

PENAL THEORY OF THE ATONEMENT

Jesus paid the debt we owed to God for our sins. This is the Bible doctrine.

Some say he endured divine wrath for our sins. That is the penal theory of the atonement.

Others say he simply did the loving of God for us so that God could give us a fresh start for we have sinned against him. That is the ethical satisfaction theory.

If God will not punish sin then he is not being serious when he condemns it. A law that prescribes no penalty for breaking it is no law at all. So God cannot be just if he forgives sin without punishing it. It is not vindictive of him to punish because he has to do it to be really good for his holiness demands that he punish (page 105, A Summary of Christian Doctrine). We can forgive without demanding compensation or atonement. Know What You Believe explains that God cannot forgive this way because God is not a private person. It is because his will which is just and loving is part of himself that he has to get atonement (page 47). He wishes he could simply forgive but he cannot. So basically it is because God is God, that is ruler and protector and one who is the law he preaches that he cannot simply forgive. What this really means is that because God is not a human being he cannot simply forgive. This is rubbish for if humans with power and who look after others, humans who are not private persons, and who have the virtues of justice and love and who are them in a sense can simply forgive there is nothing to stop him either.

Some say it is nonsense to say that God is not being serious when he condemns sin if he doesn't punish it when it happens. They say that though it is right one way to punish it is wrong another. They say the sinner should not be punished for it is only the future that matters now. So God not punishing sin would only mean he has a purpose for not punishing not that he is encouraging sin or not taking it seriously.

The punishment of a man in your place is an example of punishment going too far especially if that man is sinless. If you are punished by God with crucifixion for some sin such as stealing a loaf of bread or masturbating that is going too far too. It's worse if somebody else has to die for it. The idea that God demands death, especially when it is not your death though you committed the sins!, or everlasting damnation for any sin because he has such high moral standards is therefore sick.

The atonement is an expression of God's justice and his mercy. It demands the price of sin, which is justice, and that we get off, which is mercy. But if punishment is for making opposition to sin serious and meant then mercy whitewashes evil and is soft on it. It is denying that it is as serious as it should be considered. All who believe that there was something unique about the death of Jesus hold that it speaks to us of God's mercy. But mercy is really sugar-coated hatred so all Jesus' death would have shown is that he was the Devil's secret weapon against real goodness and love.

Many Christians say that God punished his Son in our place for our sins so that he could forgive us. "Jesus, though innocent, took the punishment due to our sins to satisfy divine justice so that we can get off like somebody paying a fine for us. God punished Jesus for our sins just like A being found guilty of a crime and B being sent to jail in his place".

Penal means punishment. This theory is called the penal theory. Paul said in Galatians that anyone hanged on a tree is cursed by God and that Jesus became a curse for us because of this. He means that God cursed Jesus for our sins. Some say he did not but when he quoted the Law saying there was a curse on the person hanged on a tree first it is clear what he meant. See Galatians 3.

If Jesus paid the debt to divine justice then there is no mercy and yet Christians say we are pardoned because of the blood of Christ. So which is it? They cannot believe in their stupid dogma themselves. The Church wants split personalities for nobody can accept such a doctrine unless they are really two persons.

The fact that the law allows people to pay fines for criminals does not prove that this is fair. It is not fair unless the person who pays will get the money back from the criminal. And besides, there is a huge difference between paying a fine for somebody and going to jail for them in their place. If the first is justified the second certainly is not. The idea that Jesus had to pay for us in any sense is immoral and blasphemous.

This doctrine of the atonement boasts that it contains no notion of God's mercy being in opposition to his justice. The two are in harmony. In being just, he is being merciful. What a terrible price people have to pay to enjoy the thought of a merciful God!

Christians argue that there is no injustice in God having Jesus executed for what other people did for Jesus consented to this

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voluntarily (page 47, Know What You Believe). Philippians 2:6-8 sanctions this view for it praises Jesus for freely and willingly obeying God to die on the cross. It would be unjust if it were done to him against his will. But it is plain that this is no excuse. If your mother is forced to pay your fine for you the judge will still have no problem taking it.

No law has the right to knowingly punish X for the offence of Y for X did not commit the crime. It would be unjust to consent to being flogged for the sin of another so that he or she will go unpunished. The Bible is insistent that God will not simply overlook sin and forgive for he is fair and righteous and holy (page 105, (A Summary of Christian Doctrine) so Jesus had no choice. But the reply to that is that God could have left us all unsaved for he owed us nothing and we deserved to be lost so what Jesus did was voluntary. Some think that if you hold that love is better than justice you will have to agree that it was not voluntary. Then because love is the best thing and it was loving for Jesus to die Jesus had no choice but to die to be loving. So it seems that Jesus didn't do it voluntarily. How could it be voluntary for one who cares about people? If it was voluntary then Jesus was not very worried about us!

Religion says, "God knew that we could sin if he voluntarily made us. He agreed beforehand that he was going to help if things went wrong. That is why the atonement and its benefits can be described as an act of grace, that is, a free gift to us from God. It would not be gratuitous if God had to give it. But it was gratuitous for God didn't have to make us." That is nonsense. It is like saying that you don't have to jail your son for murder simply because you could have put a condom on and didn't.

It is logically impossible to justly punish somebody for another's sins. It is not punishment and cannot be. It is revenge at most.

Some say that the penal theory really denies divine mercy because if Jesus has been punished instead of us then we are not forgiven. Forgiving sins means letting them go unpunished. The Bible promises forgiveness. This exposes another contradiction in the theory. If we have been forgiven then this is admitting that Jesus was not punished for our sins. And if he was not then we have to be punished. A real Christian could not accept such a theory for it is a barrier to true belief in forgiveness. It prevents forgiveness. It makes prayers for mercy insincere.

Supporters of the penal theory ignore reason and that makes them deadly. If they ought to believe such a dire and absurd theory then everybody else has the right to advocate similar doctrines and kill the sons for the crimes of their fathers. What good is evidence if such an absurd theory is true? All barriers to chaos have to be removed.

It is alleged by supporters that God can miraculously make A guilty of what B did. If I have to hurt anybody for a good reason he should make that person deserve it. If he wants me to have the power to sin by harming others then he could not do this. But I know that I do not need to harm others to have free will therefore he could and should. God would be evil if he did not do these things. But the Bible says he doesn't when it declares that he commands compassion.

Some advocates of the penal theory seem to go completely mad and assert that Jesus Christ took our guilt on the cross! Jesus took the responsibility for sin from us on himself. He became guilty of our sins. This is an outrageous blasphemy. It is calling the Son of God evil. And it is calling him insane for nobody can be to blame for what they have not done. A sin is an act against God not some kind of substance that anybody can remove from you and put on themselves.

A sceptic about Jesus might wonder if Satan engineered Christianity so that it would worship a man as God and thus blame God for sins and thus blaspheme God.

If the penal theory were true then it would be right to assume that anybody you meet will get saved and put all their sins on Jesus in case they will. It would be right to hate Jesus if they hurt you for he was to save them and yet they are still sinning. It would be a sin not to put the blame on Jesus if he has rightly taken it.

Some say, "If Jesus expiated our sins, it would be our response to him that saves us and not him." The correct view is that a person can be asked to save you but that does not mean they are not a saviour. It means they are if they save you. A person who saves you because you asked him to is your saviour. He has done something to save while the Jesus who dies as an example and a demonstration of God's wrath does nothing and has no need to die at all.

Despite itself, the penal theory implies that God is vindictive. Or is despite itself the right expression? It is not the only nasty doctrine that pretends to be well-meaning. If Jesus came to save us by dying then he was not needed and his death was suicide. We could pay the punishment ourselves if God is merciful and will devise an easy payment plan. It is mercy to do a person who deserves only pain a favour. A smart of pain once every billion years forever would still add up to infinite suffering. The punishment of Jesus was not necessary therefore he committed suicide by getting crucified and was cruelly treated by a tyrannical God. If God would not take the smarts instead but had to send Jesus to take our punishment for he needs us to be punished constantly and for forever then God is being spiteful. To go to his Heaven to be with him forever would be condoning his evil. The true saints would go to Hell.

Us forcing God to penalise Jesus for our sins means that sin is extremely serious indeed. It is murder pure and simple. It is torturing Jesus. If I were the one and only sinner Jesus would still have had to die for me that way.

Christians in the know, hate Jesus. They gloat over his death. The Cross, the Vindication of God by DM Lloyd Jones page 4 confesses that since Jesus deliberately chose the death of the cross and to be guilty of our sins it is no pity of him. That Jesus told the women of Jerusalem not to pity him seems to back up this idea. The cross says sin is to be punished and sin should not be pitied. The cross then bears witness against the idea: "A person who has done wrong and is sorry cannot go back and change the past and so is entitled to be pitied." The cross was evil. If it is no pity of Jesus then he deserves no praise for dying for us at all. Because if he did it would mean he did the right thing. So Jesus sinned by dying on the cross for sinners! It would have been a sin for him to make himself guilty of our sins for it is bad enough for those for who are guilty to be guilty but worse for somebody innocent to be guilty! The Church might answer that God wanted to be offered obedience as well but a sinless incarnation could have offered that while Jesus the sinner paid the death penalty. Much of Christianity is morally repugnant. It's worse than pornography.

Some say that the penalty for sin was death and not torment. If so then why did Jesus have to suffer so badly? Death is nothing in a sense and torment is worse. One death cannot atone for many deaths or murders. To those who say that death is the ultimate penalty of the law I say that it is not. The ultimate penalty is being tormented to your dying day. Why execute when we are going to die anyway? And if Jesus needed to suffer then why is it that there were thousands of people in this world who suffered more than him? Would it not be disgusting for the Son of God to come and suffer and not be the person who suffers most? This is the person who claims that God is right to let us suffer and if he or God cares he should be with us in extreme suffering so that it is like he suffers with us in complete support and empathy. Is it not insulting and callous to refuse to hold that if a saviour was needed the saviour was some anonymous man or woman who was very good and who suffered the most?

Evangelicals harp on about how terrific the evidence is for the Bible being true. Deuteronomy says it takes one error to prove a prophet a fraud no matter how good his predicting skills are or how good the evidence is. Can't they see that the illogical atonement theory – which is one apparently evil doctrine among several in the Bible - could just be that very one failure that we need to justify us throwing the Bible into the fire? It is in fact a major blunder worse than any inaccuracy by an alleged prophet.

It seems terrible to think that the Son of God had to die to make atonement to God for sinners if he was not God himself. It is like God making him do the dirty work. But since the atonement idea is immoral no matter if Jesus is God or not we cannot say that this problem means that Jesus must be God. Those who deny that Jesus was God say that God hating parting with his son and it was very costly to him so the fact that Jesus was not God did not make it any easier. It would be callous to say that God could not have cared much when he could raise Jesus to life for true love does not think like that. How could it be immoral for a non-God to suffer for our sins if that was the only way to make atonement? Some say that God made Jesus suffer and die for us though it was not equal in value to the penalty we owe God for sin and because of what Jesus did God let us off the rest of the debt (page 125, The Metaphor of God Incarnate). But in that case he could have let us off the whole lot. And why make Jesus do all that instead of making us pay a bit ourselves which would be fairer?

God is said to be closer to us than we are to ourselves. God is all-knowing. Some would say that it follows that Jesus' suffering is the same to God then as if God himself is suffering though Jesus is not God.

The Church says that the New Testament expression that the blood of Jesus washes away our sin only means that the life of Jesus given to God for us atones our sin by taking the divine death penalty away from us. The Bible uses this expression so the Church is probably right. It expresses the idea of Jesus taking our sins away by bearing the death penalty due to them.

The penal theory insists that the worst pain for Jesus was not how his friends all let him down and how he was nailed ignominiously on the cross but how he was literally abandoned by God himself. He did not just feel abandoned but was abandoned. This idea argues – that this abandonment is the main thing. Without it there would be no real penal atonement for sinners. It is based on the notion that the loss of God is the only real punishment. Even if it is wrong for Jesus to be executed so that sinners may avoid being executed by God if they repent, Jesus being hated by God is far worse. It violates Christianity's pretended ethos of love.

Christians say that it would be unfair for Jesus to take our punishment if he were not God. They say Jesus is God and is the one wronged by our sins. We deserve the death penalty for sin. He wanted to set us free from that punishment so he took the penalty on himself and suffered and died for our sins. They say this was fair because Jesus was God. But what would you think of a judge who went to jail for a criminal he wanted to keep out of jail? He would be making a laughing stock of justice. He would be insane.

Christendom asks Jesus to wash away her sins with his precious blood. She does not think that the blood is like bleach and

that it can cleanse the soul of sin like a garment. What she means is that she is telling Jesus to forgive her sins because he has shed his blood to pay the price that they deserve. So the sins are punished by punishing somebody else for them. Some forgiveness that! Somebody being punished for your sin in your place is worse than you being punished!

The Bible always uses cup to refer to God's metaphorical cup of wrath and anger and desire for retribution. Jesus asks God to deliver him from the cup meaning retribution for sinners on the cross. He offers the cup of his blood at the Last Supper to indicate divine vengeance. "In the Bible the image of the cup almost always evokes the idea of God's wrath against sin. Christ, it is written, died 'for sinners'; he died in their place and not only in their favour ... he is, therefore, 'responsible' for all, the guilty one before God!" From *Life and Lordship of Christ* (Sheed and Ward, 1989). That is a Catholic book and shows that Catholicism allows belief in the penal doctrine of atonement. It also shows the horrific meaning of the chalice at Mass. The Mass honours this blasphemous God of vengeance and hate who uses hypocritical love and mercy to suck you in.

If a serious allegation is made against people, evidence is needed to back it up. And it has to be good evidence and be enough and strong enough. The Christians say we make the death of Jesus our own by accepting that Jesus endured capital punishment at God's hands in our place. That accuses us of deserving it and of nailing Jesus to the cross ourselves. It is sheer bigotry when the evidence is insufficient. Also, what makes it worse is that if God can become man to be executed in our place then it follows that he can allow Johnny to be hanged for Thomas's crime. It is so evil and wrong that evidence is actually irrelevant!

What a hideous God the doctrine of blood atonement by Jesus presents to us! What a horrible Jesus who would die for the love of a God like that! When you make injustice against anybody the core of your faith and spirituality, the whole tree is rotten hypocrisy. What right has a Christian to call you guilty of anything when they are so unfair?

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