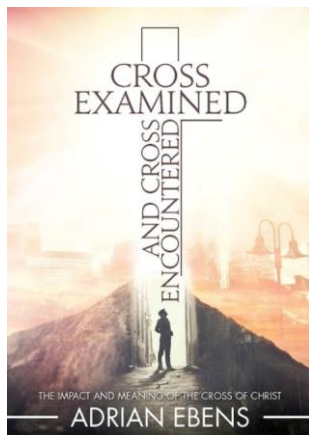
The Penal Substitutionary Theory is the most popular way of explaining the gospel in Christian circles. It teaches that God demands the death of the sinner, and to save us, He killed His Son in our place. However, is this really the gospel of the kingdom Jesus came to demonstrate?



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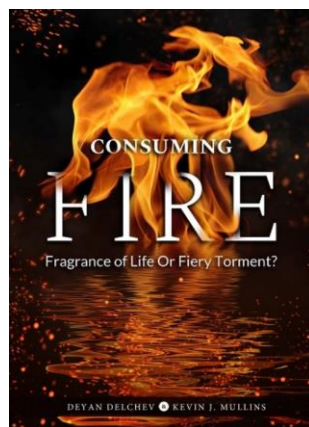
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CONSUMING FIRE:

By Deyan Delchev & Kevin J. Mullins

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Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

Common answers to this question are as follows:

- 1. To absorb God's wrath against sinful man.*
- 2. To satisfy God's justice which demands the death of the sinner.*
- 3. To offer His blood as payment to God's demands.*
- 4. To die in man's place so God wouldn't have to kill us.*
- 5. To release us from our debt so God can offer forgiveness.*

In this book are presented four articles from E.J. Waggoner between 1893 and 1894 that profoundly challenge the common understanding of God's justice and the cross as taught by "Christianity." The key lies in the true understanding of righteousness by faith.

Ellet Joseph "E.J." Waggoner (January 12, 1855 – May 28, 1916) was a Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) who attempted to introduce to the SDA church (and Christianity as a whole) the true understanding of such doctrines as:

- 1. Righteousness by faith.*
- 2. The two covenants.*
- 3. The relationship between law and grace.*
- 4. God's character (His love, true wrath, and justice).*
- 5. The atonement and why Jesus had to die.*



Sadly, the official SDA Church leadership rejected his teachings resulting in its members being divided over such doctrines from the time of 1888 until now. Consequently, the majority of the Christian world has been left in darkness with only sparkles of light coming through by others who have embraced these most precious messages throughout history—even before the time of Waggoner.

Today, this message is gaining more and more attention and acceptance by those heeding God's call to faithfully come out of the darkness of Babylon/Paganism and into His marvellous light (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 18:1-4).