

WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE TO ATONE FOR SINS?

Jesus paid the debt we owed to God for our sins by dying on the cross for us. This is the Bible doctrine.

If death is bad, then so is non-existence. It follows then that it is wrong that Henry VIII's Seventh wife never existed. The notion of death being atonement for sin is totally crazy.

You can't understand why Jesus had to die. None of the Christian explanations make any sense.

Others say that Jesus did not have to die but chose death as a sacrifice of love for God and he obeyed God in our place. He made it up to God for us. That does not really tell us why he had to die. We need a why and a good why. It is a serious matter.

Some say Jesus had to die to reveal the resurrection. This presupposes that belief in life after death is good for us. This is something that needs to be checked out independently of Christ. You cannot just suppose that it is good just because Jesus rose for it is not good then Jesus did not rise or the Devil made it look as if he did. The habit of being selective as to some of the questions that needs to be asked is the most irritating and dishonest habit and is universal in religion. Somebody else could have risen from the dead for him as a witness that Jesus was the Son of God so Jesus did not have to die.

Some say that God executed him for what we did so that he would not have to execute us! That is totally unfair. Some say that whether you commit one murder or ten you will suffer the one utmost penalty of the law which is death so Jesus was executed for all our sins and the sins of the whole world. But that is only the way we do things and that does not make it right if there is an alternative. It is not fair to impute our human standards to God in regard to justice because we can only go so far and God can punish with absolute perfect justice - if for example death is not enough he can punish after death until the chalice is filled. It is not fair for one death to atone for ten deaths but we can only go as far as we can. God is different for he could raise and kill Jesus trillions of times to atone for the sins of each person. The Bible stresses that the penalty of sin is death but death is not much of a punishment. You might as well say that falling asleep is a punishment. You might as well say that not being made and ever being brought into existence is a punishment. If the Bible were the word of God suffering would be the wages of punishment.

The atonement is a mystery. Christianity admits that we cannot understand it. When they say that faith is a personal revelation from God performed in a discreet fashion that Jesus was right to die for God in obedience to the revelations he received from God what right has any Christian to condemn anyone who gets a revelation saying that God wants babies slaughtered for a purpose only God can know? It would be bigotry and hatred to condemn that person. Most early Christians say that Jesus was sacrificed to the Devil. He was sacrificed to Satan all right but we see now in what spirit this sacrifice was made!

Atonement for sin is necessary not because it is a deterrent because we are to love God alone and losing our love for him should be the only deterrent. Atonement is not demanded for reforming us for we could do that just by choosing to do good. And if God helps us supernaturally by affecting our will then reforming is not much good because it is not all our own work - goodness is such a serious thing that to attribute it to the work of a God and not take all the credit for yourself is serious head-case fanaticism. Atonement is demanded for the sake of justice.

Christians say, "If sin is infinitely serious then God cannot pardon it without getting atonement. To pardon it without demanding that it be made up for would be condoning it. A law that demands no price for breaking it is no law at all. It is just a law in name only. Its opposition to wrongdoing is superficial and false. It is hypocritical. It is sinful and unfair. So God has to demand that we pay for sin." But if this argument is correct it does not justify atonement for the reason that circumstances might forbid God from going down that road. The argument ignores the fact that justice demands only what can be done under the circumstances. It reads as an extreme attempt to get demanding that Jesus should die!

Christians say that we cannot pay this debt ourselves so Jesus had to pay it for us. If a mortal sin is infinite in evil then a good deed is infinite in good. One good deed atones for every sin that ever happened or can have happened. This is obvious but Christianity repudiates it. The Bible which says that salvation cannot be merited denies it. Any gospel of forgiveness denies it.

However, the good work must be as difficult as the sin was enjoyable. There is something vulgar about giving somebody a sweet to atone for a lifetime of inflicting misery. If you were really sorry you would do what you could. A small good work would only atone if you could not do a better one. If you were dying a smile of kindness would atone for all your sins for that is all you can do under the circumstances.

But how can you atone if you are already in sin? You would have to be a friend of God to atone but you can't be until you are pardoned and if you are pardoned then you don't need to atone. But God could give you conditional pardon. The pardon is given to enable you to atone and if you don't atone promptly then it will be revoked.

Some say that if we give God even an eternity of good works to atone for a sin we are still only giving God what he would have to get even if we had never anything to atone for. We are not really making up for anything in that case (page 118, The Metaphor of God Incarnate). It is like owing somebody \$5.00 and then just giving them this same \$5 when you smash their window causing \$5 worth of damage. That is why they say that Jesus had to do more than make up for sins – he had to pay a whole lot extra. But the problem is that if Jesus was God then he could not pay any more than infinite atonement for infinite sin. Nothing extra could be offered. He still only offered God what was due to God. When he couldn't offer extra how could we? God would have to make do without the extra.

All Christians say that Jesus had to be God made man to suffer and die for our sins and our sins because they insult a God of unlimited goodness are unlimitedly that is infinitely evil. We couldn't save ourselves and we needed to pay the price. So God became man to pay the price himself for us. Why couldn't we pay? Because we are not God our good works are not of great value – they would not pay for the infinite seriousness of sin. Only God made man can do good works with infinite merit to cancel out the debt. From this we see that Jesus paid for our sins by his blood long before Calvary so Calvary was totally unnecessary. We have no explanation for it. It seems that when Paul and the early Christians declared that nothing mattered but the Cross of Christ they meant that Jesus was not God and so had to go through extreme agony to pay for our sins and die for them. How could the cross matter if Jesus had paid for our sins already?

The Christians have been conditioned to see Jesus' death as necessary for the removal of sin. It was not necessary at all.