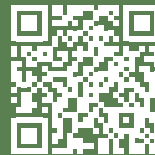


Let's Discuss...Jesus

PART 5_Was Jesus' Death Really a Sacrifice?



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Scriptures mentioned:

So the Word became human and made His home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

John 1:14 NLT

But God proves His love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by His blood, will we be saved through Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by His life.

Romans 5:8-10 NRSV

I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

John 10:10b NRSV

This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for He faced all of the same testings we do, yet He did not sin.

Hebrews 4:15 NLT

the
Discipleship
project

Summary

Why was it necessary for God to take on human form? And let's be honest, was Jesus' death really a sacrifice if He was resurrected? We mention reasons why we believe that it was. NJ shares his love for the book of Hebrews and explains how Jesus' death made a way for our forgiveness.

Definitions

atonement: originally meaning "to cover over" or "pacify"; to provide forgiveness for sins and reconciliation with God

Let's Discuss...

- Folu asks, "Why did Jesus have to come in the flesh form to earth?" Not all religions include this element of *incarnation*, the idea that the Divine would take on flesh and become human. How does the incarnation of Jesus help or benefit our faith? Are there any downsides to it?
- Ian says, "Sin is a human problem". Do you agree with this statement? What do you make of the fact that humans were created with the capacity to sin?
- Renaud quotes Colossians 1:15 that says, "*Christ is the visible image of the invisible God*" and goes on to say that when we look to Him, we can be confident that this is the character of God. It is easy to look back on religious leaders at the time of Jesus who struggled to get on board with His message and judge them harshly for sticking to legalistic and man-made understandings of doctrine. If Jesus were born today, how would we avoid being like those religious leaders? How could we discern between what we once believed to be God-given truths that He is now clarifying or reinterpreting for us, and the elements that He actually wants us to hold on to?
- Was Jesus' death really a sacrifice, considering that He resurrected? Why or why not? Give yourself permission to really ask this question. Try to remove the pressure to agree with what others might say or what you've been taught in the past. Really wrestle with it, so you can form your own personal conviction about it.
 - » We could also ask, was His coming to earth a sacrifice?
- Have you ever really sat and deeply contemplated on the brutality of the suffering that Jesus endured? Maybe by watching a film that depicts it, or some other way? How did that contemplation impact you? (See how Julian of Norwich approached this below under "Let's Pray...")
- As modern-day Christians, with no cultural framework to understand the concept that "*without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness*" (Hebrews 9:22), many of us have still somehow become desensitized to some of the gruesome realities that are part of the biblical narrative. Derek Flood opens his book, **Healing the Gospel**, talking about how not having grown up in church, his initial experience of God's love was so profound that he couldn't wait to share it. He says:

"Naturally, I wanted to share this with everyone I met, so when they handed out

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Scriptures mentioned:

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.
Colossians 1:15a NLT

So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.
Exodus 33:11 NLT

He Himself bore our sins" in His body on the cross...
1 Peter 2:24a NIV

And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
Ephesians 5:2 ESV

Peter cuts off Malchus' ear
John 18:10-11 & Luke 22:49-51

The people try to throw Jesus off a cliff
Luke 4:28-30

Thoughts on the significance of Jesus' sacrifice
Hebrews 5-10

tracts for us to distribute and told us how to "share the gospel" at my church, I was the first in line. Only, I quickly discovered that the message I was taught to share with others was very different from what I had actually experienced. It seemed more like bad news, and led to all sorts of awkward conversations like this:

Jesus died for you!

Why did Jesus have to die?

Because of our sin.

What if we haven't sinned?

"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." No one can keep the law.

But if no one can keep it how can we be blamed for that?

Because "the wages of sin is death" and so justice requires that you be sent to be tormented in Hell for all eternity.

That's awful!

Yes, but there's good news: God has provided a way out by sacrificing His Son.

God kills His own Son?

Yes, that's how much He loves you.

Why would that make anything better?

Because it satisfies God's need for punishment. Sin must be paid for with blood because "without blood there is no forgiveness."

I feel ill.

Can't you see this is God's mercy and love? Don't you want to open your heart and let Him into your life?

I think I have to go now.

The above dialog is of course overplayed in order to drive home this simple point: The way many of us have learned to present the "good news" can sound like anything *but* good news."

How have you come to terms with a God of love who requires blood to be shed for the forgiveness of sins? (Or have you?)

- Folu mentions how the incarnation of Jesus is a "good example of God's love for humanity" and His desire to be close to us. Despite that fact that Jesus is no longer walking on earth in the flesh, in what ways have you sensed His love and nearness in your everyday life?

Let's Pray...

"My wish was to have been present with those who loved Christ and were with Him at His passion so that I, with my own eyes, might have seen the passion which our Lord suffered for me, and so that I might have suffered with Him as the others did who loved Him. I never desired any other sight or revelation of God."

Julian of Norwich, **Revelations of Divine Love** (1373)

- May our hearts be broken as we consider the suffering that Love caused Jesus to experience for us. Let us not take it for granted but be transformed by a proper understanding of what He went through and why He did this for us – so that we could know once and for all that our sins don't have the last word, but His resurrection power at work in our lives does!

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Scriptures mentioned:

In fact under the Law almost everything is cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness [neither release from sin and its guilt, nor cancellation of the merited punishment].

Hebrews 9:22 AMP

He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:12 ESV

The Day of Atonement
Leviticus 16

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 1:29 NIV

Let's Go Deeper...

- **How Does "Dying For Our Sins" Work?** by Brian Zahnd [article]
- **He is Able to Sympathize.** by Erik Raymond [article]
- **Leviticus 16 | The Day of Atonement | Bible Study** by Spoken Gospel [video]
- **The Crucifixion** by Fleming Rutledge [book]
- **The Day the Revolution Began** by Tom Wright [book]
- **Healing the Gospel** by Derek Flood [book]
- **The God-Shaped Heart** by Timothy R. Jennings [book]
- **Revelations of Divine Love** by Julian of Norwich [book]