



## THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD

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A proper understanding of the Moral Government of God is essential to an understanding of the governmental atonement. Government is understood to be the governing of subjects. The Moral Government of God is the governing of God, in the realm of morality, over moral agents who are subjects in this Government. The Bible describes God as a Governor (Matt. 2:6) who is the Sovereign of a Government (Isa. 9:6-7). The Scriptures also describes God as a King (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16) who is over a Kingdom (Ps. 45:6; Dan. 6:26; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 12:10). These different expressions of a King with a Kingdom or a Governor with Government are descriptions of the same concept. King and Kingdom relates to God's rule or reigning, just as Governor and Government relates to God's governing or legislating. The Kingdom of God is internal (Lk. 17:21) and relates to righteousness, peace, and joy (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 14:17). These are the aims or purpose of His governing, what He desires for all His creation.

Government consists in laws, courts, judges, punishments, prisons, and rewards. The *Moral* Government of God has the law of love (Deut. 6:5; 10:12; Matt. 22:35-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal 5:14; Jas. 2:8), the court of Judgment Day (Matt. 12:36; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7; Jud. 1:6), the Judge of Jesus Christ (Gen. 18:25; Jn. 5:22; Rom. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:1), the everlasting punishment of eternal death or endless hell fire (Matt. 25:46; Rom. 6:23; 2 Thes. 1:9; 2 Peter 2:9; Jud. 1:7), the prison of the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10; 20:14-15; 21:8), and rewards for obedience (Matt. 5:12; 6:4; 10:41; 16:27; Lk. 6:23; 6:35; 1 Cor. 3:8; 3:14; Col. 3:24; 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Jn. 1:8; Rev. 11:18; 22:12). God judges and governs all of the earth (Ps. 67:4).

God has four distinct governments. God governs over man's moral actions (Moral Government), God governs over nations (Providential Government), God governs over animals and creatures (Animate Non-Moral Government) and God governs over the matter of the universe (Material Non-Moral Government). The Material Government (Solar systems, matter, whether, material worlds) is governed by the law of cause and effect (Gen. 6:7, 19:24, Exo. 14:21-29; Num. 11:31; 1 Kin. 18:38; 2 Chro. 7:13;

Ps. 50:1, 93:4, 135:6-7; Isa. 45:7, 45:12; Dan. 4:35; Jonah 1:4, 14-15; Matt. 5:45, 8:24-27, 24:29; Mk. 4:39-41; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:2-3; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 16:1-4, 8, 12, 18, 21). The Creature Government is governed by the law of instinct and causation (Gen. 9:2; Num. 22:22-23; Deut. 11:31; 1 Kin. 17:4-6; Dan. 6:22; Jonah 1:17, 2:10; Matt. 10:29, 17:27, 26:74; Mk. 5:11:13). The Providential Government (nations, rulers, and kings) is governed by the law of influence and causation (Gen. 19:24-25; Exo. 11:9-10; 18:10; 20:2; Num. 33:53; Deut. 2:5; 2:25; 3:20; 9:23; 11:24; Josh. 1:2-6; 1:15, 8:1; 11:20; 23:15; 24:14; 1 Kin. 22:19-23; 1 Chro. 29:10-12; Esther 4:14; Ps. 22:28, 66:7; Prov. 21:1; Isa. 60:22; Jer. 21:10; 27:6; 32:27-30; 35:15; 50:9; Eze. 11:15; 17:24; 29:19; Dan. 2:21; 2:38; 4:17; 4:32; 5:21; 5:18; 7:25; Zeph. 3:8; Jn. 19:10-11; Rom. 13:1; 13:4-5; Rev. 17:17). But God's Moral Government over man is governed by motives presented to the mind, appealing to free will. It *is not* governed by the law of cause and effect, not governed by force, but is rather governed by the law of liberty or the law of influence and response (Gen. 3:11; 4:6-7, 6:5; Deut. 30:19, Josh. 24:15; 1 Kin. 18:21; Isa. 1:16-20, 5:4; 45:22; 55:6-7, 66:3-4; Jer. 2:9; Hos. 10:12; Jer. 18:5-11; 21:8; 26:13; Eze. 18:30-32; 20:7-8; Matt. 23:37; Jn. 1:11; 5:40; 7:17; Acts 2:40; 17:30; 7:51; Rom. 2:5-11; 6:16-17; 2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jas. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 1:22; Gal. 6:17-8; Rev. 3:20; 22:17).

God is the author of our nature or constitution, He is our Maker, we are the work of His hands, He personally forms each individual in the womb (Gen. 4:1; Isa. 27:11; 43:7; 49:5; 64:8; Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139:13-14, 16; Ecc. 7:29; Job 10:9-11; 31:15; 35:10; Jn. 1:3), and He makes us in His image (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6; Jas 3:9). Therefore we are all created with a free will and a conscience like God has. Because of free will, the future is partly open with moral possibilities or alternative moral courses (Gen. 4:6-7; 22:12; Ex. 3:18; 4:9; 13:17; 16:4; 33:2; 34:24; Deut. 8:2; 13:1-3; 1 Sam. 2:30; 2 Chro. 12:6-7; 16:9; 32:31; Jdg. 2:20-22; 3:4; Isa. 5:1-5; Eze. 3:19; 12:3; 12:13; 33:19; Jer. 3:6-7; 3:19-20; 18:8-10; Ps. 81:13; 81:13-14; Job 11:14; Matt. 23:26; Rom. 6:12; 1 Cor. 10:13). Since God made free will apart of our nature, since God created our nature capable of moral action, or since we are capable of creating or originating our own moral character, we are therefore subjects of His Moral Government, designed to be governed by Him. The word nature can describe a man's *God given constitution* (Rom

1:26; 1:31; 2:14; 2:27; 2 Tim 3:3), or the word nature can mean a man's *self chosen character*, his custom, habit, or manner of life (Jer. 13:23; Acts 26:4; 1 Cor 2:14; Eph 2:2-3; Gal 2:14-15; 2 Tim 3:10; 2 Pet 1:4). Our constitution is an "instrument" that can be used by free will as an "instrument of righteousness" or an "instrument of unrighteousness" (Rom. 6:13, 6:19). While God is the author of our *metaphysical constitution* (Gen. 4:1; Isa. 27:11; 43:7; 49:5; 64:8; Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139:13-14; Ecc. 7:29; Job 10:9-11; 31:15; 35:10; Jn. 1:3), each man is the author or self-originator of their *moral character* (Ecc. 7:29; Matt. 12:34-35; 15:17-20; Mk. 7:15, 21-22; Lk. 6:45). And all men have deliberately chosen to be sinners (Gen. 6:12; Exo. 32:7; Deut. 9:12; 32:5; 1 Sam. 3:13; Jdg. 2:19; Isa. 66:3; Hos. 9:9; Ps. 14:2-3; Isa. 53:6; Ecc. 7:29; Zep. 3:7; Matt. 12:34-35; 15:17-20; Mk. 7:15, 21-22; Lk. 6:45; Rom. 3:23). Therefore they are responsible and accountable for being sinners, since it is their own fault; it is their own free will choice to sin and thereby make themselves sinners.

Within the Moral Government of God, all men are held accountable according to their knowledge, no more or less (Matt. 10:15; 11:21-22; 11:24; 23:14; Mk. 6:11; 12:40; Lk. 10:12; 10:14; 12:47-48; 20:47; 23:34; Jn. 9:41; 15:22; 19:11; Rom. 1:18-20; 4:15; 5:13; 4:17; Jas. 3:1; Heb. 10:26; 2 Pet. 2:21). And God has given light to every man, so all men have moral knowledge (Job. 12:7-9; Ps. 19:1-2; Jn. 1:9; Acts 17:30; Rom. 1:18-21; 2:14-15; 10:18; Titus 2:11-12), once they reach the age of accountability when they know right from wrong (Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:15-16; Jas. 4:17). Therefore all men are accountable and without excuse for sin since they have moral knowledge (Jn. 9:41; 15:22; Rom. 1:18-21; 2:14-15). Also, the extent of man's moral obligation is the extent of man's moral ability, no more or less (Deut. 6:5; 10:12, 30:6; Matt. 22:37; Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27; 1 Cor. 10:13). However large or small your ability is, you must love God with all of it. So God's laws are not impossible (Deut. 30:11; Job 34:23; Isa. 5:4; Matt. 11:30; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Jn. 5:3), but are reasonable, just, and good (Rom. 7:12; 7:16; 1 Tim. 1:8). God appeals to the free will or natural ability of sinners (the *grace of creation*), commanding them not sin and calling them to turn themselves from their sinning (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 30:11, 19; Josh. 24:15; Isa. 1:16-20; 55:6-7; Jer. 4:14; Hos. 10:12; Jer. 18:11; 21:8; 26:13; Eze. 18:30-32; 20:7-8; Acts 2:40; 17:30; Rom. 6:17; 2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jas. 4:7-10;

1 Pet. 1:22; Rev. 22:17). God calls all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30-31) and God rightly blames them if they do not repent (Matt. 11:20; 23:37; Mk. 6:6; Lk. 7:30; 13:34; 14:17-18; 19:14; 19:27; Jn. 5:40; Rev. 2:21). The only thing that keeps men back from God is their own unwillingness of heart, not any inability of their nature (Eze. 20:7-8; Matt. 11:20-21; 23:37, Mk. 6:6; 7:30; 13:34; 14:17-18; 19:14; 19:27; Jn. 5:40; Acts 17:27; Rev. 2:21).

In God's Moral Government, morality is of the inward intention of the heart (Gen. 6:5; Joel 2:12-13; Ps. 51:6; Isa. 29:13; Jer. 4:4; Eze. 33:31; Matt. 5:8; 6:1-5; 12:35; 15:8; 15:11; 15:17-20; 23:25-28; Mk. 7:6; 7:15-23; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 2:29; 2 Cor. 8:12; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Tim. 1:5; Titus 1:15). All sin or righteousness comes out of the will or heart (Isa. 14:13-14; Eze. 11:21; Matt. 5:28; 12:35; 15:18-19; Lk. 6:45; Rom. 6:17; 10:10; 2 Pet. 2:14). Moral perfection is purity of heart or motive (Matt. 5:8; 1 Pet. 1:22) which is perfection of heart or intention (1 Kin. 8:61; 11:4; 15:3; 15:14; 2 Kin. 20:3; 1 Chro. 12:38; 28:9; 29:9; 29:19; 2 Chro. 15:17; 16:9; 19:9; 25:2; Ps. 101:2; Isa. 38:3). God judges the heart (1 Sam. 16:7; Ps. 26:1-2; 17:3; 44:18-21; 51:6; 139:1-2, 23; Prov. 24:12; Jer. 17:10; 2 Cor. 8:12), because a person's moral character is their will, intention, motive or heart (Prov. 23:7; Matt. 5:28; Acts 7:51; Rom. 2:29; 2 Cor. 8:12; 1 Jn. 3:15). Love is the essence of all virtue (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8). There is no virtue at all without love (1 Cor. 13:1-3). To have outward acts of righteousness, without an inward heart of righteousness, is to have no righteousness at all (Matt. 5:20; 7:15; 23:28; Lk. 11:39). The Kingdom of God is internal (Lk. 17:21). And since we only have one heart, we are holy or sinful, righteous or unrighteous, moral or immoral, loving or selfish, obedient or disobedient, at any given time, but never both at the same time (Matt. 6:22-24; 7:17-18; 12:33; Lk. 11:34-36; Rom. 3:10-18; 2 Cor. 5:17; Tit. 1:15-16; Jas. 2:10; 3:11-12). You cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13), since you only have one heart, you only have one will.

All sin consists in sinning, sin is a choice to transgress known law (Jn. 9:41; Rom. 5:13; Jas. 4:17; 1 Jn. 3:4). Sin is not a metaphysical constitution, a physical or spiritual substance, disobedience is a free moral choice (1 Sam. 8:7; 2 Kin. 18:12; Ps. 78:8, 10; Isa. 5:4; 5:24; 65:12; 66:4; Jer. 3:13; 5:3; Zech. 8:17; Lk.

19:14; Rom. 6:12; Eph. 4:26-28; 1 Jn. 3:4), a choice to do evil instead of the good that you know you should choose (Jn. 3:19; 9:41; Jas. 4:17). Sin is not a defect or disability of nature but is rebellion of the will or an unwillingness of heart (Ps. 78:37; Isa. 14:13-14; 30:9; 30:15-16; 31:6; 42:24; Eze. 20:7-8; Neh.9:29; Zech. 7:11-13; Lk.19:14; 19:27). Sin is an unreasonable or unintelligence choice (Isa. 30:1; 47:8; 65:2; Ecc. 9:3; Matt. 7:26; Mk. 6:6; Lk. 6:49; Tit. 3:3). Sin is to rebel against the reigning of God (Deut. 9:7; 9:24; 31:27; Ps. 78:8; Isa. 30:1; 30:9; 31:6; 63:10; Jer. 4:17; 5:23; Lam. 3:42; Eze. 2:3; 20:7-8; Lk. 7:30; 19:14), an attempt to dethrone God and establish yourself as the center of the universe (Isa. 14:13-14). The essence of sin is a selfish rebellious heart (Ps. 77:8; Isa. 14:13-14; Jer. 5:23; Eze. 20:7-8; Lk. 19:14). Sin is a selfish motive of the will (Matt. 23:5), a state of the inner heart (Matt. 5:28; 15:18-19), which manifests itself into outward action (Matt. 12:33; 12:35). Inward sin, a selfish motive of heart, is completely voluntary (Job 11:14; Matt. 23:26; Rom. 6:12). A man determines the moral condition of his own heart (1 Kin. 8:61; Zec. 7:10; Eze. 18:31; Ps. 119:112). Remember, sin involves the whole heart, so an individual cannot be partly holy (partly loving) and partly sinful (partly selfish) at the same time (Matt. 6:22-24; 7:17-18; 12:33; Lk. 11:34-36; Rom. 3:10-18; 2 Cor. 5:17; Tit. 1:15-16; Jas. 2:10; 3:11-12). To sin (to be selfish) or not to sin (to love) is a daily choice (Lk. 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:31). The existence of sin is a contingency, it doesn't have to exist, it is always avoidable and optional (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 8:2; Jdg. 2:20-22; Exo. 33:2; 34:24; Eze. 3:19; 12:13; 33:19; Jer. 18:8-10; Ps. 81:13; Job 11:14; Matt. 23:26; Rom. 6:12; 1 Cor. 10:13). All sin is either against the person of God (Ex. 10:16; 20:3-11; Deut. 1:41; 9:16; Josh. 7:20; Jdg. 10:10; 2 Kg. 17:7; Jer. 3:25; 8:14; Lk. 10:27), against the person of your neighbor (Ex. 10:16; 20:12-17; 2 Chro. 6:22; Lk. 10:27), or against the person of yourself (1 Cor. 6:18). All sin is rebellion against the law or Government of God (Lev. 4:22; Dan. 9:11; Neh. 9:26; 1 Jn. 3:4). Sin is not the will of God (Deut. 6:5; 10:12; Matt. 22:35-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal 5:14; Jas. 2:8). God wants men to be sinless (Gen. 17:1; Deut. 18:13; 1 Chro. 28:9; 2 Chro. 19:9; Ps. 4:4; Isa. 1:16; Matt. 5:48; Jn. 5:14; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:26-28; 1 Tim. 5:7; Rev. 3:2). Yet sin occurs (Gen. 6:12; Exo. 32:7; Deut. 9:12; 32:5; Jdg. 2:19; Hos. 9:9; Ps. 14:2-3; Isa. 53:6; Ecc. 7:29; Zep. 3:7; Rom. 3:23). Therefore the will of God is not always done

(Isa. 5:2-4; Matt. 6:10; Lk. 11:2; Zach. 14:9). This explains the broken heart of God, God is grieved and disappointed with men because of their sin (Gen. 6:5-6; 1 Sam. 15:35; Ps. 78:40; 81:13; 95:10; Isa. 1:14; 63:10; 53:3 Eze. 6:9; Mk. 3:5; Eph. 4:30), because men sin when they don't have to (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 8:2; Jdg. 2:20-22; Exo. 33:2; 34:24; Eze. 3:19; 12:13; 33:19; Jer. 18:8-10; Ps. 81:13; Job 11:14; Matt. 23:26; Rom. 6:12; 1 Cor. 10:13). God says that sin is "a very horrible thing" (Jer. 18:32), and therefore the Lord does not delight in sin (Isa. 66:4; 65:12; Mal. 2:17), but rather abhors it or hates it (Deut. 12:31; Prov. 6:16-19; Zech. 8:15). It's false to say God delights in sin (Mal. 2:17). Since God doesn't want us to sin at all (Isa. 1:16; 55:7; Job 34:31-32; Jn. 5:14; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:34; Eph. 4:26-28), God gives us the ability not to sin, so that we don't have to sin (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 30:11, 19; Josh. 24:15; Isa. 1:16-20; 5:4; 55:6-7; Hos. 10:12; Jer. 18:11; 21:8; 26:13; Eze. 18:30-32; Acts 2:40; 17:30; Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 7:1; Php. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jas. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 1:22).

Having a holy people was God's original intention in creation (Gen 6:5-6; Eph 1:4; Eph 2:10). This is the end sought by His government (1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:22). Love obeys the law (Jn. 14:15; 14:23; 1 Jn. 5:2; 5:3), because love is the law (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27), love is the fulfillment of the entire law (Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8). Love is an inner motive of the heart, a committal of the will to promote the highest well-being of all (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Jn. 3:16; 15:13; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; Rom. 13:10; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8). Love necessarily manifests itself into outward action when possible (Matt. 7:17; 12:35; Lk. 6:45; Rom. 11:16; Tit. 1:15). Being holy, loving, or obedient is a free personal choice (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; Ps. 17:3; Isa. 1:16-20; 55:6-7; Hos. 10:12; Isa. 66:17; Jer. 18:7-11; 21:8; 26:13; Eze. 3:20; 18:30-32; 33:19; Jonah 3:8-10; Joel 2:12-13; Matt. 7:24-26; 21:28-30; Lk. 6:47-49; Jn. 8:34; Acts 2:40; 17:30; 24:16; Rom. 6:13, 19; 6:16-17; 1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 6:6; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jas. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 2:3; 3:22; 5:2-3; Rev. 22:17). Obedience is an intelligent choice, a choice to live according to your reason or conscience (Ps. 111:10; 119:34; 119:100; Matt 7:24; Lk. 6:47-48; Rom. 12:1; Jas. 3:13). Repentance is reasonable and intelligent (Isa. 1:18; 55:7; Eze. 12:3; 18:14; 18:29; Job 34:27; Hag. 1:5; 1:7; Lk. 15:17). Men are to walk in truth, according to reality, as God

does (1 Jn. 1:7). Love is the moral state God chooses to live in (Jn. 3:16; 15:13; Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:8; 4:16). Love is the moral state of all those who follow Jesus (Mk. 6:20; Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21; 1 Thes. 5:27; 1 Cor. 3:17; Eph. 2:21; 2:22; 3:5; Col. 3:12; 1 Thes. 2:8; Tit. 1:8; Heb. 3:1; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Jn. 2:3; 2:4; 3:3; 3:24; 4:7; 5:2-3).

Moral perfection is a moral obligation for all men (Gen. 17:1; Deut. 18:13; 1 Chro. 28:9; 2 Chro. 19:9; Ps. 4:4; Isa. 1:16; Matt. 5:48; Jn. 5:14; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:26-28; 1 Tim. 5:7; Rev. 3:2). Moral perfection is not perfection of knowledge, since that is impossible and therefore cannot be an obligation. Moral perfection is purity of heart or motive (Matt. 5:8; 1 Pet. 1:22) which is perfection of heart or intention (1 Kg. 8:61; 11:4; 15:3; 15:14; 2 Kg. 20:3; 1 Chro. 12:38; 28:9; 29:9; 29:19; 2 Chro. 15:17; 16:9; 19:9; 25:2; Ps. 101:2; Isa. 38:3). Moral perfection is having a clean conscience void of offense (Acts 23:1; 24:16; 2 Tim. 1:3). Moral perfection is defined as loving God and loving your neighbor (Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal 5:14; 1 Thes. 3:12-13; Jas. 2:8), a perfection of love (1 Jn. 2:5; 4:12). Moral perfection is a choice (1 Kin. 8:61; Ps. 101:2; Acts 24:16). While physical perfection (glorification) is not attainable in this life (1 Cor. 15:50-56; Php. 3:11-12), moral perfection (sanctification) is attainable in this life (Gen. 6:9; 1 Kg. 15:14; 2 Kg. 18:3-7; 20:3; 2 Chro. 15:17; 2 Chro. 16:9; Job 1:1; 1:8; 2:3; Isa. 38:3; Ps. 17:3; 18:20-24; Lk. 1:6; Jn. 8:34-36; Acts 20:32; 23:1; 24:16; 26:18; Rom. 6:1-2; 6:6; 6:11; 6:18; 6:22; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1:8; 6:11; 2 Cor. 6:3; Heb. 2:11; 10:10; 10:14; Gal. 5:24; Php. 2:15; 3:15; Eph. 4:22-28; Col. 1:22-23, 28; 4:12; 1 Thes. 2:10; 3:12-14; 5:23; 1 Tim. 3:2; 3:10; Tit. 1:6-7; 2:12; 2 Pet. 3:14; 1 Jn. 2:5; 4:12; Jud. 1:1). Though no man is above temptation, not even Jesus (Matt. 4:1; Mk. 1:13; Heb. 4:15), disobedience to God's law is always voluntary, optional, and avoidable (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 8:2; Jdg. 2:20-22; Ex. 33:2; 34:24; Eze. 3:19; 12:13; 33:19; Jer. 18:8-10; Ps. 81:13; 1 Cor. 10:13). Since God is the author of our nature (Gen. 4:1; Isa. 27:11; 43:7; 49:5; 64:8; Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139:13-14, 16; Ecc. 7:29; Job 10:9-11; 31:15; 35:10), and He formed our nature with free will (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6; Jas 3:9), we are naturally able to obey God (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 30:11, 19; Josh. 24:15; Isa. 1:16-20; 55:6-7; Hos. 10:12; Jer. 18:11; 21:8; 26:13; Eze. 18:30-32; Acts 2:40; 17:30; Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jas. 4:7-

10; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rev. 22:17). Christ died for our disobedience to God's moral law, not because we *couldn't* obey, or because God's laws are impossible, but because we *didn't* obey God. Because we were *deliberate criminals*, not *defective cripples*. We need the atonement to atone for our personal choices to disobey God's moral law (Isa. 52:3; 53:6).

The wrath of God is impartial (Ex. 32:33; Deut. 10:17; Rom. 2:9; 2 Cor. 10:6; Col. 3:25; 2 Pet. 1:17; 1 Jn. 3:15; Rev. 21:8; 22:15), anyone who consciously sins, rebels, revolts, or transgresses is under condemnation (Jn. 3:19; Rom. 1:18; 2:6-11; Heb. 10:26-31; 1 Jn. 3:8; 3:15; 3:20; 2 Jn. 1:9). God is against those who deliberately sin every day (Isa. 52:5; Hos 13:2; 2 Pet. 2:14). The punishment of God is rightly and justly executed upon willful, voluntary, deliberate rebellion (1 Sam. 3:13; Prov. 1:24-26; Isa. 1:20; 64:5, 7; Jer. 4:4, 17-18; 5:6; 6:10-11, 19; Eze. 20:21; Hos. 9:9; Zech. 7:11-13; Matt. 22:27; Lk. 10:27; Jn. 3:19; Acts 3:23; Rom. 2:5, 14-16; Heb 10:26-31; Eph. 5:6; 2 Thes. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17). Sin and guilt are not hereditary because God's justice does not allow children to be punished for the sins of their parents (Deut. 24:16; 2 Kin. 14:6; 2 Chro. 25:4; Jer. 31:29-30; Eze. 18:2-4; 18:19-20). Infants are morally innocent (2 Kin. 21:16; 24:4; Matt. 18:3) and have not yet "done anything" morally "good or evil" (Rom. 9:11) until the age of accountability, which is the age of reason, when they know right from wrong (Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:15-16), and choose to do what they know is wrong (Jas. 4:17). Each man originates their own sin, each man is the author of their own moral character (Ecc. 7:29; Matt. 12:34-35, 15:19; Mk. 7:21-22; Lk. 6:45). Sin is not transmitted, transferred, inherited, inherent, innate, inbred, or inborn. Sin is not propagated through hereditary *imputation* (Deut. 24:16; 2 Kin. 14:6; 2 Chro. 25:4; Jer. 31:29-30; Eze. 18:2-4; 18:19-20), but sin is propagated through personal *imitation* (1 Kin. 14:16; 15:26, 30, 34; 16:13, 26; 21:22; 22:52; 2 Kin. 3:3; 10:29, 31; 13:2; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28; 21:11, 16; 23:15; Neh. 13:26; Jer. 32:35; Isa. 3:12; Hos. 6:7; Matt. 18:6; Mk. 9:42; Lk. 17:2; Rom. 5:12; 5:14; 5:19; 1 Cor. 8:9; Heb. 4:11) Men choose to sin like Adam (Hos. 6:7). Men choose to join Adam's rebellion (Rom. 5:12, 14, 19). Men are dead in sins, that is, they are separated from God, having a dead relationship, because they have each voluntarily and personally chosen to sin (Isa. 59:2; Lk. 15:24; Rom. 5:12; 5:14; 7:9; 7:11; Col. 2:13). Men make

themselves sinners (Gen. 6:12; Exo. 32:7; Deut. 9:12; 32:5; 1 Sam. 3:13; Jdg. 2:19; Isa. 66:3; Hos. 9:9; Ps. 14:2-3; Isa. 53:6; Ecc. 7:29; Zep. 3:7; Matt. 12:34-35; 15:17-20; Mk. 7:15, 21-22; Lk. 6:45; Rom. 3:23). Men originate their own moral character (Ecc. 7:29; Matt. 12:34-35; 15:17-20; Mk. 7:15, 21-22; Lk. 6:45). Men are responsible for their own condemnation (Eze. 14:14; Hos. 13:9; Rom. 2:5; 2:27; Gal. 6:17-8; Heb. 2:2; 2 Pet. 2:13). Sinners are accountable for their own sin (Deut. 24:16; 2 Kin. 14:6; 2 Chro. 25:4; Eze. 18:2-4; 18:19-20; Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; 11:15; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 22:12). While *moral depravity* is not hereditary (Deut. 24:16; 2 Kin. 14:6; 2 Chro. 25:4; Eze. 18:2-4; 18:19-20; Jer. 31:29-30), *physical depravity* is hereditary (Gen. 1:21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 38-39; Heb. 2:14). But metaphysical constitutions have no moral character in and of themselves, apart from their use by the will or heart of man (Matt. 15:17-20; Mk. 7:15; Rom. 6:13, 6:19). Involuntary lusts of the flesh are temptations but not sin (Gen. 3:6; Heb. 4:15; Jas. 1:14), they become sin if the will submits to them (Matt. 5:28; Jas. 1:15), if men choose to selfishly serve themselves (Rom. 8:13; 9:5-8; 2 Pet. 2:10).

Under God's Government there are morally loyal subjects (Rom. 15:18; 2 Cor. 2:9; 1 Pet. 1:14; 1 Jn. 3:22; 4:17) and morally rebellious subjects (Isa. 14:13-14; 30:9; 30:15-16; 31:6; 42:24; Neh. 9:29; Lk. 19:14; 19:27). Loyal subjects are those who obey the moral law (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 2:3; 1 Jn. 3:22; Rev. 12:17; Rev. 14:12), who allow God to govern their moral actions. Rebels are those who reject the law of God (Rom. 10:21; 1 Tim. 1:9; 1 Jn. 3:4), who resist the reigning of God over their moral actions (1 Sam. 8:7; Lk. 19:14), who "despise" the Lord's "government" and are "self-willed" (2 Pet. 2:10). Christians are those who were formerly disobedient (Tit. 3:3; 1 Pet. 3:20) but are no longer disobedient (Rom. 6:17; Php. 2:12; Eph. 6:6; 1 Jn. 3:9; 3:22). Christians make the daily choice to obey God (Lk. 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:31). But sinners are unwilling to being governed by God (Isa. 14:13-14; 30:9; 30:15-16; 31:6; 42:24; Neh. 9:29; Lk.19:14; 19:27), they want to govern their own lives (2 Pet. 2:10). Sinners are unwilling to seek after God (Isa. 30:9; 30:15; 30:16; Matt. 11:20-21; 23:37; Mk. 6:6; 7:30; 13:34; 14:17-18; 19:14; 19:27; Jn. 5:40; Rev. 2:21), though God is not far from anyone (Acts 17:27).

All men are under moral obligation in God's Moral Government, under obligation to the moral law of love (Matt.

22:35-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal 5:14; Jas. 2:8). No sinner (Matt. 9:12; Mk. 2:17; Lk. 5:31) can be justified by obeying the law, since present obedience cannot atone for past disobedience (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:20; 3:28; Gal. 2:16). And though Christians are not under the condemnation of the law (Rom. 6:14-15; 8:1; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 5:18), nor under obligation to the Jewish laws (Acts 21:25; Gal. 4:21), Christians are under obligation to obey God Himself (Acts 3:19; 5:29; Rom. 6:1-2; 13:8; 2 Pet. 3:11; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 Jn. 2:4). Christians are under moral obligation to be perfect or holy (Matt. 5:48; 1 Cor. 15:34; 2 Cor. 13:7; Eph. 4:24-28; 1 Pet. 1:15), to choose to love (Rom. 13:8, 10). Christians are obligated to be righteous (Lk. 1:75; Rom. 6:13, 16, 19; 8:4; 1 Cor. 15:34; Eph. 4:24; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22). Christians are obligated to walk as Christ walked (Jn. 13:15; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 Jn. 2:6) and thereby fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). The law of God is written upon the very heart of the Christian (Ps. 40:8; 51:7; 119:34; Prov. 3:1; Isa. 51:7; Jer. 31:33; Rom. 6:17; Heb. 10:15-16), so that the Kingdom is reigning on the inside of them (Lk. 17:21). Christians live a crucified life instead of a self-indulgent life (Matt. 16:24; Lk. 9:23; Rom. 6:2; 6:6-7; 6:11; 1 Cor. 15:31; Gal. 5:24), subjecting their bodies (1 Cor. 9:27) and mortifying the deeds of their flesh (Rom. 8:13), so that they don't walk after the flesh (2 Cor 10:2; 5:15; Gal. 5:16). Those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit have no condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Christians are not sinners (Ps. 66:18; Jn. 9:31; 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Tim. 1:9; Jas. 5:16; 1 Pet. 3:12; 4:18; 1 Jn. 3:22) unless they backslide (Jas. 4:8; 5:19-20). All Christians are saints (Acts 9:13; 9:32; 9:41; 26:10; Rom. 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25-16; 15:26; 15:31; 16:2; 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:1-2; 14:33; 16:1; 16:15; 2 Cor. 1:1; 8:4; 9:1; 9:12; 13:13; Eph. 1:1; 1:15; 1:18; 2:19; 3:8; 3:18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18; Php. 1:1; 4:22; Col. 1:2; 1:4; 1:12; 1:26; 1 Thes. 3:13; 2 Thes. 1:10; 1 Tim. 5:10; Phm. 1:5; 1:7; Heb. 6:10; 13:24; Jud. 1:3; 1:14; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4; 11:18; 13:7; 13:10; 14:12; 15:3; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:8; 20:9). And as saints Christians are sanctified (Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Heb. 2:11; 10:10; 10:14; Gal. 5:24; Jud. 1:1), that is, Christians are free from deliberate rebellion or sin (Jn. 8:34-36; Rom. 6:2; 6:6-7; 6:11; 6:18; 6:22; 8:2; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 6:6). Christians keep God's commandments (1 Jn. 2:3; 3:22; 5:2-3). The righteous care about the well-being of others, but the wicked disregard the value of other people (Prov. 29:7; Jn. 13:35; 2 Thes. 3:13). True obedience to God is caring about others (Matt.

12:11-12; Lk. 6:9), love is a committal of the will to promote the highest well-being of all (Jn. 15:13; 2 Thes. 3:13), love does not promote the ill-being or harm of his neighbor (Rom. 13:10), love is absolutely unselfish (1 Cor. 13:5), and so love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom. 13:8; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8), the one who loves God will keep God's commandments (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:2; 5:3; 2 Jn. 1:6).

But the essence of God's Moral Government is His laws, His court, His punishments, His prison, and His rewards. God has the law of love (Deut. 6:5; 10:12; Matt. 22:35-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal 5:14; Jas. 2:8), the court of Judgment Day (Matt. 12:36; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7; Jud. 1:6), the Judge of Jesus Christ (Gen. 18:25; Jn. 5:22; Rom. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:1), the everlasting punishment of eternal death or endless hell fire (Matt. 25:46; Rom. 6:23; 2 Thes. 1:9; 2 Peter 2:9; Jud. 1:7), the prison of the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10; 20:14-15; 21:8), and eternal rewards (Matt. 5:12; 6:4; 10:41; 16:27; Lk. 6:23; 6:35; 1 Cor. 3:8; 3:14; Col. 3:24; 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Jn. 1:8; Rev. 11:18; 22:12). God righteously judges and governs all of the earth (Ps. 67:4; 103:19), and He is absolutely dedicated to secure, uphold, and enforce His Moral Government by the necessary means.

## THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT & THE DESIGN OF LAWS

The purpose of Government is to protect society from harm, to promote the well-being of the community. The design of laws is to protect the subjects from what is detrimental to their well-being and to promote what is beneficial for their well-being. The purpose of human government is to promote the well-being of the community (Rom. 13:4). The purpose of family government is to promote the well-being of the family (Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 23:13; 29:15). Likewise, the purpose of God's Government, the design of His laws, is to promote the highest well-being of all (Deut 5:29; 6:3; 6:24; 10:13; Jer. 7:23; 32:39; Lk. 6:9; Eph. 6:3), His own glory supremely (Matt. 22:37; Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27) and the well-being of neighbors equally (Matt. 19:19; 22:39; Mk. 12:31-33; Lk. 10:27; Rom 13:9; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8). His Kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 14:17). These are the aims or purpose of His governing, what He desires for all men. An increase of His government results in an increase of peace (Isa. 9:7). Laws protect what is valuable, and well-being is valuable (Matt. 10:31; 12:11-12; Lk. 12:7). Well-being is intrinsically good (Lk. 16:25). Right and wrong is determined by what is good and evil. God commands love because it promotes the well-being of all, and God forbids sin because it demotes the well-being of all. Love is the commitment of the will to promote the well-being of another (Jn. 15:13; 2 Thes. 3:13), while sin is essentially selfishness (Isa. 14:13-14; Matt. 23:5; Lk. 19:14). God commands the means (love) which are good because of their relation to an intrinsically good end (well-being). And God forbids the means (sin) which are evil because of their relation to an intrinsically evil end (ill-being). Obeying God's law results in blessedness or happiness (Ps. 94:12; 112:1; 119:1; Rev. 22:14). He withholds nothing good and He commands nothing evil. His law is love because He loves His subjects. Since the law protects and promotes the well-being of all, the law is holy, just and good (Rom. 7:14, 16; 1 Tim. 1:8). God's law is a light or lamp that we might see how we ought to live and conduct ourselves, that we can know what our chosen path or way of life should be (Prov. 6:23; Isa. 51:4).

The Ten Commandments (Exo. 20: 1-17; Matt. 19:18-19; Rom. 13:9), the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12; Lk. 6:31), the two Greatest Commandments (Matt. 22:37-39; Mk. 12:29-33; Lk. 10:27-28), are all designed to promote the highest well-being of all. That is the reason or purpose of "thou shalt not" and "thou shalt". These are divine commandments or orders, directing us how we ought to use our free will. These are divine laws legislated by God's divine will, being derived from God's divine mind. Because God is omniscient, because His understanding of reality is infinite, He knows what is truly harmful, helpful, detrimental, and beneficial (Ps. 147:5), and He legislates accordingly (Ps. 145:17). The will of God legislates in accordance with the mind of God. God does not give us laws for the sake of giving us laws, His laws of a reason or a purpose behind them. God's laws are based upon His infinite wisdom, not derived from any arbitrary will. Laws do not originate right and wrong (Rom. 5:13; Gal. 5:19) but laws declare right and wrong (Rom. 3:20; 7:7) so that we will know how to live in such a way that promotes the highest well-being of all. God's laws do not *arbitrarily decide* right and wrong, but they *authoritatively declare* right and wrong. The laws of God are fundamentally derived from His divine mind (Gen. 3:22), declaring what He knows to be good and forbidding what He knows to be evil. Sin is whatever the divine intelligence of God deems as harmful or hurtful to the highest well-being of all. His laws therefore are truth; they are expressed truths of reality (Ps. 119:142). What God commands, He commands because it is right (Isa. 45:19). God loves righteousness (Ps. 11:7) so all His legislation is righteous (Ps. 145:17; Hos. 14:9). God Himself is subjected to His own conscience (Gen. 3:22, 18:25; Job 34:10, 12), and God has always known right from wrong (Isa. 40:13-14). To question the law of God is therefore to question the intelligence and character of God, while arrogantly exalting your own finite intelligence and character.

God always acts in accordance with His wisdom (Prov. 3:19-20; 8:12; 8:22-30; 20:18; 24:3) and goodness (1 Jn. 4:8; 4:16). Therefore God cannot abrogate His laws without going contrary to His own wisdom and without setting aside His love for His people. But God benevolently cares about the entire world (Jn. 3:16) and therefore His laws will never pass away (Ps. 119:44; Matt. 5:18; Lk. 16:17). His "government" is "forever" (Isa. 9:7)

since He always acts according to His wisdom and love. God will not set aside His laws and allow destructive lawlessness reign, since He is benevolent and wise, since He loves Himself and His subjects. A God of love without a law of love is an unthinkable contradiction. The law of God is as immutable as the character of God. The law of God is the revealed will of God (Ps. 40:8); the law is a revelation of the heart and character of God. God longs for men to obey His good laws (Isa. 48:18). God absolutely requires that all men obey His laws (Matt. 22:35-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal 5:14; Jas. 2:8), especially professing Christians (Acts 3:19, 5:29; 2 Pet. 3:11; 2 Tim. 2:19). God absolutely requires that all men repent or stop sinning, that they stop breaking His good laws (Isa. 1:16, 55:7; Job 34:31-32; Ps. 4:4; Jn. 5:14, 8:11; Acts 17:30-31; 1 Cor. 15:34; Eph. 4:26-28; 2 Pet. 3:9). Nothing less than this can be required from a God of love.

Because God's law of love promotes the highest well-being of all, and God doesn't want us to disobey, God has given all men the ability to obey Him, so that disobedience to God's moral law is always voluntary and avoidable, holiness or obedience is possible for all (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 8:2, Jdg. 2:20-22; Ex. 33:2; 34:24; Eze. 3:19; 12:13; 33:19; Jer. 18:8-10; Ps. 81:13; 1 Cor. 10:13). If God gave us an impossible law, and punishes all disobedience, then He would be seeking our destruction rather than our well-being! But God is seeking our well-being and not our destruction, so His law is that we love to the best of our ability (Deut. 6:5; 10:12; 30:6; Matt. 22:37; Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27), therefore His moral law is not impossible at all (Deut. 30:11; Job 34:23; Isa. 5:4; Matt. 11:30; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Jn. 5:3).

And when we understand the reason for God's laws, the purpose of His commandments, we can understand why it's not vain to obey God (Mal. 3:14). It should be easy to love His law (Ps. 119:97; 119:113; 119:163), to delight to do His will with all our heart (Ps. 40:8), to consent unto the goodness of the law (Rom. 7:12, 7:16), so that His law is not a burden or grievous to us (1 Jn. 5:3). Because we know that God governs benevolently, with the interest of everyone in mind. The law of God reveals to us the heart of God. His law is love because His heart is love. Since the very essence of God is love (1 Jn. 4:8; 4:16), we can understand that all that God does is loving, from the law to the Gospel, from

His mercy to His wrath, from Heaven to Hell itself, it is all rooted in His love, derived from His benevolence (Ps. 145:9, 17). God has an infinite wise and an infinitely benevolent reason for all that He does and all that He requires.

## THE PURPOSE OF PUNISHMENT

God does not punish for the sake of punishing. Punishments have a purpose or a reason behind them. Punishments are a means to an end and not an end themselves. The purpose of punishment is law enforcement (Dan. 6:14-16; Ester 1:15-22), or public justice. Laws consist of precepts (commands) and sanctions (punishments). A precept without a sanction is mere advice but not law. Laws are not upheld, or enforced, unless there are punishments designed to enforce or uphold them. When punishments are not executed to enforce the laws, lawlessness and rebellion result (Ecc. 8:11). Punishments are designed to be undesirable. They are deliberately painful and miserable, so that they are to be feared and dreaded. The threatening of the sanction is meant to secure obedience to the precept. Punishments are designed to be public examples unto others (1 Cor. 10:5-6; Jude 1:7) that the severity of them will cause others to fear to follow in their bad example of disobedience (Rom. 11:20-22). It is not good to accept or tolerate wickedness (Prov. 18:5; Rom. 1:32). Punishments exist to protect the public; punishments (retributive justice) serves public justice (well-being of all) (Rom. 13:1-6).

Justice requires that the punishment fits the crime. The degree of punishment declares the value of the law. In human government, punishment is determined by the value of the law that was violated. If a man robs a house, he may serve a few years in jail. But if a man murders, capital punishment could be executed. Strict justice, or just punishment, which is the opposite of mercy or forgiveness, consists in “an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth...” (Exo. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut 19:21; Matt. 5:38) so the punishment fits the crime, matching the transgression. The degree of punishment declares the value of the law that was violated, or rather, the degree of punishment declares the value of the object the law sought to protect, which value was sinned against by transgression. And sinning against God and breaking His good laws is of such a horrific nature, the value of the well-being of God and everyone else is such, that the only adequate punishment is the eternal lake of fire (Matt. 2:46; 2 Thes. 1:9; 2 Pet. 2:9; Jude 1:7; Rev. 21:8) (unless atonement is made that can just as equally declare the value of the violated law, to vindicate the rightness of the law, and be such an influence as to enforce the precept of the law). Prisons are

meant to be places of isolation, to protect the law abiding citizens from dangerous criminals. Prisons are designed to remove individuals which are a threat to the well-being of others, to remove those who would harm others if left unrestrained or at liberty. God will separate the wicked from the righteous (Matt. 25:32-46), not allowing the wicked to enter the Kingdom of Heaven to disturb its blessedness (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19:21; Rev. 21:8, 22:14-15). Hell is the prison of the universe, a place of outer darkness (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

Very simply, punishments uphold and enforce laws, declaring the value of the law, also declaring that the law was right and violating it was wrong, thereby vindicating the violated law, seeking to deter future rebellion and disobedience, or seeking to secure future submission and obedience from the rest of the subjects of the government. Laws and punishments are designed to promote the highest well-being of all. Without the execution of the penalty, government would collapse, unless atonement is made which substitutes the execution of the penalty, enforcing and upholding the law just as equally as the execution of the punishment would have.

## WHAT THE PURPOSE OF PUNISHMENT IS NOT

Punishments must not be seen as personal vindictiveness on the part of the punisher (Eze. 18:32; 33:1; Lam. 3:32-33; Heb. 12:10). Just as precepts are rooted in love, so also are sanctions rooted in love; both law and punishment is rooted in God's benevolence. Even in family government punishment is inflicted out of love (Prov. 13:24, 22:15, 23:13, 29:15). The prosecution of the law through punishments is designed to enforce good laws designed for the well-being of the community (Rom. 13:4). That is the motive of a good prosecutor. Punishments are not designed to give sadistic pleasure or vindictive satisfaction to the punisher. Punishments are governmental not personal; they are governmental necessities, not personal vindictiveness or sadistic satisfactions. Punishments are designed for governmental vindication, to vindicate the violated laws, not for personal vindictiveness or sadistic desire. Laws are designed to promote the well-being of the community. Punishments are designed to enforce those laws. Personal injury against an individual is prosecuted in a court procedure as a crime against the community as a whole. For example "The State of Connecticut verses Mr. Smith." The prosecution of a crime is not personal revenge for personal injury. Crime is treated as a matter of the State, as that which endangers the whole of the community, as a violation of governmental law. Prosecution of a crime is in fact care for the community, being governmental not personal.

We see this in the case of Daniel and king Darius (Dan. 6:7-16). Daniel was found in violation of a royal decree (vs. 10-12). The consequence, designed to uphold and enforce the decree, was being cast in a lions den (vs. 7, 12, 16). Though king Darius did not personally desire this consequence upon Daniel, but was actually unwilling that he should perish (vs. 14), he had to enforce his law or else rebellion would result (vs. 16). The king did not execute the penalty for any sadistic satisfaction or any vindictive gratification. It was not any retaliation for any personal injury; it was not any personal revenge. It was governmental, not personal, it was to uphold his government and secure obedience to his law.

We also see this governmental concern in the situation of king Ahasuerus and queen Vashti (Esther 1:16-22). The queen disobeyed a command of the king and therefore transgressed the

law (vs. 12). A concern within the government of the king arose, that if Vashti was not punished, rebellion would spread through the land (15-18). So the king, out of a governmental necessity and not a personal vindictiveness, punished his own queen to enforce and uphold his laws and protect his subjects from further lawlessness and rebellion (vs. 19-22).

God Himself takes no sadistic pleasure in the death of the wicked (Eze. 18:32; 33:1; Lam. 3:32-33; Heb. 12:10). God's wrath is governmental, designed to enforce and uphold His laws, since further rebellion results when punishment for rebellion is not executed (Ecc. 8:11). God's wrath is not personal vindictiveness designed to gratify any sadistic desire in God. God is not willing that any should perish but that men return to obedience unto His moral law (2 Pet. 3:9) So God wants to find a way to set aside our punishment while at the same time upholding and enforcing His law. God prefers mercy over judgment (Jn. 8:10-11; Jas. 2:13) so that judgment is considered His strange work (Isa. 28:21). And God commands that we never be malicious or vindictive ourselves (Matt. 5:44; Lk. 6:27; 6:36; Rom. 12:19).

God fills the office of Executor, prepared to revenge all disobedience to His moral law (2 Cor. 10:6), having the authority to repay and inflict vengeance upon evil men (Rom. 12:19). This vengeance is governmental, punishment is necessary to support the authority of the law. The 1828 Noah Webster Dictionary properly and precisely defined vengeance as, "The infliction of pain on another, in return for an injury or offense. Such infliction, when it proceeds from malice or mere resentment, and is not necessary for the purposes of justice, is revenge, and a most heinous crime. When such infliction proceeds from a mere love of justice, and the necessity of punishing offenders for the support of the laws, it is vengeance, and is warrantable and just. In this case, vengeance is a just retribution, recompense or punishment. In this latter sense the word is used in Scripture, and frequently applied to the punishment inflicted by God on sinners." Punishments are not inflicted for the punishment's sake; punishments are a means to an end and not the end itself, executed upon transgressors "for the support of the laws".

God loves judgment (Isa. 61:8) and is displeased and grieved when there is no judgment (Isa. 59:15) because just government (laws and punishments) are designed to promote the well-being of the creation that He loves (Rom. 13:4). The righteous also rejoice in judgment (Ps. 58:10; Rev. 6:10; 18:20; 19:1-3). Laws and punishments are designed to promote public justice. The very purpose of retributive justice is to promote public justice. The law of God is good and the punishments prescribed to enforce them are good. So God does not kill or execute for personal pleasure as some selfish, sadistic, sick tyrant. God executes wrath upon the wicked because He's a benevolent ruler, who is set on upholding and enforcing His laws which are designed to promote the well-being of the creation He deeply loves. Wrath must be understood as governmental, rooted in benevolence, as opposed to personal, rooted in malevolence or maliciousness. The reason for His wrath is governmental, not personal, it necessary to maintain good government.

## THE NATURE OF FORGIVENESS

The Bible uses words such as “forgiveness” “pardon” and “remission”. Forgiveness, pardon, and remission are used in both the Old and the New Testament to describe God letting our sins go as if they had not been committed, letting our sins go unpunished, passing over them as if they never existed (Ex. 20:7; 34:7; 34:9; Lev. 4:20, 26; 19:22; Nu. 14:18; 14:19-20; 15:25-26; 30:5, 8, 12; I Kin. 2:9; 8:30, 34, 36, 39, 50; II Chr. 6:21-39; 7:14; Neh. 1:3; 9:17; Ps. 19:12-13; 25:11; 103:3; 130:4; Is. 55:7; Jer. 30:11; 31:34; 33:8; 36:3; 46:28; Joel 4:21; Dan. 9:9-10; 9:19; Amos. 7:2; Mt. 6:12, 14, 15; 9:2, 5, 6; Mk. 2:5-10; Lk. 5:20-24; 12:31-32 (Mk. 3:28-30); 18:21, 27, 32, 35; Mk. 4:12; 11:25-26; Lk. 7:47-49; 11:4; 12:10; 17:3-4; 23:34; Jn. 20:23; Acts 8:22; Rom. 4:7; Jas. 5:15; I Jn. 1:9; 2:12).

The word “aphesis”, for example, is translated as “remission” (Matt. 26:28; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 1:77; 3:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 10:43; Heb. 9:22; 10:18) and as “forgiveness” (Mk. 3:29; Acts 5:31; 13:38; 26:18; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). “Aphesis”, means pardon, letting sins go as if they had never been committed; passing over sins or passing them by as if they didn't exist or as if they never occurred; remitting the penalty that is justly deserved. Forgiveness of sins is when the punishment of sin is set aside, when God allows the sins themselves to go unpunished, letting them go as if they were not committed. Forgiveness is when a claim is relaxed or a penalty is dispensed with (1 Chro. 21:7-15; 2 Chro. 12:5-7, 32:26; 2 Sam. 24:16; 24:25; Num. 16:46-48; Ps. 78:38; 106:23, 45; Jer. 18:8; Eze. 20:17; Micah 7:18-19; Jonah 3:9-10; 4:2; Joel 2:13-14). Forgiveness is when God turns from His wrath or anger (Deut. 13:17; Num. 25:4; Josh. 7:26; Ps. 78:38; 85:3-4; Joel 2:13; Jonah 3:9; Isa. 12:1; Jer. 3:12; Dan. 9:16; Hos. 11:9; 14:4). Forgiveness of sins is when God does not punish sins (Acts 5:31; 13:38; 26:18; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Heb 9:22), the pardon of a debt is when the payment for a debt is remanded instead of demanded (Matt 6:12; 18:27; Lk. 7:42). Pardoning sins, passing over transgression, delighting in mercy, is one of God's glorious attributes (Micah 7:18). Punishment and forgiveness cannot co-exist, they are opposites (but atonement and forgiveness can co-exist). The pardon of a debt and the payment of a debt are polar opposites (Matt. 18:23-35). Mercy is the opposite of judgment (Heb. 10:27-

30; Jas. 2:13), mercy is when retributive judgment is set aside, when judgment is relaxed, when crimes are pardoned instead of punished, when God passes over sins as if they didn't exist, treating them as if they never occurred. But while God grants clemency or amnesty, He never grants immunity or impunity (Matt. 18:25-35; Rom. 2:9; 8:13; Heb. 10:26-31), because His laws are good and they must be obeyed.

Forgiveness and justification are synonymous terms, the Bible uses them interchangeably (Lk. 18:14; Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 3:24; 5:9; Tit. 3:7). The Bible contrasts justification with condemnation (Prov. 17:15; Matt. 12:37). Condemnation is the execution of punishment, justification is the setting aside of punishment and treating one as if they were just. Justification is being treated just as if you had never sinned. To be justified by faith (Rom. 3:28; 5:1; Gal. 3:24) or justified by His blood (Rom. 5:9) or justified by His grace (Rom 3:24) or to have the remission of sins through His blood (Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14) are essentially the same thing. Justification and remission are different expressions of the same concept, when God set's aside the punishment that sinners deserve and treat them as if they were always just and righteous. When God forgives an individual by His grace, through the atonement, He set's aside their punishment and does not hold their past sins against them (Rom. 3:25; 2 Pet. 1:9), He treats them as if they were righteous (Rom. 4:6-8). Forgiveness is simply when the penalty of the sin is remitted, when sins are let go as if they were not committed, when God acts as if they never occurred or even existed. Forgiveness in the Moral Government of God is when moral crimes or moral rebellion is graciously pardoned. And gracious pardon is the remission of the penalty for past sins.

## WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF FORGIVENESS

Every atonement view must ask this fundamental question, what is keeping God from forgiving sin? You must first pin point the obstacle that needed to be overcome before you can analyze the design of the remedy. What was necessary for God to forgive sin must be answered by the means of the atonement. The atonement is designed to overcome the obstacles of pardon or remission. So what is the problem the atonement overcomes?

As we've considered already, the purpose of punishment is to enforce the law and to uphold the Government (Dan. 6:7-16; Esther 1:16-22). Since forgiveness is the setting aside of punishment, the difficulty of forgiveness is that the influence of the law and Government is severely weakened by forgiveness since the violated law is not enforced and the Government rebelled against is not upheld. And the result of this is that rebellion is encouraged and sinners are strengthened in their disobedience (Ecc. 8:11). If a law is violated and crime against the community is committed, and there is no punishment inflicted or no atonement made, the law is not being vindicated, upheld, supported, valued, or enforced. If there is no punishment or no atonement, there is nothing to say that the law was right and violating it was wrong, there would be no deterrent from future rebellion, but future disobedience would be encouraged under the impression that you can break the law with impunity. And God is absolutely dedicated to His law since the law is designed for the well-being of all. (Deut 5:29; 6:3; 6:24; 10:13; Jer. 7:23; 32:39; Matt. 19:19; 22:37-39; Mk. 12:30-33; Lk. 6:9; 10:27; Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; Eph. 6:3; Jas. 2:8).

We see the problems of forgiveness in the situation of Daniel and the King (Dan. 6:7-16). When Daniel violated the law, the lions den was a punishment designed to enforce and uphold the law. The king sought for a means to forgive Daniel and remit his penalty but he could find no such way, he could find no adequate atonement by which the penalty can be dispensed with. If the king remitted the penalty, without atonement, he would not be enforcing his laws and rebellion could break out among the people. If the king merely showed favor to Daniel, he would be considered unjust for his partiality and thereby weakening the influence of his governing by destroying the confidence his subjects had in his

governing. And if the king merely abrogated the law, or repealed the penalty, he would be saying that the law was wrong and that he was wrong for issuing it, and thereby again destroying the confidence that his subjects have in his abilities to govern. The king found no adequate atonement by which the penalty could be remitted, by which He could pardon Daniel and grant the remission of his rebellion, so the king was forced execute the penalty, against his personal desire, or else his government would collapse. He found no substitute that could replace the punishment Daniel was facing, which would allow the king to set aside the punishment while at the same time upholding the authority and influence of his laws. When crimes are forgiven, or penalties are remitted, without an atonement made which enforces and upholds the law, there is series governmental damage done. Confidence in government is weakened, its influence is destroyed, and the law is not vindicated, upheld, or enforced if pardon is given without atonement being made.

These are very serious governmental problems that need to be overcome if God is going to forgive sin without overthrowing His Government or abrogating His laws, and thereby endangering the good of the people that He loves, whose welfare His laws are designed to protect and whose well-being His laws are designed to promote. These are the problems of forgiveness that the atonement is designed to overcome. The shedding of blood *declares* and *expresses* the righteousness God, upholding the just laws of God, so that He can safely remit the penalty of our sin (Rom 3:25-26). This *demonstration* and *declaration* of His righteousness through blood shed, *publicly showing* that God values and enforces His laws, is absolutely necessary if God is going to pardon crime without damaging His Government. Public Justice (the design of God's laws) would surely suffer if retributive justice (punishment) was set aside without an adequate atonement to substitute its place in fulfilling its purpose. Retributive justice can only be set aside if public justice is upheld by an alternative means, by a substitute.

## WHAT ARE NOT THE PROBLEMS OF FORGIVENESS

As we've considered already, the problems that need to be overcome are governmental and not personal. Just as the situation of the king and Daniel (Dan. 6:7-16), God does not have any vindictiveness or sadistic desire that needs to be gratified or satisfied (Eze. 18:32; 33:1; Lam. 3:32-33; Heb. 12:10). God is already wanting to forgive moral disobedience (Ps. 86:5), He is already willing to pardon moral crimes (Neh. 9:17), whenever it is safe for all for Him to do so (2 Pet. 3:9). God personally prefers mercy over judgment (Isa. 28:21; Micah 7:18; Jn. 8:10-11; Jas. 2:13).

The problems of forgiveness arise from the government of God and not the person of God, from God as a Ruler and not as an offended individual. The person of God did not need a bloody sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:22; Ps. 51:16-17; Prov. 21:3; Hos. 6:6; Matt. 9:13; 12:7). The reason the atonement was given in the first place was because God already had a disposition of love and mercy (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8). It is not that Calvary gave us love and mercy, but that love and mercy gave us Calvary. The atonement allows God, who holds the Office of Universal Ruler or King, to set aside His governmental wrath and extend gracious pardon to offenders without compromising His government or abrogating His laws. Individuals can forgive without atonement, but Rulers cannot forgive without an atonement being made, without virtually abrogating their laws and weakening their government. When governmental laws are violated, a price must be paid (either blood shed must be offered or eternal hell fire must be suffered), or else the law is not upheld, its value is not declared, obedience is not secured, and therefore the law is abrogated and government is destroyed. Person to person relations do not require atonements for forgiveness. We are to forgive our neighbors for their trespasses without requiring atonements from our neighbors (Matt 18:35). But government to criminal relations does require atonement for forgiveness (Heb 9:22). But the nature of both governmental forgiveness and personal forgiveness are the same (Matt. 6:12), consisting in letting sins go as if they had not been committed, acting as if they never occurred or ever existed, relaxing a claim, setting aside any penalty.

So the problems of forgiveness, which the atonement needed to overcome, were not any vindictiveness in God which needed satisfaction, nor any sadistic desire within the Godhead that needed gratification. The problems of forgiveness were governmental and not personal, if punishment was going to be set aside, an adequate atonement must substituted the punishment, to enforce God's laws and uphold God's government. Retributive justice (judgment) can only be set aside when public justice (well-being of all) is upheld and enforced by laws through the atonement.

## **THE GROUNDS AND CONDITIONS OF PARDON**

The grounds of anything must be understood to be "because of which" while the conditions must be understood to be "not without which". The ground of forgiveness or pardon is the ultimate cause, while the conditions are the necessary elements required. The conditions of forgiveness (justification) are four fold. The conditions God has established in His Government make the act of merciful forgiveness to sinners or gracious pardon to criminals, safe and wise, protecting the well-being of all.

The ground of forgiveness (justification) is entirely grace (Rom. 3:24; Eph 2:8-9; Tit. 3:7). To earn forgiveness is a contradiction in terms. Though God's law is not impossible (Deut. 30:11; Job 34:23; Isa. 5:4; Matt. 11:30; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Jn. 5:3), and we are naturally able to obey God (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 30:11,19; Josh. 24:15; Isa. 1:16-20; Isa. 55:6-7; Hos. 10:12; Jer. 21:8; Eze. 18:30-32; Jer. 18:11; Jer. 26:13; Acts 2:40; Acts 17:30; Rom. 6:17; 2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jas. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rev. 22:17), no sinner (Matt. 9:12; Mk. 2:17; Lk. 5:31) can be justified by obeying the law, since present obedience cannot atone for past disobedience (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:20; 3:28; Gal. 2:16). We are capable of obeying, but our obedience is incapable of atoning for our sins. No matter how much you obey, all you have done is your duty (Lk. 17:10). Therefore obedience cannot be supererogation, so present obedience cannot atone for past disobedience. Forgiveness is always gracious and can never be merited or deserved. Retributive justice is the execution of what is deserved. Forgiveness is withholding what is deserved. Forgiveness is entirely grounded in the loving kindness of God, granted only because God is gracious and merciful and not because of anything we have done. It was because God was loving and gracious in the first place that He sent His Son to atone for our sins (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8)

The first condition is blood shed (Lev. 17:11; Exo. 12:13; Heb 9:22) to substitute our punishment. Blood shed is necessary for the same reason punishment is necessary. A law violated needs blood shed for the same reason a violated law requires punishment. A bloody sacrifice is necessary to enforce the law, and thereby uphold God's justice. The shedding of blood must vindicate the rightness of the law, declare the value of the law, and enforce the

precept of the law. And once this is done, pardon is made possible, our punishment can be set aside, the penalty can be dispensed with. The shedding of blood, as a declaration of His righteousness, allows God to be just in remitting the penalty of eternal hell (Rom. 3:24-26). Obedience cannot atone for sins (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:20; 3:28; Gal. 2:16). Only blood shed can atone for sin (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). Both in the Old Testament (Lev. 17:11), and in the New Testament (Heb. 9:22), blood, not obedience, atoned for sin. But the blood of animals cannot take away sins (Heb. 10:4), only the precious blood of Jesus Christ can (Heb. 9:13-14).

The second condition is repentance (Isa. 55:7; Lam. 3:40; Hos. 14:1-2; Joel 2:12-13; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 13:3; 5:32; 13:5; 2 Cor. 7:10) to secure a return to lawful conduct, lest sinners are granted impunity or immunity (a license to sin) and the well-being of all is once again endangered instead of protected. An unrepentant criminal cannot be pardoned of his crimes and released from his sentence by a benevolent ruler who cares about the well-being of all. There is no forgiveness of sin without forsaking sin. Repentance is when a person forsakes their selfish way of life (2 Kin. 17:13; Isa. 55:7; Jer. 25:5; 26:3; Eze. 3:19, 33:9, 33:11; Jonah 3:8), departs from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19), forsakes their sin (Prov. 28:13; Isa. 55:7), or when a person changes their mind about sinning and makes up their mind to sin no more, when they purpose in their heart to stop sinning (Ps. 17:3; Isa. 1:16, 55:7; Job 34:31-32; Jn. 5:14, 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:34; Eph. 4:22-28). This must be a condition since minding the flesh, or being “carnally minded” (fleshly purposed) is enmity with God (Rom. 8:5-6). Men are transformed by the renewal of their minds (Rom. 12:2). Repentance is not a work but is an internal attitude of submission to God and His law; it is a change of purpose, a change of mind, a change of heart. Instead of being carnally minded, men must make up their mind to sin no more. Instead of being carnally purposed, they choose to be heavenly minded. God is utterly against those who sin every day (Isa. 52:5; Hos 13:2; 2 Pet. 2:14), His wrath is against anyone who is in willful sin or known disobedience (Jn. 3:19; Rom. 1:18; 2:6-11; Heb. 10:26-31; 1 Jn. 3:8; 3:15; 3:20; 2 Jn. 1:9). God punishes those who do not repent of their own selfish way (Jer. 15:7; Lk. 13:3, 5), but God rejoices when one repents of their sins and returns to obedience (Lk. 15:7, 10). Our God of love cannot abrogate His law of love, so a return to obedience is

absolutely necessary for God to safely, wisely, and lovingly grant pardon to sinners. Repentance must come before salvation (2 Cor. 7:10), Conversion comes before forgiveness (Mk. 4:12), repentance comes before the remission of sins (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38). God calls all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30-31) and God rightly blames them if they do not repent (Matt. 11:20; 23:37; Mk. 6:6; Lk. 7:30; 13:34; 14:17-18; 19:14; 19:27; Jn. 5:40; Rev. 2:21).

The third condition is faith (Rom. 3:25; Eph 2:8) which is the heart’s embrace and obedience to the truth (Lk. 24:25; Acts 8:37; 15:9; 26:18; Rom. 6:17; 10:10; 1 Pet. 1:22), choosing to live in accordance with intelligence, conscience, or reality, as revealed by God. Without the truth it is impossible to be saved or set free (Jn. 8:32; Rom. 6:17; 10:13-14; 2 Thes. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:22). Faith is from the heart (Lk. 24:25; Acts. 8:37; 15:9) and it purifies the heart (Acts 26:18; Rom. 6:17; 10:10; 1 Pet. 1:22). Faith and faithfulness cannot be separated (Jas. 2:18, 2:20, 2:26), faith is the seed of all true obedience.

When the Holy Spirit brings us to the place (Jn. 6:44-45; 16:8) where we repent of our sins and believe the Gospel (Mk. 1:15; Acts 20:21; Heb. 6:1), this is called conversion (Matt. 13:5; 18:3; Mk. 4:12; Lk. 22:32; Jn. 12:40; Acts 3:19; 15:3; 28:27; Jas. 5:19), regeneration (Tit. 3:5), or the new birth (Jn. 3:3-8; 1 Pet. 1:23), so that a person is an entirely new creature (2 Cor. 5:17). And without being born again by the Spirit of God a person cannot see the Kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3, 5), one absolutely must obey the Holy Spirit, or obey the Gospel (Rom. 6:17; 10:16; 2 Thes. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17) by turning from sin and trusting in Christ, by leaving all and following Jesus (Lk. 14:27, 33).

The final condition of ultimate salvation is perseverance unto the end (Matt. 10:22; Acts 13:43; 14:22; Rom. 11:22; Col. 1:22-23; Heb. 3:14; 8:9; 1 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 2:20) since God absolutely will not allow sin into Heaven (Isa. 52:1; Matt 7:21, 23, 22:11-14, 25:41; Lk. 13:27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Heb. 12:14; Rev. 21:8, 22:11-15), since Heaven will be Heaven because there is no sin and consequently no misery there (Isa. 35:10; 51:3, 51:11, 52:1; 65:19, 25; Jer. 31:12; Rev. 7:17, 21:4). Only the narrow road terminates on eternal or endless life (Matt. 7:14-15),

so men absolutely must persevere unto the end of that road to reach that final destination, since all on the broad road end in destruction (Matt. 7:13).

## WHAT IS AN ATONEMENT

The concept of the atonement is that something can be done through which punishment can be dispensed with. Atonement is that which adequately substitutes the penalty of the law; an alternative, replacement, or substitute for the punishment of sin. Since the purpose of punishment is law enforcement, and punishment must uphold and enforce the law, as well as declare the value of the law, that which substitutes the punishment of sin must equally uphold the law and declare the value of the violated law. It must fulfill the purpose of punishment by enforcing the law, declaring the value of the law, and thereby upholding God's Government, protecting the community from lawlessness and sin. Punishments are designed for law enforcement, laws are designed for public interest, and therefore for an atonement to substitute punishment, the atonement must enforce the law and protect the public interest. God cannot set aside His laws without setting aside His wisdom and benevolence, so if God is going to set aside our punishment, He must substitute our punishment with an atonement to uphold and enforce His laws, to vindicate the violated law and declare its value. God must *publicly demonstrate* that He enforces His laws, to uphold His Government, in order to promote obedience and discourage rebellion. And when His laws are violated and broken, He *demonstrates* this through the punishment of eternal hell fire or through an atonement of blood shed, thereby vindicating His broken laws and enforcing their authority.

Since all men have deliberately violated the moral law by their own free will choice (Gen. 6:12; Exo. 32:7; Deut. 9:12; 32:5; Jdg. 2:19; Hos. 9:9; Ps. 14:2-3; Isa. 53:6; Ecc. 7:29; Zep. 3:7; Rom. 3:23), and thereby incurred the just penalty of the law (Eze. 18:4; 18:20; Rom. 3:23) an atonement for disobedience is necessary if the incurred penalty is going to be set aside (Heb. 9:11), if wrath is going to pass over instead of being poured out (Exo. 12:13; Num. 16:48; 16:50; 25:8; 2 Sam. 24:25; Ps. 106:30). The Bible represents blood shed as the atonement by which the punishment of hell fire can be avoided, remitted, or set aside (Lev. 17:11; Exo. 12:13; Heb. 9:22). Jesus offered His own blood as an offering to God (Heb. 9:14; Eph. 5:2). The high price of Christ's blood (1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Cor. 7:23) just as equally upholds the law and declares its value as the punishment of hell fire would have.

The shedding of Christ's blood declares the righteousness and justice of God so that God can remit the penalty of our sins (Rom. 3:25-26). God will let our sins go unpunished if they are atoned for by blood shed. God can be just in setting aside our punishment because the atonement of blood has substituted our eternal punishment of hell.

The law of God requires (Heb. 9:19, 22) either an atonement of blood or the punishment of hell (Lev. 17:11; Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:22). Sinners need blood shed to "make amends for the harm that he hath done" (Lev. 5:16), so that once a "trespass offering" has been made, his trespass can be "forgiven him" (Lev. 5:10). The shedding of blood is the substitute for the punishment of hell. The punishment that sinners deserve is eternal hell fire (Matt. 25:46; 2 Thes. 1:9; 2 Pet. 2:9; Jude 1:7) but once blood shed has been offered on behalf of our sins, God can forgive us our sins instead of punish our sins, because they've been atoned for. Sins must be punished in hell or atoned for by blood. Once they are atoned for, they can be forgiven, that is, the penalty that they deserve can be set aside, dispensed with, or remitted, when blood is offered for them.

The sin of mankind has broken the very heart of God (Gen. 6:5-6; 1 Sam. 15:35; Ps. 78:40; 81:13; 95:10; Isa. 1:14; 53:3; 63:10; Eze. 6:9; Mk. 3:5; Eph. 4:30) because God never wanted man to sin. Hell was not made for man (Matt. 25:41). So God sought for a way to salvage His fallen creation, to restore and redeem the world that He loves so deeply and dearly. Out of love God sent His own beloved Son (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8) in the hopes that men might hear Him (Matt. 17:5; Mk. 9:7; Mk. 12:6; Lk. 9:36; Lk. 20:13), but many rejected the light and chose the darkness (Jn. 1:10-11; 3:19) and instead of hearing the Son they treated Him brutally (Mk. 12:7; Lk. 20:14-15).

But through Christ's obedience of shedding His blood (Php. 2:8) as an alternative, replacement, supplement, or substitute for our punishment of "eternal destruction (2 Thes. 1:9) which is the "second death" (Rev. 21:8) which is the wages of sin (Rom. 2:8), the free gift of reconciliation can now be offered to all men (Rom 5:18). Because Christ has shed His blood on behalf of our sins (Isa. 53:5-6; Heb. 10:12), our punishment of hell fire can be

remitted or set aside (Heb. 9:22), our debt of eternal hell can be pardoned instead of paid (Matt. 6:12; Matt. 18:27; Lk. 7:42), and we can have a relationship with God which is eternal life (Jn. 17:3). When blood shed substitutes the penalty of hell, sins can be forgiven instead of punished (Acts 5:31; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14), God's wrath can pass over instead of being poured out (Ex. 12:13; 1 Cor. 5:7). Remember, forgiveness of sin is when the penalty of sin is dispensed with (Deut. 13:17; Num. 16:46-48; 25:4; Josh. 7:26; 1 Chro. 21:7-15; 2 Chro. 12:5-7, 32:26; 2 Sam. 24:16; 24:25; Num. 16:46-48; Ps. 78:38; 85:3-4; 106:23, 45; Isa. 12:1; Jer. 18:8; Eze. 20:17; Micah 7:18-19; Jonah 3:9-10; 4:2; Joel 2:13-14; Dan. 9:16; Hos. 11:9; 14:4). The blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins, so that our penalty can be set aside and our sins can be let go as if they had not been committed (Matt. 26:28; Mk. 1:14; Lk. 1:77; 3:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 10:43; Rom. 3:25). Because Christ bore our sins, that is, because Christ took it upon Himself to died for our sins, our punishment can be remanded instead of demand, we can be justified or forgiven (Isa. 53: 11; Rom. 4:6-9), we can be pardoned of our past and treated as if we were always righteous. The suffering of Christ on the cross substitutes the eternal suffering we deserve in hell. Because of Christ, "mercy rejoices against judgment" (Jas 2:13) because mercy is when retributive judgment is set aside, when crimes are pardoned not punished.

The atonement consisted in the wounding and bruising of Christ (Isa. 53:5), in *the agony of His soul* (Isa. 53:3-4, 10-12; Matt. 26:38; Mk. 14:34) and in the shedding of His blood (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). The normal cause of death in crucifixion is suffocation. But if Jesus died of suffocation, He could not have verbally cried out before His death (Lk. 23:46). Medical science affirms that the intense suffering and extreme agony that Christ endured resulted in the heart of the Savior literally rupturing, so Jesus actually died of a broken heart (Jn. 19:34). Crucifixion usually takes days, which is why men were surprised Jesus had died so soon (Mk. 15:43-44; Jn. 19:33). And it was because Christ died of spiritual agony that ruptured His heart, that the soldiers did not have to break His legs to suffocate Him faster (Ps. 34:20; Jn. 19:32-34; 19:36). Jesus said that no man takes his life but he lays it down (*sacrifices Himself*) of his own free will (Jn. 10:17-18). So we see that Jesus gave up the Ghost (Mk. 15:37; 15:39; Lk. 23:46)

and committed His Spirit into the hands of the Lord (Lk. 23:46) before the cross could kill Him through suffocation. While wicked men crucified Christ (Mk. 12:7; 27:35; Mk. 15:24-25; Lk. 20:14-15; 23:33; 24:20; 24:7; Jn. 19:18; 23; Acts 2:23; 2:36; 4:10; 1 Thes. 2:14-15), this is not what killed Jesus. The agony of his heart and soul literally ruptured His heart, so that He didn't die of the suffocation crucifixion causes, He died of a broken heart over our sin, bearing the burden of our transgressions. It is this unimaginable suffering and horrific death of the Lord which is an adequate substitute for the eternal torment of hell. Jesus laid down His life, endured agonizing suffering for our sin, gave up the Ghost, and thereby *sacrificed Himself* as a Lamb and High Priest (Jn. 1:29; 10:11; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 7:27; 9:10; 9:14; Tit. 2:14), bearing the agonizing burden of our sin (1 Pet. 2:24).

There is a moral influence or transformation brought about by the atonement. A revelation of the suffering of Christ should subdue our hearts and bring us to complete surrender unto God (Rom. 2:4), repenting out of a motive of love, not selfishness (1 Jn. 4:19). God is drawing all men through the atonement (Jn. 12:32), and it is His loving kindness which draws us (Jer. 31:3; Rom. 2:4). Transformation, liberation, or regeneration is through spiritual revelation, when men obey the gospel of Jesus Christ from the heart (Jn. 6:45, 63; 8:32; 15:3; 17:17; Acts 9:4-6; Rom. 2:8; 6:17; 12:2; 1 Cor. 4:15; Tit. 2:11-12; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Thes. 1:8; 1 Pet. 1:22-23; 4:17; 2 Pet. 1:2-3; 2:20; Jas. 1:18; 21-22). That is why we must publicly preach Christ (Acts 5:42; 9:20; 17:3; 1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Cor. 2:12; 4:5; Eph. 3:8; Php. 1:15-16), why we must preach the truth of the kingdom of God (Lk. 4:43; 9:2; 9:60; Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23; 28:31), why we see Paul publicly reasoning with men (Acts 19:8; Acts 19:9), particularly reasoning about the Christ (Acts 28:23). Men are in the bondage of deception (Lk. 2:18; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:26) so they need liberation through the preaching of the truth (Jn. 8:32; Lk. 2:18; 2 Tim. 2:24-25). Sacrifices are useless without a change of heart, without a deep moral change inside the transgressor for whom the sacrifice is made (Ps. 50:7-23; 51:16-17; Prov. 15:8; 16:6; 21:3; 21:27; Isa. 1:10-17; 56:6-7; 66:3-4; Jer. 7:21-26; 11:14-17; 14:10-12; Hos. 6:6-7; 8:11-14; 9:1-6; 12:9-11; 14:1-3; Joel 1:9; 13; 2:12-14; Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-27; Jonah 1:15; 2:9; 3:5-10; Mic. 6:6-8; Zeph. 1:7-13; 3:10-11; Hag. 2:14; Zech. 14:21; Mal. 1:6-14; 2:10-14; 3:3-4; Matt. 9:13; 12:7; Heb. 10:8).

Laws have penalties to secure obedience to the precept. If the atonement is to substitute our punishment, it must just as equally secure obedience to the precept as the punishments would have. So the atonement is designed to turn sinners into saints, to deliver us from a life of sinning (Jn. 1:29; Acts 3:26; 2 Cor. 5:15; Eph. 5:25-27; Col 1:21-23; Titus 2:11-12, 14; Heb. 9:26; 10:10; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Jn. 1:7; 3:5). Jesus is a Savior from sin (Matt. 1:21). Christ died so "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:4) Christ died "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26). Christians are saved unto obedience (1 Pet. 1:2) and unto good works (Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14). This is because the atonement breaks and subdues our hearts, so that the cross brings us to repentance unto obedience (Rom. 2:4; 1 Jn. 4:19). The atonement so affects our hearts that we turn from our disobedience in humble, sincere, and deep repentance. The atonement makes us *at-one* with God, by allowing God to set aside our punishment while also bringing us to a place of submission and surrender. The cross does not change God. The cross changes sinners.

There is also a spiritual transformation through the atonement. Through our own sin we have become dead in our sins, that is, we became relationally dead to God (Isa. 59:2; Lk. 15:24; Rom. 5:12; 5:14; 7:9; 7:11; Col. 2:13), but now the atonement allows us to be reconciled unto God and enter into a loving relationship with Him (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:21). Salvation is the person Jesus (Isa. 62:11; Jer. 3:23; Lk. 2:30), eternal life is having a relationship with God (Jn. 17:3; 1 Jn. 5:20). And we can become filled with the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49; Acts 2:4), being lead by Him into all truth (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). God doesn't save us without changing us.

The atonement allows God to be "just" (Rom. 3:26; 1 Jn. 1:9) and also to "forgive us our sins" (1 Jn. 1:9) at the same time. The design of blood shed is to "*declare* His righteousness" (Rom. 3:25-26), so that He could grant "the remission of sins that are past" (Rom. 3:25), "to *declare* His righteousness" so "that He might be just" in forgiving our sins or justifying those who believe in Christ (Rom. 3:26). The atonement, or the severity of blood shed, *publicly declares* God's righteousness (Rom. 3:25-26) while also *publicly demonstrating* His love (Rom. 5:8). That is why the atonement needed to be public (Lk. 12:32), to *demonstrate* His

love and His righteousness. So the atonement reconciles both the justice of God and the mercy of God (Ps. 85:10). The atonement upholds God's justice because blood shed substitutes our punishment of hell fire and secures obedience to the law. And the atonement allows for mercy and forgiveness because the penalty of our sin can be set aside when sinners turn from their sin and trust Jesus Christ. The atonement upholds public justice by declaring God's righteousness, thereby allowing God to be merciful to us by setting aside retributive judgment. Because the atonement satisfies or propitiates public justice, which was the very purpose of our punishment in the first place, retributive judgment or our punishment can be set aside or remitted.

The blood of Christ cleanses us (1 Jn. 1:7), washes us (Rev. 1:5; 7:14), purges us (Heb. 9:22), reconciles us (2 Cor. 5:18; Heb. 2:17), brings justification (Rom. 5:9), brings forgiveness (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14), brings remission (Matt. 26:28; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:22), brings peace (Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:20), brings redemption (Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12), redeems us (Gal. 3:13; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9), ransoms us (Matt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:6), buys us (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 2 Pet. 2:1) and saves us from God's wrath (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thes. 1:10). Christ is our atonement (Rom. 5:11) our salvation (Ps. 27:1; Lk. 2:30; Col. 3:4) our propitiation (Rom. 3:25; 1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Jn. 4:10) our righteousness (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30). God casts away our sins (Isa. 38:17; Micah 7:19) and remembers them no more (Heb. 8:12; 10:17). Jesus Christ is the absolutely only way to God (Jn. 14:6), there is no other name by which we can be saved (Acts 4:12), through Him we obtain salvation (1 Thes. 5:9; 2 Thes. 2:10). The cost of our salvation, the price of our deliverance, the ransom of our souls, was the high price of Christ's most valuable and precious blood.

Christ died for all men (Isa. 45:22; 53:6; 55:1; Eze. 18:30-32; Matt. 23:37; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 2:10-11; Jn. 1:29; 3:16; Rom. 2:11; 5:15; Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 2:11; 4:10; Tit. 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Jn. 2:22; Rev. 3:20), and He died for all specifically because all men have chosen to become sinners of their own free will (Isa. 52:3; 53:6). There is no partiality with God (Rom. 2:11; 2 Pet. 1:17), God wants everyone to repent and be saved (Ps. 145:9; Eze. 18:32; 33:1; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Pet. 3:9). The

atonement makes salvation *possible* and *available* to all men, it is a gift that God offers to all to accept and receive (Jn. 1:11-12; Lk. 14:16-24; Rom 5:18) through a decision (2 Cor. 5:20) to repent and believe, though many reject God's gracious offer (Isa. 65:2; Lk. 7:30; 14:16-24; Jn. 1:10-11; Rom. 10:21; 2 Thes. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17) and resist His grace (Gen. 6:3; Matt. 23:37; Lk. 7:30, 13:34; Acts 7:51). God is trying to save all men (Jn. 3:16, 6:44-45, 12:32; 16:8; Acts 17:30-31, 2 Pet. 3:9). God gives light to all men (Jn. 1:9), God is convicting all men (Jn. 16:8), God is drawing all men (Jn. 6:44-45, 12:32), God is calling all men (Matt. 11:28, 22:9; Lk. 5:32; Acts 17:30; Rev. 22:17), God's grace has appeared to all men (Rom. 5:15; Tit. 2:11-12).

While God grants amnesty, clemency, or pardon through Christ's blood for our past sins (Rom. 3:25; 2 Pet. 1:9), He does not grant immunity or impunity for future sins (Matt. 18:25-35; Rom. 18:13; Heb. 10:26-31; Jud. 1:4). If future sins occur, they would need to be forsaken (Lk. 13:3; Jam. 5:19-20) and forgiveness through Christ's blood would need to be sought for (Matt. 6:12; 1 Jn. 1:9). So backsliders can be restored if they return (Ps. 51:9; Lk. 22:32; Jas. 5:19-20). You cannot be forgiven of what you haven't yet committed; you cannot be forgiven of what you are not yet guilty of. The future doesn't exist yet. You can only be forgiven of what you are guilty of. If we were "forgiven" of all future sins at conversion, this would be a license to sin (Jud. 1:4) and we would never have to ask God for forgiveness again. The atonement is designed to make the forgiveness of forsaken sins, past sins, possible. Forgiveness is always conditional upon repentance and faith. Forgiveness is never automatic or unconditional and certainly never granted to the impenitent or unbelieving.

The atonement of blood, which declares God's righteousness, is a supplement, replacement, or alternative for our punishment, allowing God to set aside our punishment and thereby grant the remission of sins, upon condition that we repent, believe, and ultimately persevere unto the end. The atonement *pardons our past* by bringing the remission of sins and the atonement *purifies our present* by bringing us to repentance unto obedience. The atonement both saves us from God's wrath and it saves us from our sinning! The blood of Christ brings both purification and pardon.

Now that the atonement has been made, God is begging man to be reconciled unto Himself (2 Cor. 5:20). God is anxiously longing for men to repent of their sins and put their faith in Jesus Christ so that He can forgive them and enter into a loving relationship with them. When men turn from their sins and trust in Christ, God will set aside their punishment “for Christ’s sake” (Eph. 4:32), Christ’s suffering will be credited to our account (sort of speak) as if these sufferings were our own, so we will not have to eternally suffer for our sin in hell. Our punishment of hell can be done away with because an atonement of blood has been shed for our sins (Heb. 9:22). Our sins have been atoned for by the price of His blood (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23).

## WHAT AN ATONEMENT IS NOT

1. The atonement was not a satisfaction to any vindictiveness in God’s person, or gratification to a sadistic nature in God. It was because God was loving and gracious in the first place that He sent His Son to atone for our sins (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8). If God wanted personal vindictive satisfaction, He would have eternally punished the sinner and not have sent His Son in the first place. Retributive justice strictly required the eternal punishment of only the guilty sinner (Eze. 18:4, 20). But the Father was pleased and satisfied with the atonement (Isa. 53:10-11), but not in a sadistic or vindictive way. Remember that the purpose of punishment is not for any sadistic pleasure or for any vindictive satisfaction in the punisher (Eze 18:32; 33:11; Lam. 3:32-33; Heb. 12:10). Punishment is governmental not personal. The purpose of punishment is law enforcement, to uphold the laws, to enforce the laws, to vindicate the law, and to declare the value of the law (Ecc. 8:11; Dan. 6:14-16; Ester 1:16-22). Punishment is to uphold the Government and thereby protect the public, not to satisfy any personal vindictive revenge. Punishment is a governmental necessity. So the atonement was not God seeking any personal revenge or retaliation. God did not have to punish Himself in order to forgive men. He simply needed to uphold His law while granting pardon. For an atonement to adequately substitute the punishment, it must equally uphold the law, enforce the law, vindicate the law, and declare the value of the violated law just as equally as the punishment would have. That is why the blood of Jesus Christ is an adequate substitute for the eternal punishment of sinners in hell, because of the sinless purity of His character and because of the dignity of His person. Therefore the price of Christ’s blood is more valuable than the price sinners owed; the price of His blood far out weights the price of our “debt”. The price of Christ’s blood is a substitute to the payment of our debt, the cross of Calvary is a substitute for the eternal sentence of hell, and the suffering of Christ is substituted for the suffering that sinners deserve.

Just as God does not take any sadistic pleasure or vindictive satisfaction in punishment (Eze. 18:32; 33:1; Lam. 3:32-33; Heb. 12:10), neither is the Godhead gratified or satisfied in any personal vindictive or sadistic sense when it comes to the atonement (Ps.

51:16-17; Heb 10:6; 10:8). The way that wicked men treated His Son did not itself please God (Mk. 12:6-9; Lk. 20:13-16; 1 Thes. 2:15). The satisfaction (Isa. 53:11) and the pleasure (Isa. 53:10) which God the Father has in the atonement is not sadistic or personal vindictiveness, but rather this satisfaction and pleasure is because God delights public justice, rejoicing that His laws are being enforced and upheld through the *public demonstration of Christ's bloody sacrifice* (laws designed for the well-being of all), and rejoicing and delighting that mercy and pardon can now be granted to repentant rebels who have violated His moral law. This is the reason for the satisfaction and pleasure God the Father had in the suffering of the Son (Isa. 53:10-11). Just as punishment is a means to an end, and not the end itself and therefore God rejoices in justice, not for the pain as an end but as a means, not for its own sake, but because of what it brings. So also the blood atonement is a means to an end, and not the end itself, therefore the pleasure God gets from the blood shed is not in the blood as an end, or in blood shed for its own sake, but as a means to an end, delighting in it because of what it brings. It's the mercy and not the sacrifice that God desired (Hos. 6:6; Matt 9:13; 12:7).

2. The atonement does not change God, the atonement changes man (Matt. 1:21; Jn. 1:29; Acts 3:26; Rom. 2:4 (with Rom. 5:8); 2 Cor. 5:15; Eph. 5:25-27; Col 1:21-23; Titus 2:11-12, 14; Heb. 9:26; 10:10; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Jn. 1:7; 3:5; 4:19). The atonement does not change God from being stern, severe, and angry, to being mild, forgiving, and kind. God was merciful, loving, and forgiving before the atonement was made (Ps. 86:5; Neh. 9:17; Jonah 4:2; Joel 2:13) which is why He gave us the atonement (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8). God did not have to be reconciled unto man, but man had to be reconciled unto God (Rom. 5:10-11; 11:15; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20-22), man needed to change, not God. So the atonement changes man, not God. God is the same after the atonement as He was before the atonement (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8; Jas 1:17). It was not that the Father wanted to punish men, seeking personal vengeance, so the Son stepped in to shed His own blood to satisfy the Father's personal vindictiveness wrath, so that now the vindictiveness of God is satisfied and therefore He doesn't want to punish men anymore. Rather, the Father wanted to reconcile men and bring men back into a relationship with Him, He wanted to set aside their punishment

through forgiveness, and therefore He sent His Son to die for their sin, to change them and bring them to repentance, to make a way for His wrath to be set aside while also protecting the highest well-being of all, so that their punishment would not be a governmental necessity anymore. The Lord wanted to set aside the penalty of the law while upholding the authority, influence, and dignity of the law at the same time. So the Son changes men on behalf of the Father, as opposed to the Son changing the Father on behalf of man. Men are reconciled unto God, instead of God reconciled unto men.

3. The atonement is not the exact and literal punishment that we deserve; blood shed is not the exact and literal payment of our debt. Nowhere in the Bible is it said that Jesus took the *eternal* punishment that we deserve, or paid the *eternal* debt that we owed, but the Bible says everywhere that the Savior *suffered* for our sins (Lk. 9:22; 17:25; Acts 3:18; 26:23; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 1:11; 2:21; 3:18; 4:1; 4:13; 5:1). The atonement is a substitute for the punishment that we deserve; blood is a substitute for the debt that we owe. If Christ were to literally serve our prison sentence, He would have had to suffer in hell for all of eternity.

This is a dialog I had with a friend:

“What is the punishment that we deserve for our sin?”

“Hell.”

“Did Jesus suffer in eternal hell?”

“No.”

“So did Jesus take our punishment?”

“That's a good question.”

The atonement consisted in wounding and bruising (Isa. 53:5), agony of soul (Isa. 53:3-4; 10-12; Matt. 26:38; Mk. 14:34) and the shedding of blood (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22) on behalf of our sins, iniquities, transgressions, offenses, and crimes. But our punishment was eternal torment in hell fire (Matt. 25:46; 2 Thes. 1:9; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7; Jud. 1:7). The suffering of Christ was a substitute for the punishment of our sin, the atonement of Calvary is a substitute for the torments of hell. This substitution is four fold: Christ is a substitute for sinners, the cross is a substitute for hell fire, Calvary is a substitute for the lake of fire, and six hours is a substitute for eternity.

The “wages of sin” is contrasted with "*eternal* life" (Rom. 6:23), which implies that the wages of sin is "*eternal* death". "And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment...*" (Matt. 25:46). "Who shall be *punished* with *everlasting destruction...*" (2 Thes. 1:9). "Everlasting" means perpetual, eternal, duration without termination, time without end. Our punishment was eternal, never ending. Christ suffered for six hours. Therefore Jesus did not take our exact and literal punishment. The suffering of Jesus was a substitute for our punishment. If Jesus took our exact and literal punishment, it would have been an "everlasting punishment". *An eternal debt can never be paid; it is eternally unsatisfied because it is eternal. An eternal prison sentence never ends, and cannot end, because it is an eternal prison sentence.* Sinners will not be released from hell because their debt is eternal, their debt cannot be paid because their debt is eternally unsatisfied. The suffering of the atonement was a substitute for the suffering of our punishment, the price of His blood was a substitute for the payment of our debt. Christ suffered for six hours for our sins so that we don't have to be punished all eternity for our sins. The cross of Calvary substitutes the fires of hell.

Besides, *retributive justice* would not be satisfied by punishing the innocent for the sins of the guilty. Retributive justice strictly requires the punishment of the guilty (Eze. 18:4, 20). But the atonement upholds *public justice*; the suffering of the just can substitute the punishment of the guilty (1 Pet. 3:18), so that the atonement makes an adequate satisfaction for sin, a satisfaction to public justice, not retributive justice. Public justice (well-being of all) is the reason for retributive justice (sanctions, punishments), so when atonement is made that fulfills the reason of retributive justice, vindicating the law and influencing obedience, retributive justice can be set aside. Though God's retributive justice cannot be satisfied, since it requires *eternal* punishment and is therefore *eternally* unsatisfied, the atonement can satisfy public justice, which is the very reason for retributive justice.

Christ did in fact drink a cup of suffering (Matt. 20:22; 26:42; Jn. 18:11), He tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9). This cup could not be the cup of God's wrath (Ps. 11:6; Isa. 51:17; 51:22) since the cup of God's wrath was still full after the

atonement (Rev. 14:10; 16:19), and because the disciples of Jesus would drink the same cup Jesus drank (Matt. 20:22-23; Mk. 10:38-39). But both Jesus and His disciples drank from a cup of suffering on behalf of others, they drank a cup of death. Jesus shed his blood in atonement for the whole world, and his disciples shed their blood in martyrdom to spread the Gospel to the whole world.

Let it be understood that Christ did not pay our debt or serve our sentence, but Christ died to substitute the payment of our debt, Christ died to substitute the sentence we deserve. Blood shed is the price which substitutes the payment of our debt. The cross of Calvary substitutes our eternal sentence in the lake of fire. If Jesus were to literally pay our debt, take our punishment, or serve our sentence, Jesus would have had to suffer for all of eternity. But Jesus didn't suffer for all of eternity. Therefore Jesus didn't literally pay our debt, take our punishment, or serve our sentence.

There are very serious problems with the view that the atonement is our exact and literal punishment, as opposed to the atonement being a substitute for our penalty, a public demonstration of God's righteousness which allows God to set aside our penalty or to issue a pardon. The problems of the retributive satisfaction view must not go unnoticed or unmentioned.

A. One logical conclusion of Christ taking our exact punishment, or the retributive satisfaction view, would be universalism, limited atonement, or double punishment. If Christ paid the debt of all, nobody has a debt to pay; if Christ satisfied God's wrath for everyone, God has wrath left over for no one (universalism). But if some will have to pay their debt, Christ must not have paid their debt, if some will still face God's wrath, Jesus must not have satisfied God's wrath for them (limited atonement). Or, if Christ paid the debt of all, but not all will be saved, God punishes the same sins twice (double punishment). The double punishment view makes no sense. If justice has been satisfied, justice can demand no more. A "double punishment" is a contradiction in terms. And the Bible says that Jesus died for *all men* (Isa. 45:22; 53:6; 55:1; Eze. 18:30-32; Matt. 23:37; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 2:10-11; Jn. 1:29, 3:16; Rom. 2:11, 5:15; Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 2:11; 4:10; Tit. 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1

Jn. 2:22; Rev. 3:20), because God wants *all men* to be saved (Eze. 33:11; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 22:17), yet we know that not *all men* will be saved (Gen. 6:5-8; Isa. 53:1; Matt. 7:13; 21:10; Lk. 13:23-24; 23:21; Jn. 5:40; 6:60; 6:67; 7:7; 16:33; Acts 8:1; 14:22; 1 Cor. 4:13). Therefore limited atonement and universalism cannot be true.

**B.** Another logical conclusion of the retributive view is what is known as “Once Saved, Always Saved.” If our debt has been paid, there is no debt left for us to pay. If our sentence has been served, there is no sentence for us to serve. We would be eternally secure without any fear of falling into condemnation no matter how much or how often we sin and openly rebel against God. Our sins, past, present, and future, have been paid.

But the “Once Saved, Always Saved” doctrine is damnable heresy, it is utterly false (2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 1:4-5). This antinomian eternal security is contrary to the entire Bible which repeatedly and abundantly teaches the doctrine of probation or conditional security for believers (Eze. 3:20-21; 18:18-31; 33:12-20; Matt. 6:14-15; 10:22; 24:13; 24:48-51; 25:1-13; Mk. 4:16-19; 13:13; Jn. 6:66; 15:6; Acts 1:25; 11:23; 13:43; 14:22; Rom. 8:13; 11:20-23; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:9-10; 9:27; 10:5-13; 15:1-2; Gal. 5:4-9; 5:19-21; 6:7-9; Col. 1:21-23; 1 Thes. 3:5; 3:8; 2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 1:5-6; 1:18-20; 3:6; 4:1; 4:16; 5:15; 2 Tim. 2:12; 4:9-10; Heb. 2:1; 2:3; 3:6; 3:8-15; 3:18-19; 4:1; 4:11; 4:14; 6:1; 6:8; 6:11-12; 6:15; 10:23; 10:26-31; 10:35-39; 12:14-15; 12:25; Jas. 1:13-16; 5:19-20; 2 Pet. 1:9; 2:20-22; 3:17; Rev. 2:4-7; 2:10-11; 2:17; 2:25-26; 3:2-5; 3:10-12; 3:16; 3:19; 3:20; 21:8; 22:15). The Bible speaks of individuals who have fallen from the faith (Matt. 18:21-34; 24:10; Mk. 4:17; Lk. 8:13; Jn. 6:66; Acts 1:25 w. Matt. 19:28; 2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 1:19; 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:8; 4:10; Heb. 3:12-15; 4:1-11; 6:6; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; Jud. 1:5). We have the example of the unforgiving servant who was forgiven of his unpaid debt, but then later had his debt reinstated because of his immoral conduct (Matt. 18:23-35). This parable clearly shows how the Lord can graciously pardon an individual and then later execute the punishment that they deserve. We also see the example of the Apostle Judas who lost his salvation. Judas was a disciple of the Lord, and therefore left all to follow Jesus (Lk. 14:33), picked up his cross (Lk. 14:27), who even loved Jesus more than his own family (Lk. 14:26). Judas was

picked by Jesus specifically to cast out devils, heal, and preach (Matt 10:1-27). Judas was a friend Jesus trusted (Ps. 41:9; Jn 13:18), so Judas kept the money (Jn. 12:6; 13:29). Jesus told Judas that He was shedding His blood for him (Lk. 22:14-20), and previously said that His name was written in the Lambs book of life (Lk. 10:20). Jesus even said that Judas was one of His sheep (Matt 10:1-4, 16), who received His truth (Matt 10:1-4, 8), who’s Father was God (Matt 10:1-4, 20), who even had a throne in Heaven upon which he would judge Israel (Matt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30). But then later we see that Judas became a devil (Jn. 6:70), and therefore it would have been better for him to have never been born (Mk. 14:21). He even began to steal money from the group (Jn. 12:6). Judas fell from his apostleship by his transgression (Acts 1:25) because He failed to do what Jesus picked him for, and his name was blotted out of the book of life (Ex. 23:33; Rev. 3:5). So we can see that the atonement does not automatically or unconditionally save anyone. Many of those for whom Christ died will ultimately perish for their sin because they choose to continue in their sin (Heb. 10:26-31) instead of sinning no more. Though Christ died for all, many are on the broad road (Matt. 7:13). It’s possible to deny the Lord that bought us and thereby fall into condemnation (2 Pet. 2:1). The wrath of God is impartial (Ex. 32:33; Deut. 10:17; Rom. 2:9; 2 Cor. 10:6; Col. 3:25; 2 Pet. 1:17; 1 Jn. 3:15; Rev. 21:8; 22:15), so anyone who consciously or knowingly transgresses or revolts is under condemnation (Jn. 3:19; Rom. 1:18; 2:6-11; Heb. 10:26-31; 1 Jn. 3:8; 3:15; 3:20; 2 Jn. 1:9) because God must uphold and enforce His laws as long as He is loving and caring, as long as He hates sin because He’s benevolent. But if backsliders repent (Lk. 13:3; Jam. 5:19-20) and seek forgiveness (Matt. 6:12; 1 Jn. 1:9), they can be restored (Ps. 51:9; Jer. 3:22; 4:1; Lk. 15:20; 22:32; Rom. 11:23; Jas. 5:19-20) unless they are apostates (Heb. 6:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:5; 2 Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:14-16), having grieved away the Spirit (Matt. 12:31-32; Eph. 4:30), having resisted all possible influence (Heb. 6:4-6; 2 Tim. 3:8).

**C.** Another logical problem with the retributive satisfaction view is that there is no grace, mercy, forgiveness, remission, or pardon in it at all. If God punishes all sin, God forgives no sin. If God executes all penalties, God remits no penalties. If God requires payment for all debts, God pardons no debts. But the

Bible says that God does forgive our actual sin (Matt. 9:6; Mk. 2:10; Lk. 5:24; Acts 5:31, 13:38; 26:18; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 Jn. 1:9), God does remit our actual deserved penalties (Matt. 26:28; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 1:77; 3:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 10:43; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:22; Heb. 10:18), God does pardon our actual debts (Matt. 6:12; 18:27; Lk. 7:42; 11:4), God does pardon or forgive our actual sins and iniquities (Ex. 34:9; Num. 14:9; 2 Kin. 5:18; 2 Chro. 30:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 25:11; Isa. 55:7; Jer. 5:1; 33:8; 50:20). Forgiveness of sins is when God does not punish our sins, when God treats them as if they never occurred, when God passes over them as if they never existed. Remember, pardoning sins, passing over transgression, delighting in mercy, in one of God's glorious moral attributes (Micah 7:18). But to say that the atonement was the punishment of our sin, the penalty of our sin, or the payment of our debt, is to take forgiveness, remission, and pardon completely out of the Gospel. The Scripture Heb. 9:22, for example, would make absolutely no sense at all if the nature of the atonement was our punishment. It tells us that without the shedding of blood, there is no *remission of sins*. When there is an offering of blood, God can remit the penalty of our sins. But if the retributive view were correct, Heb. 9:22 would be saying, "Without executing the punishment of sin, the punishment of sin cannot be set aside" or "Without paying a debt, a debt cannot be pardoned" or "Unless sins are punished, sins cannot be forgiven." This is such a contradiction that no further reasoning or explanation is even necessary, the contradiction is plain enough. The scriptures explicitly say that Jesus Christ shed His blood and died so that God could grant us forgiveness, remission, or pardon (Matt. 26:28; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:22; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). The atonement of blood makes it possible for God to graciously pardon our crimes and set aside our punishment, thus forgiving our actual sins and pardoning our actual debt.

**D.** Another problem with the retributive satisfaction view is that it makes salvation by justice, the payment of a debt, rather than by grace, the pardon of a debt. If God releases us from obligation to pay our debt because someone else has paid our debt, this releasing is on the grounds of justice rather than grace. There is no grace in releasing someone from obligation to pay a debt that has already been paid. Justice requires such a release. Grace and mercy is when God pardons our unpaid debt, when God releases us

from paying our eternal debt of hell. And it is only because Christ has shed His blood as a substitute for our punishment, thus declaring the righteousness of God and vindicating the violated law, is God able pardon us of our eternal debt without abrogating His laws or destroying His Government. But to say that Christ took our punishment and therefore God cannot punish us because it would be unjust for God to punish the ones for whom Christ was punished, is to say that we are saved on the grounds of justice, rather than by grace and mercy. If Christ satisfied retributive justice, God cannot punish those for whom Christ died; they are released because of justice not grace.

**E.** Another issue with the retributive satisfaction view is that it presents a very confused view of the penalty of the law. As a young convert I heard Christians say, "That should have been us on the cross", and I would think privately to myself, "I thought that I deserved hell forever?" But they claim that Christ literally took our punishment. They reason that since Jesus took our punishment, yet Jesus didn't go to hell, therefore hell is not our punishment. This is a logical argument, given the premise that Jesus literally took our punishment, but the Bible explicitly says eternal hell is our punishment (Matt. 25:46; 2 Thes. 1:9; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7; Jude 1:7).

Some who hold to this view have represented physical death, or blood shed, as the penalty of the law. But if this were true there are some serious problems. First, it would mean that all men could simply physically die and go to Heaven and therefore Christ was not necessary. Second, it would mean that Christ did not really save us from the penalty of the law because both sinners and Christians will physically die one day. Third, it would mean that our sins are punished twice because Christ physically died and we physically die. Others have represented spiritual separation from God as the penalty of our sin. Since *eternal* spiritual separation is our punishment, and Christ was not *eternally* separated from His Father, then still Jesus did not take our exact and literal punishment. In essence, this group says that "physical death is the punishment of sin, spiritual death is the punishment of sin, but eternal death in hell is merely the consequence of sin." But this is entirely backwards. Physical death is the consequence of Adam's sin (Gen. 3:22; 1 Cor. 15:21-22), spiritual death (no relationship,

spiritual separation) is the consequence of our own sin (Isa. 59:2; Lk. 15:24; Rom. 5:12; 7:9; Col. 2:13), and eternal spiritual death, hell fire, is the eternal punishment of sin (Matt. 2:46; 2 Thes. 1:9; 2 Pet. 2:9; Jude 1:7; Rev. 21:8).

**F.** Another objection to the retributive satisfaction view is that it gives a distorted view of justice. It represents justice as being satisfied with the punishment of the innocent instead of the guilty, when strict justice requires that only the guilty be punished (Eze. 18:4, 20). But the guilty is not punished and therefore retributive justice is not really satisfied. This view overlooks the very reason for retributive justice (letter of the law), which reason is public justice (spirit of the law). This view gives no satisfactory answer as to *why* the exact and literal punishment needed to be executed, as to *why* God is not capable of forgiving our sin, pardoning our debt, and remitting the penalty. This view simply says that God had to execute the exact and literal punishment, either upon the guilty or upon another, without explaining why punishment is necessary to begin with, or properly explaining the purpose of punishment in God's Moral Government.

**G.** Another objection to the retributive satisfaction view is that it gives a distorted image of the Father. After hearing a sermon on the atonement as a new convert, the individual that I attended Church with that day said to me afterwards, "The picture that I had in my mind was that of a family. A young child made a mistake and the Father became very angry so that he was going to beat the child. Just as the Father was about to beat the child, the older brother stepped in and said, 'no Father, beat me instead'." Even as a new convert I knew that this view of the Father, Son, and sinner was not at all accurate. It represented the Father as if He were just so angry, without any self-control or mercy that He just absolutely had to beat someone; He just absolutely had to take out or vent His rage and anger on either the innocent or the guilty. And this scenario is some how passed off as justice? What a distorted view of our gracious and merciful Father!

It must be understood that the Father was just as loving as the Son was. It was the grace and love of the Father which sent the Son in the first place (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8)! God would have never sent Jesus if He was vindictiveness or unmerciful. The problems that needed to be overcome in the exercise of pardon were

obstacles for the government of God, not hindrances rooted in the person of God. But the retributive satisfaction view distorts the image of the merciful and loving Father, and presenting Him like all the other pagan gods of the ancient world, god's which required blood from human sacrifices in order to be personally appeased. The blood atonement of Christ, which God required and Jesus offered, is far different from the human sacrifices offered up to appease the heathen gods. God is merciful; the pagan gods are vindictive. God required blood for governmental reasons; the heathen gods required blood because they were personally blood thirsty, wicked, and cruel, because they were unforgiving.

**H.** Another problem with the retributive satisfaction view is that it poses great difficulty in preaching the Gospel. Preaching to sinners would amount to this, "You have a debt to pay for your sin, but Jesus Christ has paid your debt, but if you don't come to Jesus Christ you will have to pay your own debt." Warning sinners (the world or the elect) to flee from the wrath that is to come would be nonsense if Jesus Christ has entirely satisfied the wrath of God. There would be no such thing as wrath that is to come upon them. And if the atonement is limited, we don't know who we can tell "Jesus died for you", and how can they believe unless they first hear (Rom. 10:14)?

**I.** Another problem with the retributive satisfaction view is that if it were a matter of debt, merely a commercial transaction, there is no necessity for preaching since the debt would be paid whether the debtor hears about it or not, whether they believe it or not. There is absolutely no reason why repentance and faith are necessary conditions at all, since the debt is paid whether they believe is not or not, and whether they repent or not. But the Bible says that a person must repent or perish (Lk. 3:13) and that men must believe in order to be saved (Jn. 3:16-18). And there is an absolute necessity for public proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of souls (Rom. 10:13-15). But if it were just a matter of debt, a commercial transaction, repentance and faith cannot be conditions of salvation and preaching the gospel has no necessity. The debt is paid whether they hear, repent, or believe.

**J.** And lastly, a problem with the retributive satisfaction view is that those for whom Christ died (the world or the elect)

would have been saved for the past two thousand years. If their debt was paid two thousand years ago, it follows that they haven't had a debt for the past two thousand years. If God's wrath was satisfied for them two thousand years ago, they have not been under God's wrath for the past two thousand years. Those for whom Christ died (the elect or the world) would already be saved though they just don't know it yet. But the Bible says, prior to conversion, we were in fact under God's wrath (Jn. 3:36; Lk. 13:3; Rom. 1:18; 2:5; Col. 1:21; Eph. 2:3).

This also gives us a serious problem in regards to preaching the Gospel and the conversion of souls. Evangelism is when we are warning sinners that they are in fact under the wrath of God, *while at the same time* that Jesus Christ has shed His blood for them. But how can these two Biblical truths co-exist in the retributive satisfaction view? And in order to be converted we ourselves needed to recognize that we were under the wrath of God and must seek mercy. But if God's wrath was satisfied two thousand years ago, we were very mistaken when we thought of ourselves as under God's wrath. But if we were not under the wrath of God, we didn't really flee from the wrath that is to come (Matt. 3:7; Lk. 3:7). If the retributive satisfaction view were true, warning sinners to flee from God's wrath would be absurd, and fleeing from the wrath of God would be impossible. The logical conclusion of this perspective is that preaching the gospel is pointless and conversion is impossible, since without recognizing that we were under God's wrath, it would be impossible for us to be converted.

In essence, Jesus Christ did not take our exact and literal punishment. The blood of Jesus Christ is a governmental substitute for the punishment that we deserve, which allows God to set aside our punishment by forgiving our sin or pardoning our debt, because it displays or demonstrates His righteousness as equally as punishment would have, vindicating the law, declaring the value of the law, and thereby upholding the law. God's Moral Government required either our punishment of eternal hell or a blood atonement of pure blood. And once a blood offering is made which sustains and supports the Government of God, which declares the value of the violated law, vindicating the law, and which publicly declares the righteousness of God, mercy and grace can be extended to

sinners by setting aside their eternal punishment, by pardoning their rebellious selfish crimes against God and against mankind.

4. Jesus did not literally become a sinner on the cross nor did Jesus literally become guilty of our sin. Certain theologians have claimed that Jesus literally became a sinner when He hung on the cross, or that Jesus literally become guilty of our sin. But when the Bible says that He who knew no sin "became sin" for us (2 Cor. 5:21) it simply means that He became our "sin offering" (Isa. 53:10). And when it says that Christ bore our sins (Isa. 53:12; 1 Pet. 2:24), this is language meant to signify that the atonement takes care of our sin, that the suffering is made on behalf of our sin (Gal. 1:4; 1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Jn. 4:10). Jesus bore our sins in that Jesus was offered for our sins (Heb. 9:28), He bore our sins by taking it upon Himself to die for our sins. To say that Jesus bore our sins, and that Jesus suffered and died for (on behalf of) our sins, is to say the same thing. To bear someone's sin means that you suffer for the sins of another (Lam. 5:7). Just as the scapegoat did not literally become a sinner and the scapegoat did not literally become guilty, nor did the scapegoat take the punishment of the people, neither did Christ who is our scapegoat. But the scapegoat bore the sins of the people in that it was released on behalf of the sins of the people (Lev. 16:9-10). Jesus died for our sins, He was offered for our sins, but He did not become guilty of our sins. Jesus was a spotless sacrifice, not a sinful sacrifice. Because we are told that if the offering "hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not be acceptable for you" (Lev. 22:20). Therefore the actual moral condition of Christ at his death was sinless and pure, not sinful and defiled. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, *the just* for the unjust, the he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (1 Pet. 3:18). The moral character of Jesus never changed; He is always the same (Heb. 13:8). He was a perfect sinless offering (Heb. 4:15) without spot or blemish (1 Pet. 1:19) because "he offered himself *without spot* to God" (Heb. 9:14). Jesus was always morally perfect, especially during the crucifixion (Isa. 53:7, 53:9; Lk. 23:9; Jn. 19:9; Acts 8:32-33; 1 Pet. 2:22-23). When Jesus hung on the cross, God saw Him as the sinless offering not as a sinful person, but as a spotless Lamb that was being slaughtered for the sins of the people. Christ was the sinless Lamb of God who offered Himself for the sins of the people. This is what it means that He became sin (sin offering)

for us, and that Christ bore the sins of the whole world. It was *the world* that esteemed Jesus as a sinner (Isa. 53:3-4; 53:9; 53:12; Heb. 12:2-3), who numbered Him with the transgressors (Mk. 15:28-32; Lk. 22:37). Jesus was treated as a sinner *by the world* (Isa. 53:12; Lk. 23:33). It was *the world* that considered Jesus to be a sinner and treated Him as such, but *God* viewed Jesus exactly as He was, as a spotless sin offering being made for the sin of the world. If Jesus was not morally sinless at His death, His offering would not have been acceptable unto God; His blood atonement would not be an adequate substitute for the punishment of hell because it would have lost its purity and value.

Jesus was forsaken of God (Matt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34) but not relationally separated (Jn. 8:29) because of any sin (Hab. 1:13; 2 Cor. 6:14). He was always pleasing to His Father (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mk. 1:1; Lk. 3:22; Jn. 8:29; 2 Pet. 1:17), especially during the crucifixion (Isa. 53:10-11). But He was forsaken in the sense that *the Father gave the Son over* into the hands of wicked men to be crucified (Matt. 17:22; 26:35; Mk. 14:41; Lk. 24:7; Acts 2:23), when He lifted up the protection He previously had over the Son (Matt. 4:6; Lk. 4:11; Jn. 7:30; 10:31; 10:39). The Son was forsaken by the Father only in that the Father was “far from helping” or delivering the Son (Ps. 22:1). Pilate had no power over Jesus except what the Father gave to Him (Jn. 19:11). It was wicked men who actually crucified Jesus (Mk. 12:7; 27:35; Mk. 15:24-25; Lk. 20:14-15; 23:33; 24:20; 24:7; Jn. 19:18, 23; Acts 2:23; 2:36; 4:10; 1 Thes. 2:14-15). The Apostle Creed says that Jesus “suffered under Pontius Pilate”. That is because it was Pilate who “delivered” Jesus to be “crucified” (Matt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15; Lk. 24:7; Jn. 19:16). In this same way the Father can be said to be the one who bruised the Son (Isa. 53:10), in the sense that *the Father gave the Son over as an offering*, lifting up the protection that He once had over the Son, delivering His Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. As the hymn says, “God, His Son not sparing, *sent Him to die...*” God spared not His Son but delivered Him for all mankind (Rom. 8:32). The Father bruised the Son only in the sense that He made “his soul an offering for sin” (Isa. 53:10), but not in the sense that the Father directly bruised Him, or that the Son was under the wrath of the Father, or that the Son was personally crucified by the Father directly.

5. The atonement is not limited in its intention or purpose. Christ died for all men (Isa. 45:22; 53:6; 55:1; Eze. 18:30-32; Matt. 23:37; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 2:10-11; Jn. 1:29; 3:16; Rom. 2:11; 5:15; Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 2:11; 4:10; Tit. 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Jn. 2:22; Rev. 3:20) because all men have chosen to become sinners (Isa. 52:3; 53:6). There is no partiality with God (Rom. 2:11; 2 Pet. 1:17), God wants everyone to repent and be saved (Ps. 145:9; Eze. 18:32; 33:1; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Pet. 3:9). The atonement does not make salvation *automatic* for a few, but it makes salvation *available* to all men, it makes forgiveness possible to everyone. Salvation is a gift that God offers to all to accept and receive (Jn. 1:11-12; Lk. 14:16-24; Rom 5:18) through a decision (2 Cor. 5:20) to repent and believe, though many *reject* God’s gracious offer (Isa. 65:2; Lk. 7:30; 14:16-24; Jn. 1:10-11; Rom. 10:21; 2 Thes. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17) and *resist* His grace (Gen. 6:3; Lk. 7:30; Acts 7:51). God is trying to save all men (Jn. 3:16; 6:44-45; 12:32; 16:8; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Pet. 3:9). God gives light to all men (Jn. 1:9), God is convicting all men (Jn. 16:8), God is drawing all men (Jn. 6:44-45; 12:32), God is calling all men (Matt. 11:28; 22:9; Lk. 5:32; Acts 17:30; Rev. 22:17), and God’s grace has appeared to all men (Rom. 5:15; Tit. 2:11-12). The atonement makes salvation automatic and unconditional for none. Rather, the atonement makes salvation available and possible for all.

6. The atonement was not necessitated by any sort of foreknowledge or unavoidable because of prophecy. Prophecies are not merely God knowing all of the future intuitively from all of eternity, leaving God without the ability to plan the future or change the future, making the future nothing more than eternal certainties or fixities without any open possibilities for God or man. Prophecies are many times God foretelling what He Himself will deliberately bring to pass (Isa. 42:13-16; 46:10-11; 48:3; Eze. 12:25; 17:24; Acts 27:23-25), and this including the prophecies of the coming Messiah (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 9:6; 53:6; Acts 2:23, 4:28). Jesus voluntarily laid down his life of his own free will (Jn. 10:11; 10:18; 15:13). Because of free will His future was open with alternative possibilities (Mk. 14:36), He could have avoided the cross by praying for twelve legions of angels (Matt. 26:53), but made the deliberate choice not to do so (Matt. 26:42; Lk. 22:42). Though the atonement was a preparatory plan before creation (1 Cor. 2:7; 1 Pet. 1:20), preparing for the possible fall, and it was

settled that this plan would be accomplished once the fall of man occurred at creation (Rev. 13:8), it was still an act of God's grace and mercy, of His own free will, not necessitated or unavoidable. So it was not foreknowledge that forced Jesus to the cross. It was not prophecy that caused Jesus to go the cross. It was the voluntary and gracious love of God which brought Jesus to the cross to die for our sins (Jn. 3:16, 10:11; Rom. 5:8). This is a wonderful and glorious truth!

## EXAMPLES OF ATONEMENT

Old Testament pictures of the atonement were the offering of Aaron (Num. 16:45-48), the scapegoat (Lev. 16:9-10), the pass over Lamb (Ex. 12:21:23) and the serpent in the desert (Num. 21:6-8). These were a "shadow" or an "image" of the sin offering that would come (Heb. 10:1). It is the blood of Jesus Christ, and not the blood of bulls and goats (Heb. 10:4), which is valuable enough to substitute our punishment (Heb. 9:13-14).

The atonement offered by Aaron on behalf of the people (Num. 16:45-48) shows how when an atonement is made, "the plague was stayed" (vs. 48) that is, the "wrath" (vs. 46) ceased. If God was going to set aside His wrath, atonement needed to be made. Through Jesus Christ we have received the atonement (Rom. 5:11). The wrath that we deserve can now be set aside just as the plague the Israelites deserved was stayed.

The scapegoat is another illustration. The scapegoat would symbolically or metaphorically bear the sin of the people away into the wilderness, signifying how atonement takes away our sins or deals with the sin problem. Certainly the scapegoat did not literally take anyone's punishment since the goat did not go to hell eternally. Nor was there a literal transfer of character, God did not see the Priest as a goat or see the goat as a Priest. But the scapegoat illustrated how atonement takes away or carries away our sin. Jesus Christ is our scapegoat. Christ did not take our place in eternal hell fire. Rather, Christ suffered for our sins on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24). That means that Christ died on behalf of our sins (Isa. 53:4-6), He was our sin offering (2 Cor. 5:21). So that God is able to set aside our punishment of eternal hell because our sins have been atoned for by the price of Christ's precious blood (Heb. 9:22).

The pass over Lamb is a great illustration of how atonement is an alternative to judgment. When blood was put on the door of the house, the plague was able to "pass over" instead of being poured out. The Passover lamb did not receive the plague, did not become guilty of sin, did not become a sinner, nor was there a transfer of identity. But the blood of the lamb was an alternative or substitute for the plague, which made it possible for

the plague to “pass over” instead of being poured out. Jesus Christ is our Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7), the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29). Christ did not receive the plague instead of us, but the slaying of Christ substituted the wrath that we deserved. Jesus, as the Passover Lamb, makes it possible for God’s wrath to pass over us instead of being poured out upon us.

The serpent in the desert was instituted because God sent punishment upon the Israelites for their sin. To “take away” (Num. 21:7) the punishment that they were receiving, Moses lifted up a bronze serpent for all to look upon and be healed. Looking upon the serpent would remit the punishment that they deserved. Jesus Christ is our Serpent lifted up in the wilderness (Jn. 3:14). Jesus makes it possible for us to be healed (Isa. 53:5; 1 Pet. 2:24), that is, for our sins to be forgiven. Jesus Christ makes it possible for our punishment to be taken away or remitted. If men will but look upon Jesus as their salvation, they will be saved from the eternal wrath that they deserve, their sins will be forgiven and their debts will be canceled.

## **IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS**

A term in the Bible which is used to describe forgiveness and justification is “imputed righteousness”. King David and the Apostle Paul described in detail what imputed righteousness is. Their description is the clearest presentation of imputed righteousness in the Scripture. According to these inspired writings, imputed righteousness consists in being considered righteous, having your transgressions forgiven, having your sins covered, and as not having your iniquities imputed or accounted against you (Ps. 31:1-2; Rom. 4:7-8). In other words, to be imputed righteous is when God pardons our crimes, not giving us the treatment that we deserve, but rather treats us as if we were righteous, that is, giving us the treatment of law abiding citizens. God considers us righteous by treating us as righteous.

The New Testament word “logizomai” is translated as “think” (2 Cor. 3:5; 10:2; 10:7; 10:11; 12:6; Phi. 4:8), as “imputed” (Rom. 4:11; 4:22-24; Jam. 2:23), as “counted” (Rom. 2:26; 4:3; 4:5; 9:8), as “reckoned” (Lk. 22:37; Rom. 4:4; 4:9-10), as “accounted” (Rom. 8:36; Gal. 3:6), as “reckon” (Rom. 6:11; 8:18), as “suppose” (2 Cor. 11:5; 1 Pet. 5:12), as “account” (1 Cor. 4:1), as “accounting” (Heb. 11:19), as “conclude” (Rom. 3:28), as “count” (Phi. 3:13), as “esteemeth” (Rom. 14:14), as “impute” (Rom. 4:8), as “imputeth” (Rom. 4:6), as “imputing” (2 Cor. 5:19), as “laid” (2 Tim. 4:16), as “numbered” (Mk. 15:28), as “reasoned” (Mk. 11:31), as “thinkest” (Rom. 2:3), as “thinketh” (1 Cor. 13:5), and as “thought” (1 Cor. 13:11). When an individual is imputed righteous, it simply means that their sins are forgiven and they are thought of as righteous, esteemed as righteous, counted as righteous, reckoned as righteous, or considered as righteous. When a person is imputed as righteous they are treated as if they were righteous, treated as if they were never unrighteous, being treated as Law abiding citizens.

The Old Testament equivalent word is “chashab” and it is translated as “counted” (Gen. 15:5-6; 31:15; Lev. 25:31; Num. 18:30; Jos. 13:3; Neh. 13:13; Job 18:3; 41:29; Ps. 44:22; 88:4; 106:31; Prov. 17:28; 27:14; Isa. 5:28; 40:15; 20:17; Hos. 8:12), as “thought” (Gen. 38:15; 50:20; 1Sam. 1:13; 18:25; 2 Sam. 14:13; Neh. 6:2; Ps. 73:16; 119:59; Jer. 18:8; Mal. 3:16), as “think” (Neh.

6:6; Job 41:32; Isa. 10:7; Jer. 23:27; 29:11; Eze. 38:10), as “accounted” (Deut. 2:10-11; 2:20; 1 Kin. 10:21; 2 Chro. 9:20; Isa. 2:22), as “imagine” (Job 6:26; Ps. 140:2; Hos. 7:15; Zec. 7:9-10), as “esteemed” (Isa. 29:16-17; Isa. 53:3; Lam. 4:2), as “reckoned” (Num. 18:27; 23:9; 2 Sam. 4:2; 2 Kin. 12:15), as “count” (Lev. 25:27; 25:52; Job 19:15), as “reckon” (Lev. 25:50; 27:18; 27:23), as “counteth” (Job 19:11; 33:10), as “imagined” (Ps. 10:2; Ps. 21:11), as “imputed” (Lev. 7:18; 17:4), as “account” (Ps. 144:3), as “considered” (Ps. 77:5), as “esteem” (Isa. 53:4), as “esteemeth” (Job 41:27), as “imagineth” (Nah. 1:11), as “impute” (2 Sam. 19:19), as “imputeth” (Ps. 32:2), as “reckoning” (2 Kin. 22:7), as “regard” (Isa. 13:17), as “regardeth” (Isa. 33:8), as “thinkest” (Job 35:2), and as “thinketh” (Psa. 40:17). To be imputed righteous is to be counted as righteous, to be thought of as righteous, to be esteemed as righteous, to be reckoned as righteous, to be considered as righteous, to be regarded as righteous, etc.

The word “imputed” does not mean transferred. It is a theological error to say that “the righteousness of *Christ* is transferred to our account”. If imputed means transferred, when God imputed an uncircumcised individual as circumcised (Rom. 2:26), it means that someone else’s circumcision is transferred to them! The obvious meaning is that they are simply considered circumcised, reckoned as circumcised, or thought of as circumcised, but not that someone else loses their circumcision so that it could be transferred to another. Some have represented the doctrine of the imputed righteousness “of *Christ*” as the Gospel itself. But if this is the Gospel, neither Jesus nor the Apostles ever preached it! The Scriptures abundantly talk about imputed righteousness, but it never talks about the imputed righteousness “of *Christ*”. Rather, the truth is that we have imputed righteousness *through Christ*!

When a person is imputed righteous, that means that God considers them righteous and treats them as righteous, not that the righteousness of *Christ* is transferred to them. To say that we need the perfect obedience that *Christ* rendered to the law to be transferred to our account in order to be justified is to say that we are in fact justified by the works of the law. *Christ* needed to perfectly obey the law in order to be a spotless sacrifice and qualify as a sin offering (Exo. 12:5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Php. 2:8), but

justification is by *Christ*’s blood (Rom. 5:9) and by faith (Rom. 3:28; 5:1; Gal 3:24), but not at all by the works of the law (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:20; 3:28; Gal. 2:16; 3:11; Gal. 5:4). *Christ* was under obligation to obey the law of love for Himself (Matt. 5:17; Gal. 4:4), just as God is under obligation to His own conscience (Gen. 3:22; 18:25; Job 34:10, 12), so *Christ*’s obedience to the law cannot be a work of supererogation, there can be no “extra” obedience to be transferred to another. So if *Christ* was under obligation to the law, His obedience to the law cannot be transferred to another. And if *Christ* was not under obligation to the law, there would be no obedience to be transferred. It was not His *obedience to the law*, but His *suffering on the cross*, which is credited to us. He suffered and died for us and His suffering was a work of supererogation since He was not obligated to do it. That is the means of justification.

Some has supposed that when God looks upon a Christian who is sinning that God doesn’t see the Christian sinning but “see’s the righteousness of *Christ*” instead. But God clearly saw the good and bad works of the actual Christians in Revelations (Rev 2:2, 2:9; 2:13; 2:19; 3:1; 3:8; 3:15), not “the righteousness of *Christ*”. Imputed righteousness is not some scheme that fools God or blinds Him so that He no longer knows reality as it is, or no longer see’s individuals as they are. That would mean God is no longer omniscient. Whenever anyone is in sin, our omniscient God sees it clearly and perfectly (Prov. 15:3; Eze. 8:12; 9:9; Mal. 2:17).

Imputed righteousness is a gift of God (Rom. 5:17), it comes from God (Isa. 54:17; 2 Cor. 5:21) by His grace and mercy, not earned or deserved by anything that we have done. It is “the righteousness of *God*” as opposed to the righteousness of *man*, since it comes from God and not from man. It is a gift from God, through *Christ*, to man. *Christ* is our righteousness (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30) because it is only through Him, what He did for us on the cross, that God is able to treat us as if we were righteous, treating us as if we were never unrighteous. Imputed righteousness is not the transfer of *Christ*’s righteousness, neither is it a scheme that blinds God the Father so that He does not see our true condition, but it is rather the same thing as forgiveness and justification, it is when God set’s aside the punishment that we deserve for our unrighteousness and treats us as if we had always

been righteous, when God reckons or considers us as righteous, because Christ shed His blood for our sins. Forgiveness, justification, and imputed righteousness are expressions of the same event, when God forgives our sins and remits our penalty, letting our iniquities go as if they had not been committed (*forgiveness*), thus treating us as if we were just (*justification*), treating us as if we were righteous (*imputed righteousness*), because of the blood of Jesus.

But let it be clear that forgiveness, justification, or imputed righteousness is conditional upon an attitude of heart repentance (Isa. 55:17; Eze. 18:32; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 13:3; 13:5; 24:47) and faith from the heart (Jn. 3:18; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9; Eph. 2:8-9). And final salvation is ultimately conditional upon perseverance unto the end (Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Mk. 13:13; Acts 13:43; Acts 14:22; Heb. 3:6; 3:14; 2 Pet. 2:20). Repentance is when a person changes their mind about sinning and makes up their mind to sin no more (Isa. 1:16; 55:7; Jn. 5:14; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:34; Eph. 4:22-28), and faith is the hearts embrace and obedience to the truth (Lk. 24:25; Acts 8:37; 15:9; 26:18; Rom. 10:10; 1 Pet. 1:22). The notion of being *righteous in our position* but *unrighteous in our practice* is absolutely contrary to scripture (1 Jn. 3:7; 3:10), and it over looks the conditions of forgiveness and the nature of saving faith; such a concept is false doctrine and damnable heresy (2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 1:4-5). Jesus is the author of salvation to all them that *obey* Him (Heb. 5:9), the Gospel must be obeyed (Rom. 2:8; 6:17; 10:16; Gal. 3:1; 5:7; 2 Thes. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17). Christians are those who keep God's commandments (1 Jn. 2:3), so that only those who keep God's commandments will enter through the gates into the Heaven (Matt. 7:21; 19:17; 25:21, 23, 46; Lk. 10:28; Heb. 12:14; Rev. 22:14), while all sinners will be left outside the Holy City (Rev. 22:15). God will kill and destroy all sinners and rebels (Amos 9:10; 2 Cor. 10:6; 2 Thes. 1:8; Heb. 10:27; 1 Pet. 4:8; 4:17). Remember, the wrath of God is impartial (Ex. 32:33; Deut. 10:17; Rom. 2:9; 2 Cor. 10:6; Col. 3:25; 2 Pet. 1:17; 1 Jn. 3:15; Rev. 21:8; 22:15), so anyone who consciously or knowingly sins or rebels is under condemnation (Jn. 3:19; Rom. 1:18, 2:6-11; Heb. 10:26-31; 1 Jn. 3:8, 3:15, 3:20; 2 Jn. 1:9), God is utterly against all those who sin every day (Isa. 52:5; Hos 13:2; 2 Pet. 2:14). God must condemn all those who do not stop sinning since God is absolutely benevolent and therefore always enforces His laws which protect the well-

being of all. And remember, Christians are those who were formerly disobedient (Tit. 3:3; 1 Pet. 3:20) but are no longer disobedient (Rom. 6:17; Php. 2:12). Christians make the daily choice to obey God (Lk. 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:31). Christians are not sinners (Ps. 66:18; Jn. 9:31; 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Tim. 1:9; Jas. 5:16; 1 Pet. 3:12; 4:18; 1 Jn. 3:22) unless they backslide (Jas. 4:8; 5:19-20), all Christians are saints (Acts 9:13; 9:32; 9:41; 26:10; Rom. 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25-16; 15:26; 15:31; 16:2; 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:1-2; 14:33; 16:1; 16:15; 2 Cor. 1:1; 8:4; 9:1; 9:12; 13:13; Eph. 1:1; 1:15; 1:18; 2:19; 3:8; 3:18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18; Php. 1:1; 4:22; Col. 1:2; 1:4; 1:12; 1:26; 1 Thes. 3:13; 2 Thes. 1:10; 1 Tim. 5:10; Phm. 1:5; 1:7; Heb. 6:10; 13:24; Jud. 1:3; 1:14; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4; 11:18; 13:7; 13:10; 14:12; 15:3; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:8; 20:9). And as saints, Christians are sanctified (Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Heb. 2:11; 10:10; 10:14; Gal. 5:24; Jud. 1:1), that is, Christians are free from deliberate rebellion or intentional sin (Jn. 8:34-36; Rom. 6:2; 6:6-7; 6:11; 6:18; 6:22; 8:2; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 6:6), they have pure hearts (Matt. 5:8; Rom. 6:17; 1 Pet. 1:22), they keep God's commands (1 Jn. 2:3; 3:22; 5:2-3).

When men turn from all their sins and put their faith in the blood of Jesus Christ which was shed for them, God forgives them of their sin, remitting the penalty of the law, and God considers them righteous, treating them just as if they had never sinned.

## THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER

The concept of atonement is that something can be done by which punishment can be set aside. Atonement is that which substitutes the penalty of the law. The purpose of punishment is law enforcement. When a law is broken, punishment must be inflicted to stop the spread of rebellion, to declare the value of the violated law, to uphold and enforce the law for the future. Something must be done to vindicate the violated law, to show that the law was right and violating it was wrong.

It is the blood of Christ which is of such great value that can substitute the punishment sinners deserve. Because God is love, He has a law, the law of love, and must uphold and enforce His good law. Therefore God cannot just set aside our punishment without an atonement being made to vindicate His laws, to support His Government, to subdue the rebellion of selfishness. It is the blood of Jesus Christ which is so precious and valuable that can adequately substitute our punishment of eternal hell, breaking and subduing our hearts, thereby enforcing the law and upholding the Moral Government. The purpose of law is to protect the well-being of all. The purpose of punishment is to enforce the law that protects the well-being of all. And the purpose of the atonement is to substitute the punishment which enforces the law which protects the well-being of all. The suffering of Christ enforces the law of God, by declaring God's righteousness and breaking our hearts, so that punishment is no longer necessary to enforce the law of God, and can therefore be set aside. Since the atonement supports public justice, retributive justice (our punishment) can be dispensed with.

When the law is violated and disregarded, something must be done to enforce the law, uphold the law, and vindicate the law. Otherwise, God's Moral Government is overthrown completely. God must show that the law was right and violating it was wrong or else God cannot set aside our punishment. So either the eternal punishment of the sinner, or the shedding of innocent blood, must occur, when the law is violated. The atonement enforces the law, declares the value of the law, declares God's righteousness, and vindicates the law, just as equally as the punishment would have, and so punishment can be set aside, remission or pardon can be offered and granted.

All men have chosen to sin against God, all men have chosen to be sinners, and therefore rightly deserve the punishment of hell. All men have rebelled against the governing of God and God must uphold His good laws either through punishment or atonement. Jesus shed His blood for the sins of all men, so that God can now forgive us our sins and pardon our debts if we turn from our sins and trust in Christ.

The atonement is a four fold substitution. Jesus Christ substitutes sinners, the shedding of his blood and the agony of his soul substitutes hell fire, Calvary substitutes the lake of fire, and six hours substitutes eternity. This is the great exchange! The person of the suffering, the nature of the suffering, the duration of the suffering, and the locality of the suffering is all substituted in the atonement. But the value of the atonement is sufficient, that is, the high price of Christ's blood is more than an equivalent to the endless torment of sinners in hell. We have been redeemed from our punishment by the blood of Christ, we have been truly purchased with a high price, and we have been ransomed by His blood.

God can be merciful by setting aside our punishment while at the same time be just because an atonement has been made to substitute our punishment and enforce His laws. The atonement reconciles justice and mercy so that God can uphold His Government and enforce His laws while also pardoning our debt, forgiving our sin, and remitting our deserved penalty. Now we have salvation only because of God's grace, only because of the blood of Christ, without which mercy or forgiveness or pardon could not be wisely or safely given, without which God's laws would not be vindicated and God's Government would not be upheld. It is because of the precious blood of Christ that pardon can be offered to the entire world upon condition that they repent of their sins and believe the Gospel, the Gospel that Jesus Christ has suffered and died for their sins.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **SUPPORTING QUOTES FOR THE GOVERNMENTAL ATONEMENT**

#### **THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD**

“That creation and moral government, including both law and gospel, together with the penal sanctions are only efforts of benevolence, to secure the highest good.” Charles G. Finney (1851 Edition of Systematic Theology, p. 60)

“That God’s ultimate end, in all he does, or omits, is the highest well-being of himself, and of the universe, and that in all his acts and dispensations, his ultimate object is the promotion of this end.” Charles G. Finney (1851 Edition of Systematic Theology, p. 59)

“God acts, not from any contracted, selfish motives, but from the most noble benevolence and regard to the public good. It hath often and long since been made a matter of objection to the doctrines of future punishment of the wicked, and the atonement of Christ, that they represent the Deity as having regard merely to his own honor and dignity, and not to the good of his creatures, and therefore represents him as deficient in goodness.” Jonathon Edwards Jr. (Inferences and Reflections on Atonement, p. 6)

"God legislates, not arbitrarily or oppressively, but wisely and equitably." John Miley (Theory and Scripture Interpretation, p. 2)

#### **THE PURPOSE OF LAWS**

"Let it be distinctly understood that the divine law originates in God's benevolence, and has no other than a benevolent end in view. It has revealed only and solely to promote the greatest possible good, by means of obedience. Charles Finney (The Oberlin Evangelist; July 30, 1856; On the Atonement, p. 3)

“Moral Law is thus the expression of the principles of moral government. While the expression of moral law proceeds

from the divine will, the action prescribed originates in the divine intelligence. Moral law is not something which may be altered or changed in our present circumstances. It is that precise prescription of action in the relation of moral beings that shall result in the happiness of all. The absolutely intelligent God, in a state of love or voluntary benevolence, views objectively what is the only conduct in His moral creatures that can result in happiness to Himself and to them.” Gordon Olson (The Moral Government of God, Published by Revival Theology Promotions, p. 12)

“The moral law is like a fence on a farm. It not only shows ownership but provides protection.” Harry Conn (Four Trojan Horses, Published by Mott Media, p. 79)

“Isaiah 9:6-7.... As government increases, peace increases... government is meant to increase peace. This is the basic reason for government. Without government there is chaos. Government brings order, and as a result, peace.” Michael Saia (Understanding the Cross, Published by Xulon, p. 59).

#### **THE PURPOSE OF PUNISHMENT**

“But in order to a moral law, there must be a penalty; otherwise it would be mere advice, but no law.” Jonathon Edwards Jr. (The Necessity of the Atonement, p. 4)

“Consequences” are “the enforcement of moral government... The idea of sanctions, therefore, is unavoidably associated with moral government and moral law. It is the method of enforcing moral government.” Gordon Olson (The Moral Government of God, Published by Revival Theology Promotions, p. 36)

“The purpose of punishment is to prevent sin, in the individual and in the society. It is not primarily to reform the guilty. A moral government seeks to evaluate properly the seriousness of a given crime against society and prevent its repetition by exhibiting an appropriate punishment. Punishment is a public declaration of the fact that disobedience and rebellion against God will not be tolerated, and thus becomes a barrier to all who are considering the ways of lawlessness and in compliance.”

Gordon Olson (The Kindness of God Our Savior, Published by Revival Theology Promotions, p. 70-71)

"The penalty was designed as a testimony to God's regard for the precept and his law, and to his purpose to sustain it." Charles Finney (The Oberlin Evangelist; July 30, 1856; On the Atonement, p. 3)

"There can be no law without sanctions. Precept without sanction is only counsel or advice, and no law... Sanctions are to be regarded as an expression of the benevolent regard of the Law-giver to His subjects; the motives which He exhibits to induce in the subjects the course of conduct that will secure their highest well-being." Charles Finney (Skeletons of a Course of Theological Lectures, 1840, p. 202-203)

"The suffering of a sinner, of one who transgresses the law, are right and good for the ends of the government which we are members. The penalty is inflicted, not for the mere sake of putting the delinquent to pain, nor of gratifying the private revenge of a ruler, but to secure and promote the public ends of good government. These ends are to prevent others from transgressing; by giving, to all the subjects, a decided and clear demonstration of the dignity of the law, and a tangible proof of the evil of crime." Thomas W. Jenkyn (The Extent of the Atonement, p. 144)

### **WHAT THE PURPOSE OF PUNISHMENT IS NOT**

"God has the same natural reaction to personal injury that we do, but has a complete conquest of love so that governmental expediency, and not personal vindictiveness, dictates every manifestation of righteous indignation and judgment." Gordon Olson (The Kindness of God Our Savior, published by Revival Theology Promotion, p. 46)

Vengeance is "The infliction of pain on another, in return for an injury or offense. Such infliction, when it proceeds from malice or mere resentment, and is not necessary for the purposes of justice, is revenge, and a most heinous crime. When such infliction proceeds from a mere love of justice, and the necessity of punishing offenders for the support of the laws, it is vengeance,

and is warrantable and just. In this case, vengeance is a just retribution, recompense or punishment. In this latter sense the word is used in Scripture, and frequently applied to the punishment inflicted by God on sinners." The 1828 Noah Webster Dictionary

"The design of punishment is not revenge or vengeance; for it is not to gratify private feelings or to redress private wrong, - which is the true notion of revenge or vengeance. It is not the infliction of pain for an offence committed against an individual. It is always, though it may be for a wrong done to an individual, inflicted for the offence regarded as perpetrated against the peace of a community; against the lawgiver; against the law itself. When a man is punished for assault and battery, it is not pain inflicted considered as a recompense to the individual who has been injured or wronged: it is as a just retribution for a crime against the peace of the society and the honour of the law... When a man is punished for murder, it is not as an act of recompense to the murdered man, - for he is beyond the reach of all such recompense,- but it is for an offence against the law and the peace of the community... The crime is punished, not as a matter of private vengeance or satisfaction, but as due to public justice... the affair is no longer one of a private character, but becomes one pertaining wholly to the public." Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 191-192)

### **WHAT FORGIVENESS IS**

"Forgiving is defined as the act of forgiving; the act of granting pardon, as for a wrong, offense, or sin; the remission of an obligation, debt, or penalty; pardon. Forgiveness is basically the disposition or willingness to forgive or pardon. To forgive means to give or to give up, to give over, to resign, to grant free pardon for or remission of a wrongful act or an obligation. It is to give up all claims for or on account of an injury, all forms of compensation, benefit, or return. It is to give up all forms of retribution or retaliation for wrongs committed. It is to abandon all resentment in a spirit of cheerful leniency and a restoration of the subject deserving displeasure to good will and friendship." Gordon Olson (The Kindness of God Our Savior, Published by Revival Theology Promotions, p. 2-3)

"Will not impute sin. On whom the Lord will not charge his sins; or who shall not be reckoned or regarded as guilty. This shows clearly what the apostle meant by imputing faith without works. It is to pardon sin, and to treat with favour; not to reckon or charge a man's sin to him; but to treat him, though personally undeserving and ungodly (ver. 5), as though the sin had not been committed." Albert Barnes (Commentary on the Romans, p. 106)

Regarding Matthew 18:23-27, "The sole reason for the slave's reason was his lord's compassion. Forgiveness in this parable is certainly the relaxation of a legitimate claim. No third party intervened, no bargain was made, the debtor was simply released from his debt. It is possible to receive payment on a claim, and it is permissible to forgive a claim, but you cannot do both! The Bible portrays a God who is completely desirous and willing to forgive sin without receiving any payment to satisfy a vindictive urge." George Otis Jr. (The God They Never Knew, Published by Mott Media, p. 88)

"For forgiveness to mean anything, it must mean that no one pays the penalty. If forgiveness is real, then God simply releases us from the penalty of our sin..." Michael Saia, "Understanding the Cross, Published by Xulon, p. 147)

### **WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF FORGIVENESS?**

"Whenever sin is forgiven, its consequences are eliminated, thus weakening the enforcement of moral government." Gordon Olson (The Kindness of God Our Savior, Published by Revival Theology Promotions, p. 71)

"Every just penalty the lawbreaker pays strengthens moral government; almost every mercy he receives weakens justice, unless government finds a method of blending mercy and justice... His problem was to find a way to: 1) uphold His law, 2) show His hatred for sin, 3) set the man free without encouraging others to sin." George Otis Jr. (The God They Never Knew, Published by Mott Media, p. 81, 82)

### **WHAT THE PROBLEMS OF FORGIVENESS ARE NOT**

"A voluntary disposition of mercy and forgiveness prevails equally among all the Members of the Godhead. The Godhead are without personal vindictiveness. The problems of forgiveness are not personal but government. God does not require an exact payment for sin to satisfy retributive justice, but only requires that an atonement shall satisfy public justice and all the problems of a full and free reconciliation in His government of moral beings." Gordon C. Olson (The Truth Shall Make You Free, Published by Bible Research Corp, p. 89)

"Is it not plain that the Father received the ransom, not because He himself required or needed it, but for the sake of the Divine government of the universe, and because man must be sanctified through the incarnation of the son of God?" Gregory of Nazianzus (yr 330-390) (The Truth Shall Make You Free by Gordon Olson, Published by Bible Research Corp, p. 99)

"The atonement does not change God. It does not make him in any sense a different Being from what he was before the atonement was made. It is not held, and it cannot be held, that God was, before the atonement was made, severe, stern, and inexorable, and that he has been made mild and forgiving by the death of the Redeemer. It is not held, and cannot be held, that he was indisposed originally to show mercy and that he has been bought over to mercy, or that such an influence has been exerted on him by the atonement as to make him now willing to do what he was indisposed to do before." Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 219)

"The simple statements of the Bible seem to be, that sin is such a dreadful tragedy in the kingdom of God that it cannot be disposed of in any simple manner. Some equivalently terrible event must be brought to pass to deal honorably with the matter. God may be ever so ready to forgive freely man's sin out of His great bounty of love, but cannot do so simply because there are other conditions and problems involved." Gordon Olson (The Truth Shall Make You Free, Published by Bible Research Corp, p. 108)

"The unchangeable God may consistently offer pardon to a

sinner now that an atonement has been made, though there would be insuperable difficulties in such an offer if no atonement had been provided." Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 223)

"An atonement was needed, not to render God merciful, but to reconcile pardon with a due administration of justice." Charles G. Finney (1851 Systematic Theology, p. 288)

"God is love, and prefers mercy when it is safely exercised. The Bible represents him as delighting in mercy, and affirms that judgment is his strange work." Charles G. Finney (1851 Systematic Theology, p. 289)

"The government bearings of this scheme are perfectly apparent. The whole transaction tends powerfully to sustain God's law, and reveal his love and even mercy to sinners. It shows that he is personally ready to forgive, and needs only to have such an arrangement made that he can do it safely as to his government. What could show his readiness to forgive sin so strikingly as this? See how carefully he guards against the abuse of pardon! Always ready to pardon, yet ever watchful over the great interest of obedience and happiness, lest they be imperiled by its freeness and fullness!" Charles G. Finney (The Oberlin Evangelist; July 30: 1856; On the Atonement, p. 5)

"The problem was not with God as an offended party requiring vindictive satisfaction, but with God as a loving Moral Governor who desires to do justice to all His subjects." Gordon Olson (The Kindness of God Our Savior, Published by Revival Theology Promotions, p. 68)

"No appeasement of Divine wrath is necessary as a prelude to mercy; no vindictive reactions need to be satisfied; no inner antagonism needs to be subdued; no unwillingness must be overcome; no payment in the absolute sense needs to be made for every sin that is to be passed over. The problems of forgiveness do not relate to God considered as an isolated Being, but to God in relationship to His moral creatures as a Moral Governor. The problems are not personal, but governmental." Gordon Olson (The Kindness of God Our Savior, Published by Revival Theology

Promotions, p. 38)

Some theologians "insist on presenting a vindictive God who demands a payment before He will forgive. Surely this is an obvious contradiction of Jesus' parable on forgiveness, where the man was forgiven his debt solely on the basis of compassion – without payment of any kind! Certainly there were governmental considerations for God to weigh. There was the necessity to uphold the law and justify the Lawgiver in the issuance of a pardon in opposition to His words, 'the soul that sinneth, it shall die.' However, to in any way confuse God's governmental role with His personal feelings is gross error. God always wanted to forgive... He needed only to find a way to do it wisely. George Otis, Jr. (The God They Never Knew, Published by Mott Media, p. 24)

### **THE NECESSITY OF THE ATONEMENT FOR PARDON**

"Atonement...is necessary that it should confirm, and not set aside, law; that it should carry out, and not set aside, the real purpose of the penalty of the law as expressing the sense entertained by the lawgiver of the value of law and the evil of violating it; that it should secure the reformation and future good conduct of him who is pardoned; that it should preserve a community from harm if any number of offenders should be forgiven; and that it should furnish in it's own nature a proper representation of the character of him who has appointed the atonement." Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 156-157)

"God could not have been just in justifying the believer, had not Christ been made a propitiation...If his death were not necessary, he died in vain...if it had been possible that the designs of God in the salvation of sinners should be accomplished without the death of Christ, Christ's prayer, in this instance, would have been answered, and he would have been exempted from death. And since he was not exempted, we have clear evidence that his death was a matter of absolute necessity...Why is an atonement necessary in order to pardon the sinner? I answer, it is necessary on the same ground, and for the same reasons, as punishment would have been necessary, if there had been no atonement made. The ground of both is the same...to maintain the authority of the divine

law. If that be not maintained, but the law fall into contempt, the contempt will fall equally on the legislator himself; his authority will be despised and his government weakened. And as the contempt shall increase, which may be expected to increase, in proportion to the neglect of executing the law, the divine government will approach nearer and nearer dissolution, till at length it will be totally annihilated." Jonathon Edwards Jr. (The Necessity of the Atonement, p. 2-3)

"An atonement is necessary because there is nothing else that will remove the difficulties in the way of pardon, or because there is no other way by which it can be consistent for God to forgive an offender and to restore him to favour." Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 157)

"The atonement is a governmental expedient to sustain law without the execution of its penalty to the sinner." Charles G. Finney (The Oberlin Evangelist; July 30, 1856; On the Atonement, p. 2)

"The atonement of Christ was necessary to demonstrate His righteousness in the free pardon of repentant sinners. The word demonstrate signifies a manifestation, a public declaration, a showing forth or a proof of God's righteous method in the administration of forgiveness." Gordon C. Olson (The Truth Shall Make You Free, Published by Bible Research Corp, p. 94)

"The sacrifice made on Calvary is to be understood as God's offering to public justice--God himself giving up his Son to death, and this Son pouring forth his life's blood in expiation for sin--thus throwing open the folding gates of mercy to a sinning, lost race. This must be regarded as manifesting his love to sinners. This is God's ransom provided for them." Charles G. Finney (The Oberlin Evangelist; July 30, 1856; On the Atonement, p. 5)

"Sin deserves eternal penalty, and the penalty may not be remitted, except on rectorally sufficient ground." John Miley (The Governmental Theory of the Atonement, p. 6)

## **THE ATONEMENT SUBSTITUTES THE PUNISHMENT**

"The very idea of atonement is something done, which, to the purpose of supporting the authority of the law, the dignity and consistency of divine government and conduct, is fully equivalent to the curse of the law, and on the ground of which, the sinner may be saved from that curse...a less degree or duration of suffering endured by Christ the Son of God, may, on account of the infinite dignity and glory of his person, be an equivalent to the curse of the law endured by the sinner." Jonathon Edwards Jr. (The Necessity of the Atonement, p. 7)

"His sufferings were in the place of the penalty, not the penalty itself. They were a substitution for the penalty, and were, therefore, strictly and properly vicarious, and were not the identical sufferings which the sinner would himself have endured. There are some things in the penalty of the Law, which the Lord Jesus did not endure, and which a substitute or a vicarious victim could not endure. Remorse of conscience is a part of the inflicted penalty of the Law, and will be a vital part of the sufferings of the sinner in hell - but the Lord Jesus did not endure that. Eternity of sufferings is an essential part of the penalty of the Law - but the Lord Jesus did not suffer forever. Thus, there are numerous sorrows connected with the consciousness of personal guilt, which the Lord Jesus did not and cannot endure." Albert Barnes (Commentary on Galatians 3:13)

"He did not endure eternal death...eternal death was the penalty of the law...No man can possibly hold that the Redeemer endured eternal sorrow; and no man, therefore, who believes that the penalty of the law is eternal death, can consistently maintain that he endured the literal penalty of the law." Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 236-237)

"The atonement is something substituted in the place of the penalty of the law, which will answer the same ends as the punishment of the offender himself would. It is instead of punishment. It is something which will make it proper for the lawgiver to suspend or remit the literal execution of the penalty of the law, because the object or end of that penalty has been secured, or because something has been substituted for that which will

answer the same purpose. In other words, there are certain ends proposed by the appointment of the penalty in case of violation of the law; and if these ends are secured, then the punishment may be remitted and the offender may be pardoned. That which will secure these ends is an atonement.” Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 244-145.)

“The atonement is the substitute for the punishment threatened in the law; and was designed to answer the same ends of supporting the authority of the law, the dignity of the divine moral government, and the consistency of the divine conduct in legislation and execution. By the atonement it appears to God is determined that his law shall be supported; that it shall not be despised or transgressed with impunity; and that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God. The very idea of an atonement or satisfaction for sin, is something which, to the purposes of supporting the authority of the divine law, and the dignity and consistency of the divine government, is equivalent to the punishment of the sinner, according to the literal threatening of the law. That which answers these purposes being done, whatever it be, atonement is made, and the way is prepared for the dispensation of pardon.” Jonathon Edwards Jr. (The Necessity of the Atonement, p. 5-6)

“The death of Christ manifests God’s hatred of sin and love of holiness in the same sense as the damnation of the wicked manifests these, namely, on the supposition that the divine law is just and holy. If it be allowed the divine law is just and holy, then every thing done to support and execute that law, is a declaration in favor of holiness and against sin; or a declaration of God’s love of holiness and his hatred of iniquity...By atonement I mean that which, as a substitute for the punishment which is threatened in the law, supports the authority of that law, and the dignity of the divine government.” Jonathon Edwards Jr. (Inferences and Reflections on Atonement, p. 3)

"If free pardon is to be extended to penitent sinners, some great measure must be substituted for the punishment of sinners that will uphold the moral government of God at least equally as well as the pronounced consequences would have done." Gordon C. Olson (The Truth Shall Make You Free, Published by Bible

Research Corp, p. 95)

"In his undertaking the work of redemption; in his manifested character on earth; in his teaching; in the spirit with which he bore his trials; in his readiness to meet death, and in the manner in which he actually met it; in the offers of salvation which he made to mankind on the ground of the sacrifice which he made for human guilt, no one who believes the Saviour at all can doubt that he was in all respects pleasing to God. Whatever were the sufferings which were brought upon him, they were not of the nature of punishment for his own offences; whatever was the reason why he was left in darkness and gloom on the cross, it was not because he had incurred for himself the wrath of God. In the very midst of those sufferings he was performing a work which, of all the works ever performed on the earth, was most acceptable to a pure and holy God." Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 292-293)

“An atonement is, properly, an arrangement by which the literal infliction of the penalty due to sin may be avoided; it is something which may be substituted in the place of punishment; it is that which will answer the same end which would be secured by the literal infliction of the penalty of the law. It is not a commercial transaction, - a matter of debt and payment, of profit and loss. It pertains to law, to government, to holiness; not to literal debt and payment.” Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 230)

“Retributive justice, therefore, is not at all satisfied by the death of Christ. But the general justice to the Deity and to the universe is satisfied. That is done by the death of Christ which supports the authority of the law, and renders it consistent with the glory of God, and the good of the whole system, to pardon the sinner.” Jonathon Edwards Jr. (Inferences and Reflections on Atonement, p. 8)

"The sufferings and especially the death of Christ were sacrificial, were not the punishment of the law but were equivalent to the meaning to it, were representative of it and substituted for it. The demands of the law were not satisfied, but the honor of the law was promoted by it as much as this honor would have been

promoted by the infliction of the legal penalty upon all sinners." Gordon C. Olson (The Truth Shall Make You Free, Published by Bible Research Corp, p. 100)

"The death of Christ is not a substituted penalty, but a substitute for a penalty. The necessity of an atonement is not found in the fact that the justice of God requires an invariable execution of deserved penalty, but in the fact that the honor and glory of God, and the welfare of his creatures, require that his essential and rectoral righteousness be adequately declared. The death of Christ is exponential of divine justice, and is a satisfaction in that sense, and not in the sense that it is, as of a debt, the full and complete payment of all its demands." John Miley (The Governmental Theory of the Atonement, p. 9)

"Atonement is, properly, an arrangement by which the literal infliction of the penalty due to sin may be avoided; it is something which may be substituted in the place of punishment. It is that which will answer the same end secured by the literal infliction of the penalty of the law... The atonement is the governmental provision for the forgiveness of sins, providing man meets the conditions of repentance and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." Harry Conn (Four Trojan Horses, Published by Mott Media, p. 80-81)

"It [the atonement] provides a substitute for the penalty of the law". Winkie Pratney (Youth Aflame, The Nature of Sin, Published by Communication Foundation Publishers)

### **WHAT KILLED JESUS? JESUS DIED OF A BROKEN HEART**

"The atonement of Christ was to consist in our blessed Lord taking the sins of the whole world into His holy heart and reliving the awfulness in His mind until His human strength overcome in unspeakable agony... He died of a broken or ruptured heart and not from the crucifixion, as evidenced by the blood and water which came from His side when pierced by the soldier (Jn. 19. 32-35)." Gordon Olson (The Kindness of God Our Savior, Published by Revival Theology Promotions, p. 94, 96)

"Jesus took the sins of the whole world deep into His heart and mind, the anguish of His soul reached unbearable proportions... He did not die of crucifixion, but rather from internal agony of His soul... He died as a result of a voluntary identification, the sin of the world crushing out His life." George Otis Jr. (The God They Never Knew, Published by Mott Media, p. 124, 126)

### **THE ATONEMENT RECONCILES JUSTICE AND MERCY**

"Through the shedding of blood, God was just by discouraging sin, and merciful by forgiving freely... The fact that God sent Jesus Christ to the Cross is an awesome revelation of two aspects of His character. It shows us His love while it upholds His justice because sin is discouraged. We can now understand why God instituted the practice of shedding blood to illustrate that sin is horrible... The Cross also demonstrates God's determination to find a way to be merciful." Ross Tooley (We Cannot But Tell, Published by OMF Literature Inc, p. 99-100)

"The Cross reconnects the smashed relationship of man and God. He can now forgive because His only begotten Son provided the great Substitute. The agony of the worst torture in history wrote God's grief and hatred for sin in letters of blood. To see the cross both upholds the law and forgives the repentant sinner." Winkie Pratney (Youth Aflame, The Nature of Sin, Published by Communication Foundation Publishers)

"The Divine law has been broken; the interests of the universe demanded that its righteousness should be maintained, therefore, its penalty must be endured by the transgressor, or, in lieu of this, such compensation must be rendered as would satisfy the claims of justice, and render it expedient for God to pardon the guilty... Christ made such a sacrifice as to render it possible for God to be just, and yet to pardon the sinner." Catherine Booth (Popular Christianity, Published by Convention Bookstore, p. 30)

## **CHRIST WAS IMPUTED, CONSIDERED, OR TREATED AS A SINNER**

“Though innocent, he was treated in his death as if he had been guilty; that is, he was put to death as if he had personally deserved it...He was suspended on a cross, as if he had been a malefactor. He was numbered with malefactors; he was crucified between them; he was given up by God and man to death as if he had himself been such a malefactor.” Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 296)

“Standing for the sinner, he must, in an important sense, bear the curse of the law—not the literal penalty, but a vast amount of suffering, sufficient, in view of his relations to God and the universe, to make the needed demonstration of God’s displeasure against sin, and yet of his love for both the sinner and all his moral subjects. On the one hand, Jesus represents the race; on the other, he represented God.” Charles G. Finney (The Oberlin Evangelist; July 30, 1856; On the Atonement, p. 4)

“On the supposition of his dying as a Savior for sinners, all is plain. He dies for the government of God, and must needs suffer these things to make a just expression of God’s abhorrence of sin. While he stands in the place of guilty sinners, God must frown on him and hide his face. This reveals both the spirit of God’s government and his own infinite wisdom.” Charles G. Finney (The Oberlin Evangelist; July 30, 1856; On the Atonement, p. 6)

“Cursed. It conveys the idea of being given over to destruction, or left without those influences which would protect and save, -as a land that is given over to the curse of sterility or barrenness...it would mean that all saving influences were withdrawn” Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship; p. 295)

“The Savior identifies Himself with sinners so intimately that He is treated as if their sins were His, if the seemingly insurmountable problems of reconciliation were to be solved. He must be the great High Priest who voluntarily places the sin of mankind, not upon the head of an innocent animal, but upon Himself, with dreadful heart-broken solemnity, until it crushes

out His holy and spotless life.” Gordon C. Olson (The Truth Shall Make You Free, Published by Bible Research Corp, p. 33)

“Christ was treated as though he had been a sinner – and as his sufferings answered the purpose of the sinner’s punishment, and are the ground of his pardon, it may be said with respect to all believers, that their sins were imputed or reckoned to Christ, and his righteousness imputed or reckoned to them. That is, Christ was treated as sinners deserve, and sinners are treated as Christ deserves.” Nathan Beman (Four Sermons on the Doctrine of the Atonement, p. 39)

“Jesus was not sinful, or a sinner, in any sense. He did not so take human guilt upon him, that the words sinful and sinner could with any propriety be applied to him. They are not applied to him any way in the Bible; but there the language is undeviating. It is that in all senses he was holy and undefiled. And yet language is often used on this subject which is horrible and only a little short of blasphemy, as if he was guilty, and as if he was even the greatest sinner in the universe. I have heard language used which sent a chill of horror to my heart; and language may be found in the writings of those who hold the doctrine of imputation in the strictest sense, which is only a little short of blasphemy. I have hesitated whether I should copy expressions here on this subject from one of the greatest and best of men (I mean Luther) to show the nature of the views which people sometimes entertain on the subject of the imputation of sin to Christ. But as Luther deliberately published them to the world... and since similar views are sometimes entertained now; and as it is important that such views should be held up to universal abhorrence, no matter how respectable the source from which they emanate, I will copy a few of his expressions on this subject...“If thou wilt deny him to be a sinner and accursed, deny, also, that he was crucified and dead.” “But if it is not absurd to confess and believe that Christ was crucified between two thieves, then it is not absurd to say that he was accursed, and of all sinners, the greatest.” “God, our most merciful Father, sent His only Son into the world, and laid upon him all the sins of all people, saying, be thou Peter, that denier; Paul, that persecutor, blasphemer, and cruel oppressor; David, that adulterer; that sinner which did eat the fruit in Paradise; that thief who hung upon the cross; and, briefly, be thou the person who has

committed the sins of all people; see, therefore, that thou pay and satisfy for them” – Luther on the Galatians, Gal\_3:13. (pp. 213-215. London edition, 1838).

“Luther was a great and holy man. He held, as firmly as anyone can, to the personal holiness of the Redeemer. But this language shows how imperfect and erroneous views may warp the language of holy people; and how those sentiments led him to use language which is little less than blasphemy. Indeed, we cannot doubt that in Luther had heard this very language used by one of the numerous enemies of the gospel in his time, as applicable to the Saviour, he would have poured out the full torrent of his burning wrath, and all the stern denunciations of his most impassioned eloquence, on the head of the scoffer and the blasphemer. It is singular, it is one of the remarkable facts in the history of mind, that a man with the New Testament before him, and accustomed to contemplate daily its language, could ever have allowed himself to use expressions like these of the holy and unspotted Saviour. But what is the meaning of the language of Paul, it will be asked, when he says that he was “made a curse for us?”

“In reply, I answer, that the meaning must be ascertained from the passage which Paul quotes in support of his assertion, that Christ was “made a curse for us.” That passage is, “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” This passage is found in Deu\_21:23. It occurs in a law respecting one who was hanged for a “sin worthy of death,” Deu\_21:22. The Law was, that he should be buried the same day, and that the body should not remain suspended over the night, and it is added, as a reason for this, that “he that is hanged is accursed of God;” or, as it is in the margin, “the curse of God.” The meaning is, that when one was executed for crime in this manner, he was the object of the divine displeasure and malediction. Regarded thus as an object accursed of God, there was a propriety that the man who was executed for crime should be buried as soon as possible, that the offensive object should be hidden from the view. In quoting this passage, Paul leaves out the words “of God,” and simply says, that the one who was hanged on a tree was held accursed.

“The sense of the passage before us is, therefore, that Jesus was subjected to what was regarded as an accursed death. He was treated in his death as if he had been a criminal. He was put to death in the same manner as he would have been if he had himself been guilty of the violation of the Law. If he had been a thief or a murderer; if he had committed the grossest and the blackest crimes, this would have been the punishment to which he would have been subjected. This was the mode of punishment adapted to those crimes, and he was treated as if all these had been committed by him. Or, in other words, if he had been guilty of all these, or any of these, he could not have been treated in a more shameful and ignominious manner than he was; nor could he have been subjected to a more cruel death. Since it has already been intimated, it does not mean that Jesus was guilty, nor that he was not the object of the approbation and love of God, but that Jesus’ death was the same that it would have been if he had been the vilest of malefactors, and that that death was regarded by the Law as accursed.

“It was by such substituted sorrows that we are saved; and he consented to die the most shameful and painful death, as if he were the vilest criminal, in order that the most guilty and vile of the human race might be saved. With regard to the way in which Jesus’ death is connected with our justification, see the note at Gal\_2:16. It may be observed, also, that the punishment of the cross was unknown to the Hebrews in the time of Moses, and that the passage in Deu\_21:23 did not refer originally to that. Nor is it known that hanging criminals alive was practiced among the Hebrews. Those who were guilty of great crimes were first stoned or otherwise put to death, and then their bodies were suspended for a few hours on a gibbet. In many cases, however, merely the head was suspended after it had been severed from the body. Gen\_40:17-19; Num\_25:4-5. Crucifixion was not known in the time of the giving of the Law, but the Jews gave such an extent to the Law in Deu\_21:23 as to include this mode of punishment (see Joh\_19:31 ff).

“The force of the argument here, as used by the apostle Paul, is, that if to be suspended on a gibbet after having been put to death was regarded as a curse, it should not be regarded as a curse in a less degree to be suspended Alive on a cross, and to be put to

death in this manner. If this interpretation of the passage is correct, then it follows that this should never be used as implying, in any sense, that Christ was guilty, or that he was ill-deserving, or that he was an object of the divine displeasure, or that he poured out on him all his wrath. He was, throughout, an object of the divine love and approbation. God never loved Jesus more, or approved what he did more, than when he gave himself to death on the cross. God had no hatred toward him; He had no displeasure to express toward him. And it is this which makes the atonement so wonderful and so glorious. If God had been displeased with Jesus; if the Redeemer had been properly an object of God's wrath; if Jesus, in any sense, deserved those sorrows, there would have been no merit in Jesus' sufferings; there would have been no atonement. What merit can there be when one suffers only what he deserves? But what made the atonement so wonderful, so glorious, so benevolent; what made it an atonement at all, was that innocence was treated as if it were guilt; that the most pure, and holy, and benevolent, and lovely being on earth should consent to be treated, and should be treated by God and man, as if Jesus were the most vile and ill-deserving. This is the mystery of the atonement; this shows the wonders of the divine benevolence; this is the nature of substituted sorrow; and this lays the foundation for the offer of pardon, and for the hope of eternal salvation. Albert Barnes (Commentary on Galatians 3:13)

### **EXAMPLES OF ATONEMENT**

“There was once a King called Zeleukas who forbade adultery. To reinforce his law, he declared a harsh penalty for disobedience: the gouging out of both eyes. All went well for a while. Then one day, the first to break his law was brought before him. Imagine his horror when he saw it was his own son!

“What could the King do? If he forgave his son, he would weaken his own law. People would no longer respect the king. And he would be doing nothing to dissuade the son from this sin in the future.

“After careful deliberations, the King came to his decision; he would pluck only one eye from his son. The other eye would come from the King! It was probably the talk of the country for years. But people could not escape the King's logic. He managed

to uphold the rightness of his law and yet extend partial forgiveness to his son. Out of gratitude, the son probably resolved to never be immoral again.

“The problem King Zeleukas faced was similar to the one God had. Although God loved mankind and was committed to doing the best for His creatures, He still had to uphold his laws – all of which are based on what is best for everyone. God knew that sin could never be encouraged, for sin hurts everyone. So what could He do?

“His answer was the shedding of blood...” Ross Tooley (We Cannot But Tell, OMF Literature Inc, p. 97)

“In the time of Oliver Cromwell, “the iron man of England,” an officer of his army was found to be a traitor, and Oliver Cromwell signed the death-warrant for him. An order was given that the next morning when the bell from a nearby church should ring at six o'clock that officer should be shot.

“The wife of the officer came into the room where Oliver Cromwell was and fell upon her knees and said, “Sir, won't you pardon my husband?” “No,” he said. “He has proved himself a traitor to the country and to the commonwealth. Tomorrow when the bell from the church steeple will ring at six o'clock, then he will be shot.”

“Heartbroken, this woman of love went out of his presence. Oh, what she experienced! She did not sleep that night, of course. Early in the dawn long before sunrise the form of the wretched woman torn by grief in her heart, was seen hurrying toward the church steeple.

“Up she went, step by step until she reached where the large bell was hanging. A man perhaps ninety years of age both deaf and blind, received a few shillings a month for ringing the bell. The officer's wife hid herself in the belfry and when that blind and deaf man began to take hold of the bell rope and pull the wife placed her hand between the brass tongue of the bell and the side and instead of striking the side of the bell, it struck the soft hand of the loving wife of that officer and no sound was heard.

“Then the man swung it the other way and the woman put her left hand upon the other side of the bell and it struck her left hand. For about five minutes it kept on striking against her hands until instead of fingers there were only shreds of flesh and blood left. Tears were flowing down the face of that woman in her suffering but she never made a sound, because she was suffering for a loved one. When the old man had finished she went down, the blood dripping to the floor, and she went to Cromwell, the man who had said her husband must die. She stretched forth her bleeding hands and said, “for the sake of these hands won’t you forgive my husband?”

“Cromwell weakened and said, “Woman great is your love. Go in peace.” Thus her husband was freed through an act of grace on the part of their Governor and in recognition of the love and the suffering of another.” M. L. Dye (Exactly What Our Savior Taught About Sin)

### **THE ATONEMENT WAS MADE FOR ALL SINS OF ALL MANKIND**

The atonement “must be of universal application, since there is no partially with God. God can have no selected favorites as long as He is love and universally benevolent...Thus whatever God makes possible, He will make equally possible for all men.” Gordon C. Olson (The Truth Shall Make You Free, Published by Bible Research Corp, p. 97)

### **THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF THE ATONEMENT**

“The fact, that the execution of the law of God on rebel angels had not arrested, and could not arrest, the progress of rebellion in the universe, proves that something more needed to be done, in support of the authority of the law, than would be done in the execution of its penalty upon rebels. While the execution of law may have a strong tendency to prevent from the beginning of rebellion among loyal subjects, and to restrain rebels themselves, yet penal infliction do not, in fact, subdue the heart, under any government human or divine.” Charles G. Finney (1851 Systematic Theology, p. 291)

“Let it be distinctly understood that the divine law originates in God’s benevolence, and has no other than a benevolent end in view. It has revealed only and solely to promote the greatest possible good, by means of obedience. Now, such a law can allow of pardon, provided an expression can be given which will equally secure obedience—making an equal revelation of the lawgiver’s firmness, integrity, and love. The law being perfect, and being most essential to the good of his creatures, God must not set aside its penalty without some equivalent influence to induce obedience. The penalty was designed as a testimony to God’s regard for the precept and his law, and to his purpose to sustain it. An atonement, therefore, which should answer as a substitute for the infliction of this penalty, must be of such sort as to show God’s regard for both the precept and penalty of his law. It must be adapted to enforce obedience. Its moral power must be in this respect equal to that of the infliction of the penalty on the sinner.” Charles G. Finney (The Oberlin Evangelist; July 30, 1856; On the Atonement, p. 3)

“The Lord Jesus by His life and suffering for the sins of the whole world...rendered satisfaction to public justice (a demonstration before all that rebellion against authority will be punished), as distinguished from retributive or vindictive justice, thus removing the governmental barrier to the free pardon of repentant sinners – the governmental of sin-prevention problem. The advent and sufferings of Christ has provided a moral force of far greater proportions to confront the minds of moral beings as they contemplate sin, than the threatened eternal punishment of sinners had provided. The great mass of unrepentant sinners have a public testimony of the awfulness of the Moral Governor’s hatred of sin and the dreadful certainty that no sin will go unpunished. If such an ordeal of suffering was endured by the Godhead to make the forgiveness of sin possible, sinful rebellion must be viewed as a colossal tragedy in the moral government of God, to be feared by all.” Gordon C. Olson (The Truth Shall Make You Free, Published by Bible Research Corp, p. 106)

“The only means in all the universe to subdue the rebellious heart and uphold the moral government of God is the love shown for us on Calvary. It was the greatest and most profound event of all history. The death of the Lord Jesus did not render God

merciful but was an expression of his mercy... It seeks to bring back wanderers by expressing God's love and forgiveness, and that salvation is free for all men if they choose to available themselves of it." Harry Conn (Four Trojan Horses, Published by Mott Media, p. 81)

"Although God loved mankind and was committed to doing the best for His creatures, He still had to uphold his laws – all of which are based on what is best for everyone. God knew that sin could never be encouraged, for sin hurts everyone. So what could He do? His answer was the shedding of blood... If the sacrifice produced the necessary brokenness of heart, and persuaded the offerer not to sin again, God's purposes were fulfilled... God chose the awful cross. Why? God wanted to inspire brokenness of heart in the people, in an even greater way than through offering animal sacrifices. He deliberately made it horrible so it would humble the heart of man over sin, and deter him from sinning again." Ross Tooley (We Cannot But Tell, Published by OMF Literature Inc, p. 97-98)

## WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION

'By these words [Romans 4:6-7] we are taught that justification with Paul is nothing else but pardon of sin" John Calvin, (Albert Barnes Commentary on the Romans, p. 106)

"In response to heart faith a marvelous thing happens. In heaven, we are justified... our standing before God has changed. Justified means it is as though I had never sinned." Paris Reidhead (Finding the Reality of God, pg 111)

"What is gospel justification? It consists not in the law pronouncing the sinner just, but in his being ultimately governmentally treated as if he were just; that is, it consists in a governmental decree of pardon or amnesty – in arresting and setting aside the execution of the incurred penalty of law – in pardoning and restoring to favor those who have sinned, and those whom the law pronounced guilty, and upon whom it had passed the sentence of eternal death, and rewarding them as if they had been righteous... (Romans 4:6-7). This quotation from David shows both what David and what Paul understood by justification,

to wit, the pardon and acceptance of the penitent sinner." Charles Finney (Finney's Systematic Theology, Published by Bethany House, p. 360).

"In response to heart faith a marvelous thing happens. In heaven, we are justified: The record against us has been changed; that is to say, our standing before God has changed. Justified means it is as though I had never sinned." Paris Reidhead (Finding the Reality of God, Published by Bible Teaching Ministries, p. 111)

"It is very evident that in this text [Acts 13:38-39] forgiveness and justification are used interchangeably, as synonymous terms... In this rich passage [Rom. 3:25-26], which presents the fundamental elements of redemption, to remit sins and to justify, on the basis of the atonement, through the instrumentality of faith, are treated as precisely the same thing, and signify a release from the guilt and punishment of past sin, through the forbearance of God." Asbury Lowrey, (Positive Theology, Published by R. P. Thompson, 1854, p. 211-212)

"What is justification then? To be justified is to have our sin forgiven, such that the penalty of that sin will not be carried out on us as the guilty parties. We remain guilty for the sin, but because of the atonement of Christ, and our meeting the conditions (repentance, faith), God is free to release us from the punishment we deserve to receive, He can treat us governmentally as if we were righteous, even though we are guilty of breaking his law. It is this governmental treatment as righteous, even though we are guilty, that constitutes justification." Michael Saia (Understanding the Cross, Published by Xulon, p. 133).

## IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

"This is, if I understand it, the true doctrine of 'imputation;' not that there is any transfer of moral character from us to the Redeemer, or from him to us, and not that God literally 'reckons' or imputes our sins to him as his, or his righteousness to us as ours, but that his work may be estimated as performed in the place and on the account of sinful men, and that in virtue of that we may be regarded and treated as if it had been performed by ourselves."

Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany House, p. 315)

“God imputeth righteousness. Whom God treats as righteous... forgiven, and whose sins are not charged on him, but who is freed from the punishment due to his sins. Being thus pardoned, he is treated as a righteous man. And it is evidently in this sense that the apostle uses the expression ‘imputed righteousness’ i.e. he does not impute, or charge on the man his sins; he reckons and treats him as a pardoned and righteous man.” Albert Barnes (Commentary on the Romans, p. 105)

“This passage [Rom. 4:5-8] deserves special attention, as it explains all those text that seem to favor, and have been construed to support the theory of the imputation of Christ’s active and passive righteousness to the sinner. Here it is manifest that justification, imputation of righteousness, forgiving iniquities, covering sins, and the non-imputation of sin, are phrases substantially of the same import, and decide positively that the Scripture view of the great doctrine under consideration, is an actual deliverance from the guilt and penalty of sin: from which it follows, that the phrases so often occurring in the writings of Paul – the righteousness of God and of Christ – must mean God’s righteous method of justifying the ungodly, through the atonement and by the instrumentality of faith – a method that upholds the rectitude of the Divine character, at the same time that it offers a full and free pardon to the sinner.” Asbury Lowrey, (Positive Theology, Published by R. P. Thompson, 1854, pg. 211-212)

“In theology, the remission of sin, and absolution from guilt and punishment; or an act of free grace by which God pardons the sinner, and accepts him as righteous, on account of the atonement of Christ.” Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary

“Holiness isn’t something you can borrow – you either have it or you don’t. The theological doctrine of ‘imputed righteousness’ has been grossly distorted in our day. We are told that God looks at us through the blood of Christ and see’s us as righteous, regardless of our actual state... Let’s stop kidding ourselves. God sees us exactly the way we are. If we are living in obedience, He sees it. If we are living selfish, unholy lives, we can

be sure he sees that too.” George Otis Jr. (The God They Never Knew, Published by Mott Media, p. 40)

“As one ‘made under the law’ (Ga. 4:4-5), Christ was obliged to obey and keep the law. Since He had to obey for Himself, He could not obey for others in the sense that His obedience could be literally imputed to them... while Christ could not obey for us, He could die entirely in our behalf since there was not the least guilt charged against Him for which He must die.” Gordon Olson (The Kindness of God Our Savior, Published by Revival Theology Promotions, p. 91)

“Forgiveness of sin, such that the penalty is not carried out, is sufficient to qualify as a definition of ‘imputed righteousness... How could the Holy Spirit convict us of sin if he did not know we were sinning? How could we grieve the Spirit of God if he never saw us as anything other than righteous? God has a very good sense of reality, he knows when we sin, and he sees us exactly as we are.” Michael Saia (Understanding the Cross, Published by Xulon, p. 132).

## APPENDIX B:

### PROBLEMS WITH THE RETRIBUTIVE SATISFACTION VIEW

#### LIMITED ATONEMENT, UNIVERSALISM, OR INJUSTICE

“Two persons cannot be held responsible for the same offense. If a debt has been paid by a friend, it cannot be demanded of him who originally contracted it. If one could be substituted in the place of another in a penitentiary, and serve out the term of punishment assigned to the original offender, the offender could not be again imprisoned for the crime.” Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 298)

“No man can be held accountable for a debt that has already been paid for on his behalf to the satisfaction of the offended party. But a double jeopardy, a duplication of indebtedness, is indeed involved if the non-elect are to be punished for sins which the Lord Jesus Christ has already endured punishment.” Culance (Sovereignty of Grace, p. 156)

“For God to have laid the sins of all men on Christ would mean that as regards to the lost He would be punishing their sins twice, once in Christ, and then again in them.” Boettner (The Reformed Faith, p. 98)

“Reformed people argue that if Christ’s death actually paid for the sins of every person who ever lived, then there is no penalty left for anyone to pay, and it necessarily follows that all people will be saved, without exception. For God could not condemn to eternal punishment anyone whose sins are already paid for: that would be demanding double payment, and it would therefore be unjust.” Wayne Grudem (Systematic Theology, p. 595)

“If Christ died for everyone, everyone would be saved.” Joshua Williamson (Open Air Outreach message board, Doctrine and Theology section)

“That if, as their substitute, Christ suffered for them the full amount deserved by them, then justice has no claim upon them, since their debt is fully paid by the surety, and of course the principal is, in justice, discharged. And since it is undeniable that the atonement was made for the whole posterity of Adam, it must follow that the salvation of all men is secured upon the ground of “exact justice.” This, as has been said, is the conclusion to which Huntington and his followers came. This doctrine of literal imputation, is one of the strongholds of universalism, and while this view of atonement and justification is held they cannot be driven from it.” Charles Finney (Lectures on Systematic Theology, 1851, Lecture on Justification)

#### AUTOMATIC AND UNCONDITIONAL SALVATION

“Every elect vessel, *from the first instance of his being*, is as pure in the eyes of God from the charge of sin as he shall be in glory. Though such persons do act rebellion, yet the loathsomeness and hatefulness of his rebellion is laid on the back of Christ; he bears the sin, as well as the blame and shame: and God can dwell with persons that act the thing, because all the filthiness of it is translated from them upon the back of Christ.” Dr. Crisp [one who held to the automatic and unconditional salvation view] (Checks to Antinomianism by John Fletcher, Published by Carlton & Porter, p. 116)

“With equal clearness it would follow that they [those for whom Christ died] could not be required to repent of the sin which they had committed [if the atonement was payment of a debt]. If the whole matter is transferred and cancelled, then it is clear that there can be no reason why they should repent, or, indeed, why there should be any repentance in the case.” Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 299)

“If a third person pay a debt, there would be no grace exercised by the creditor in the discharging of the debtor; yet when a third person atones for a crime, by suffering in the stead of a criminal, there is entire grace in the discharge of the criminal, and *retributive justice still allows him to be punished in his own person.*” Jonathon Edwards Jr. (Grace Consistent with Atonement, p. 7)

“Forgiveness of sins is not automatic in the Christian life but requires repentance, confession, and the exercise of a humbled faith in the atoning death of Christ... before forgiveness and cleansing can take place.” Gordon Olson (The Truth Shall Make You Free, page 160. Published by Bible Research Corp)

“If A owes B \$100, and C pays B \$100 in behalf of A, then A owes B nothing.” Gordon C. Olson (The Truth Shall Make You Free, Published by Bible Research Corp, p. 93)

### **SALVATION BY LAW (JUSTICE), NOT GRACE AND MERCY**

“When a debt is paid, there is no forgiveness; when a penalty is endured, there is no mercy.” Albert Barnes (The Atonement, Published by Bethany Fellowship, p. 231)

“If our forgiveness be purchased, and the price of it be already paid, it seems to be a matter of debt, and not of grace.” Jonathon Edwards Jr. (The Necessity of the Atonement, p. 1)

“If the atonement of Christ be considered as the payment of a debt, the release of the sinner seems not to be an act of grace, although the payment be made by Christ, and not by the sinner personally. Suppose any one of you, my auditors, owes a certain sum; he goes and pays the full sum himself personally. Doubtless all will agree, that the creditor, in this case, when he gives up the obligation, performs a mere act of justice, in which there is no grace at all...this...places the whole grace of the gospel in providing the Savior, not in the pardon of sin.” Jonathon Edwards Jr. (Grace Consistent with Atonement, p. 2)

“If Christ have, in the proper sense of the words, paid the debt which we owed to God, whether by a delegation from us or not; there can be no more grace in our discharge, than if we had paid it ourselves. But the fact is, that Christ has not, in the literal and proper sense, paid the debt for us...Payment of debt equally precludes grace, when made by a third person, as when made by the debtor himself...Grace is ever so opposed to justice, that they mutually limit each other. Wherever grace begins, justice ends; and

wherever justice begins, grace ends.” Jonathon Edwards Jr. (Grace Consistent with Atonement, p. 3-4, 6)

“If, in the obligation of an absolute retributive justice the Father must inflict merited punishment upon sin and if in the atonement he inflicted such punishment upon his Son as the substitute for sinners-then he does not remit the penalty. No dialectics can identify such an infliction with remission. And where there is no remission of penalty there can be no grace of forgiveness. Hence, the doctrine of Satisfaction does not admit the grace of the Father in forgiveness; which fact of grace, however, is clearly given in the Scriptures.” John Miley (Theory and Scripture Interpretation, p. 6)

“That if, as their substitute, Christ suffered for them the full amount deserved by them, then justice has no claim upon them, since their debt is fully paid by the surety, and of course the principal is, in justice, discharged. And since it is undeniable that the atonement was made for the whole posterity of Adam, it must follow that the salvation of all men is secured upon the ground of ‘exact justice.’” Charles Finney (Lectures on Systematic Theology, 1851, Lecture on Justification)

### **ANTINOMIANISM OR LAWLESSNESS ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED**

“There is as much ground to be confident of the pardon of sin to a believer, *as soon as he committed it*, as to believe it after he has performed all the humiliation in the world. A believer may be assured of pardon as soon as he commits any sin, even adultery and murder...God does no longer stand displeased though a believer do sin often. There is no sin that ever believer commit that can possibly do them any harm. Therefore, as their sins cannot hurt them, so there is no cause of fear in their sins committed. Sins are but scarecrows and bugbears to fright ignorant children.” Dr Crisp [A teacher of antinomianism] (Checks to Antinomianism by John Fletcher, p. 116. Published by Carlton & Porter)

## **A DISTORTED VIEW OF THE FATHER**

“His sacrifice is never represented in the Bible as having purchased or begotten the love of the Father, but only as having opened up a channel through which the love could flow out to His rebellious and prodigal children. The doctrine of the New Testament on this point is not that ‘God so hated the world that His own Son was compelled to die in order to appease His vengeance,’ as we fear has been too often represented, but that ‘God so LOVED the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.’ Catherine Booth (Popular Christianity, p. 30, published by Convention Bookstore

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