



CROSS EXAMINED

AND CROSS
ENCOUNTERED

THE IMPACT AND MEANING OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST

— ADRIAN EBENS —

*This book is dedicated to my dear friends
Tor and Azadeh.*



Adrian Ebens, 2020

Copyright © 2019, 2020, Adrian Ebens

The moral right of the author has been asserted.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced for commercial profit, including transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher and copyright holders. Please note the author has highlighted sections of the verses with bold to emphasise a specific point gathered from those texts.

Unless otherwise identified, Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

This book and all other Father of Love publications are available from our website fatheroflove.info to order additional copies please email adrian@life-matters.org

ISBN: 978-0-6488114-2-8

This book was

Proofread by Danutasn Brown, Richard Robison and Lorelle Ebens

Designed by Shane Winfield/Advent Design

Cover Photo by iStockphoto

Internal illustrations by Maryna Kriuchenko—Dreamstime.com

Typeset 11/14.5 Myriad Pro Light

Printed in Australia

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	
Father Forgive Them	4
CHAPTER 2	
Crucify Him!	9
CHAPTER 3	
In All Their Affliction He Was Afflicted.....	13
CHAPTER 4	
Could You Not Watch With Me One Hour?	19
CHAPTER 5	
Sacrifice and Offering You Did Not Desire.....	23
CHAPTER 6	
We Have a Law.....	35
CHAPTER 7	
As Moses Lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness.....	47
CHAPTER 8	
Thy Way O God is in the Sanctuary	53
CHAPTER 9	
Selah.....	60



FATHER FORGIVE THEM

Images flashed into my mind triggering a deep sense of regret. The growing catalogue of memories of my troubled interactions with those around me was becoming a burden to my soul. My search for peace was now in earnest. As I reflected on some of my recent outbursts I felt a sense of self-loathing and a desire to be a different person from what I realised myself to be at that moment. The word that crystallised in my mind at that moment was *forgiveness* and my need for it.

Have you ever come to that point in your life where you realise that the person you are is not someone that you like, and yet after many attempts to change yourself, you arrive back at the same place with the same burdened feeling? How do you escape from the disturbing image that you see in yourself?

This experience proves true the words of the Bible.

...No one is righteous—not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one. Romans 3:10–12 (NLT)

There are many who seek to escape this condition by blinding themselves to their own character flaws and focusing on the faults of others. As all of us have character flaws it is easy to find something in another person to blame

for a difficult situation in which we might find ourselves. Seeking to find peace for our souls in this way will inevitably damage the relationships we have with others and in the end cause us even greater sorrow and loneliness.

The only path to peace and freedom is to take responsibility for our own issues and seek for forgiveness from our Maker.

Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:2-4

It was in exactly this condition that I found myself. I was mourning about my selfishness and the pain that I inflicted on others through my need for attention.

I was raised in a Christian home and I had been taught about the love of God as manifested in Jesus Christ. As a child I had heard these words spoken several times:

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

I was encouraged by the thought that I could come to Jesus to find rest and relief from my burden. I began to reflect on the life of Christ and especially the final scenes related to His death. The story of the Cross has tremendous power for the broken soul that has come to the end of its ability to save itself. The Cross has transformed the lives of millions giving them peace and hope. Yet it contains an enigma. How can a story of betrayal, torture and the slaughter of an innocent man 2000 years ago bring peace to my soul? How is this relevant to me today?

At first, this story feels counter-intuitive. Would it not make more sense to enter a space of quietness filled with sweet aromatic incense and peaceful music surrounded by natural beauty to bring such peace? As the story of the Cross comes to life in the soul, we hear the sounds of soldiers yelling, the loud crack of a whip across the back of Christ, the sickening thud of a large wooden cross falling to the ground as the Saviour faints under its weight. We hear the jeering of the crowd and witness contorted faces delighting in

the scenes of brutality.

What is the secret to this enigma? How can this story give me peace? How can there be serenity derived from slaughter?

There is a strong desire to avert one's gaze from the scene and yet there is this drawing power that wills you to behold the playing out of this drama. Somehow its brutality is strangely familiar and at the same time horrifying. We arrive at the place of the skull—Golgotha. Christ meekly lies down upon this instrument of torture; blood has been streaming from His face due to the mock crown made of thorns that has been beaten into His head by the mob. The men suffering this fate with him resist desperately, seeking to delay the inevitable. The Saviour's back is unrecognisable from the lashings received a little earlier. But what has this man done to deserve this treatment?

A short read through the Gospel story reveals a life filled with compassion, kindness and the most beautiful pictures painted of His Father in heaven who is full of love and kindness. How is it possible that this man should face such barbaric treatment?

The loud chink of metal on metal arrests our attention as spikes are driven through those tender hands that had blessed so many. Those precious feet that had walked the dusty roads of Israel were now pierced and fastened to the wooden cross. The cross is then lifted up and thrust violently into place for all the world to encounter, for this event left on record in Scripture would be told and read by millions from that point forward.

As I pondered this Cross event in my search for relief of my guilt, my heart went out in sympathy to this innocent man who also is the Son of God. My mind traced His steps from Gethsemane to Calvary. I pondered the words of Pilate the Roman governor:

Behold the Man. John 19:5

I watched Him stagger and fall in the garden sweating drops of blood in intense agony. I watched as His disciples fled and left Him to the mercy of the mob. I wondered in amazement how the crowd could choose Barabbas and want to crucify the Son of God. Why are they doing this? What evil has

He done to deserve this? I watched as He was mocked, beaten and abused:

And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified. Matthew 27:28–31

The temptation to blame the heartless actors in this drama was strong, but I then thought of my own heartless treatment of others and realized I was guilty just like them. The words of Christ come to mind:

"...Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me." Matthew 25:40

Had I not laughed and mocked at others? Had I not watched movies depicting brutality and rejoiced when those I understood to be villains met their demise? Had not curse words fallen from my lips against those I deemed had wronged me? My sense of condemnation increased as I read. As I meditated upon the two men dying alongside Jesus I identified with the words of the man who said:

"And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." Luke 23:41

The condemnation I had heaped upon others who had hindered and inconvenienced me previously now came home with force as I beheld Christ upon the Cross. I felt the impact of the words:

"For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." Matthew 7:2

In an eternal moment I became transfixed by my gaze upon the Cross. Although literally 2000 years from this event, I felt myself to be there as a witness to the drama. My world went into slow motion and the noise and the commotion around the Cross went quiet as I looked upon the Son of

God and studied that beautiful face, then the words come forth from His lips.

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” Luke 23:34

As the significance of the words penetrated my soul, a spark of hope ignites within. Forgiveness so long desired and hoped for presents itself before me eloquently. As I kneel before my Maker with tears streaming down my cheeks, I look into the face of love and my heart melted. In that face was not one thread of condemnation. I had a strong sense of the reality that my sinful life was part of the reason He was suffering on the Cross and yet there was no condemnation from Him—only love and forgiveness.

He didn't blame me for the suffering I caused Him. He freely forgave me. The question was and is, will I accept it? Will I believe that I am forgiven? In my case I took it with both hands and claimed my inheritance of eternal life. I told Jesus I was sorry for what I had done and I asked Him to be Lord of my life. Instantly a peace came over me, so healing, so calming, so freeing. The burden of guilt that was crushing me vanished and I felt a joy in my soul that cannot be described but only experienced by those who embrace it.

Like a fountain of living water, the tears poured forth from my eyes in gratitude. The rest that I was seeking was finally mine. The gratitude I felt was immense and I happily submitted to the Lordship of my Saviour.

Such was, and is, my blessed and beautiful encounter with the Cross. It raises many questions. How can something so beautiful emerge from something so horrible? How does this event that played out 2000 years ago feel like it happened today? What are the key elements that brought this about and why should you care about this question of the Cross and your own personal encounter with it? Let's examine the Cross and see.

CRUCIFY HIM!

"... the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify..." Matthew 20:18–19

Why did the leaders of Israel hate Jesus so much? Why were they so intent on destroying Him? How can a man who brought so much joy and happiness into the world be such a threat?

That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. John 1:9–11

These leaders were representative of the entire human race in their natural condition and their attitude towards the Son of God, the anointed One of the Father.

*For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. **He is despised and rejected by men,** A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; **He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.** Isaiah 53:2–3*

The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us." Psalm 2:2–3

The story of the Cross is the clearest moment in human history revealing our collective attitude towards the Son of God in our natural inheritance from Adam. This story proved true the statement of Paul when he said:

The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Romans 8:7 (NIV)

Where did this hostility come from? In the very beginning, God had lovingly instructed Adam and Eve that there was a tree in the middle of the garden from which they were not to eat. To eat from this tree would lead to their death and they would cease to exist. The tree was placed in the garden to give Adam and Eve the opportunity to choose to serve their Creator. Without this principle existing in the garden they would have no ability to exercise their choice. Yet to choose against God is to be disconnected from the source of life.

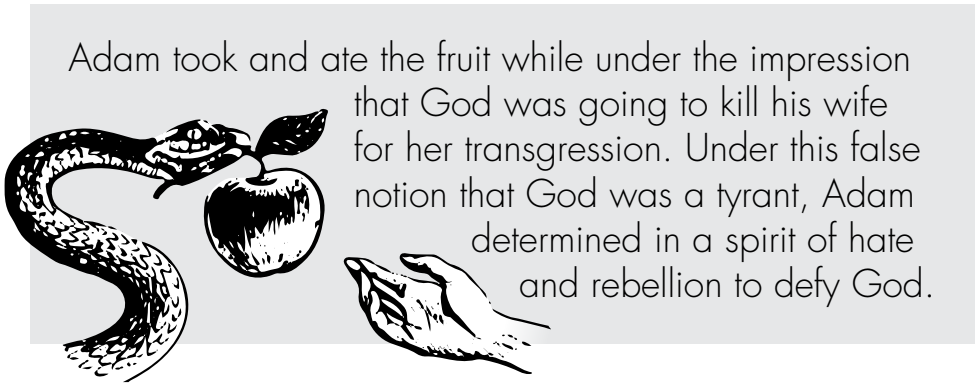
How should the words of God be understood? Were they given in infinite love and care for the wellbeing of Adam and Eve? Satan taking his opportunity to strike through the medium of the serpent was able to suggest a different motive to Eve as to why God had said this.

"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4–5

Satan insinuated that God was selfish and sought to prevent Adam and Eve from reaching their full potential. Placing this motive on God's words changed completely the meaning of what God said would happen if they should eat the fruit. Satan stated his assertion using reverse logic. "You will not certainly die." This suggested that God would ensure they would die because He apparently had the selfish motive of restricting their full potential. This means that Adam and Eve understood that they *must die* rather than

they *would die*. In other words, they understood that God would put them to death rather than God would allow them to destroy themselves in their sinfulness. The difference is monumental.

Adam took and ate the fruit while under the impression that God was going to kill his wife for her transgression. Under this false notion that God was a tyrant, Adam determined in a spirit of hate and rebellion to defy God and stand with Eve in whatever should happen to her. At the same time, Adam also wondered if the words of the serpent were true and this emboldened him to take the fruit and join the serpent in defiance of God.



Here we find the source of man's hatred towards God. Adam had a wrong impression of God's character and acted upon that false impression. In believing that God would protect His own interests by putting others to death, Adam manifested this characteristic when he feared for his life under questioning.

*So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "**The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.**"*

Genesis 3:10–12

Adam feared because he was under the false impression that God had come to kill him. When asked if he had eaten of the tree from which he

was commanded not to eat, he shifted the blame to his wife and to God. In essence, Adam was saying, "If anyone has to die then you should take my wife and kill her and you also should be put to death because you made her!"

All this stems from the false notion that God will kill to protect His interests. As Adam perceived there was no way out other than someone being put to death, he condemns his wife and God to death in order to protect his interests. We note with interest that all communication with man after the fall came through the Son of God who is the one mediator between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5). Thus, Adam sentenced the Son of God to death for making a woman who would tempt him into breaking God's commandment. In those words, "the woman whom You gave to be with me" is contained the seeds of the cry "Crucify Him" that would erupt 4000 years later.

This seed was lodged deep in the heart of Adam and this reality was hidden from even himself. If the Son of God had confronted Adam with the charge that it was Adam's plan to kill Christ, he would have answered in the manner that his descendants did.

"...Why do you seek to kill Me?" The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?" John 7:19, 20

Adam would have completely denied the charge of the Son of God as an over-reaction to a supposedly minor problem. The only way this seed of death could be removed was for it to manifest and then for Adam to repent of his evil towards the Son of God.

This seed of death is the inheritance of every man and woman. Subtly and imperceptibly, we contain this natural rebellion towards God and a desire to harm His Son. This is the reason He is despised and rejected by *all* men, not only the men who physically crucified Him 2000 years ago.

The implications of this are far-reaching and therefore the principle of the Cross is not limited to a single day in human history but rather expands into every day of human history.

IN ALL THEIR AFFLICTION HE WAS AFFLICTED

*All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**. Revelation 13:8*

When Jesus spoke of the Cross He did so in much broader terms than most people realise.

*Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, **let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**" Matthew 16:24*

The principle of the Cross is one of self-denial. Jesus demonstrated this in the events leading up to His crucifixion. He did not defend Himself against the mocking and beating that He received. He bore it patiently even though it caused Him immense suffering. All the power of the universe was at His command. In an instant He might have caused His suffering to end but He submitted to it in order to give His assailants as much time as possible to change their mind about Him. Christ hoped they would repent of their deeds before they would destroy themselves in the destruction of Jerusalem forty years later.

The reality is that everything is held together in the universe by the Son of God.

*And He [Christ] is before all things, and in Him all things consist.
Colossians 1:17*

*... who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of
His person, and **upholding all things by the word of His power**...
Hebrews 1:3*

As the One who made us, Christ is a tender parent who yearns over every man, woman, and child. He desires every one of His children to grow in a happy, healthy, and peaceful environment. His desire is an expression of His Father, who is the source of all things. This means every time one of His children suffers pain, Christ suffers pain. His heart aches for all the suffering of humanity. The prophet Isaiah spoke of this saying:

***In all their affliction He was afflicted,** And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old. Isaiah 63:9*

Every single thing that Israel suffered as a nation and as individuals, Christ went through it with them. But it is not for Israel alone that Christ suffered, but for all those who live upon the earth.

For those of you who have children, how do you feel when your child is in great pain? It pierces your heart and causes much suffering and grief. What if one of your children wounds another one of your children? This causes even more grief. You suffer for your child that is wounded and feel disappointment for the one who inflicted the wound.

How does a parent feel when someone outside the family harms their child? The natural feeling for many is to inflict punishment on that person. How does Jesus feel when one of His children is raped? This causes Him more grief than a human parent feels for their child. The human response to deal with the perpetrator is to inflict punishment on them. For Christ, the perpetrator is also His child. He is wounded by their vile act but if He withdraws His protection from them they will die and He does not want anyone to die.

So, Christ silently suffers while men, women and children hurt, abuse and kill one another.

Every time we sin, we are resisting the appeal of the Spirit of Christ to our soul. Each time we do what we know is wrong, we pierce Christ.

... if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. Hebrews 6:6

Every time a person slaps their partner, Christ feels it. Every time a child is shaking in the corner while their daddy is beating their mummy, Christ feels it all. But He cannot force people to stop doing these things because the use of force does not change the character of those doing the evil. However, it would certainly change the character of God if He used force. But the Scripture says, God does not change (Malachi 3:6). Consider also that if a person perceives God is forcing them, it can make them even more determined to resist and do evil.

When we understand the sufferings of Christ in the pain that humans inflict on each other we get a perspective of the Cross that is so bright that it becomes impossible to live the same way as before this realisation. Consider the following statistics from *worldometers.info*:

According to WHO (World Health Organisation), every year in the world there are an estimated 40–50 million abortions. This corresponds to approximately 125,000 abortions per day.¹ Can we imagine the suffering that Christ experiences in 125,000 of his children dying in this way—every day? What of the feelings of the mother as she tries to come to terms with terminating her pregnancy? There is no way for a human mind to comprehend the suffering that is involved in this statistic.

Today approximately 3000 people will die in car accidents and 2800 people will take their own lives. How much suffering is involved in those statistics not only for those who died but for those left behind? How many women and children will today be abused sexually by men? Statistics indicate that

¹ worldometers.info/abortions/

nearly 25 million people are being trafficked as slaves and over half of these are being sexually abused.² 71% of the 25 million are women and girls.

Today, 137 women will die by the hands of their partner, or former partner somewhere around the world.³ The sufferings inflicted on Christ in these statistics are unfathomable. These are only a few of the statistics reflecting human suffering around the world each day.

Every day, Christ is forced to endure the violence and selfishness of men and women. One might raise the question, "Why doesn't Christ save Himself and come down from this Cross of self-denial?" Every day is a living hell for Him and His dear angels that are sent to protect us and who also must witness these atrocities. Have you ever wished that you were an angel? Think carefully about how much sorrow they must endure in caring for the fallen sons and daughters of this world. Is that a work you would do willingly; forced to watch a child being abused because there is no one asking Jesus to help them or they are shutting their minds away from the light sent to them? How helpless and sorrowful would that angel witnessing such a scene feel?

Consider the predicament of the parent of a drug-addicted daughter in a violent relationship with an abusive husband. How do you make it stop? Do you force your daughter to change? Can you snap your fingers and make all the pain go away? What if your daughter refuses to be helped, can you make her change? Without her consent, you can do little except walk through it together telling her you love her and doing your best to comfort her as she walks through the dark valley. To try to force her to change is to only drive her deeper into the problem.

Our Father and Saviour are in a similar situation. Although they have unlimited resources, they cannot force the wills of their children and they cannot make us change unless we ask for their help and listen to their guidance and follow it.

To the human mind, this Cross seems impossible to believe because it is so different to the way we think. There is no self-defence, self-preservation or

2 <https://www.bustle.com/p/13-sex-trafficking-statistics-that-put-the-worldwide-problem-into-perspective-9930150>

3 BBC.com *The Women killed in one day around the world*. 28 November 2018

self-interest. It is a complete giving of self to the service, comfort and help of your children, most of whom want nothing to do with you.

There are many people who are angry at God because He appears not to care about their suffering. Yet when people refuse to acknowledge Him or keep His commandments, how can He prevent Satan from attacking them when they give him permission to ruin their lives through their refusal to walk in God's ways?

For those of us who believe in God and seek to follow His ways, can you see that the Cross of Christ is not a one-day event but an experience that covers all human history? It is true that Christ died once in the flesh, but this event is the key to open for us the truth that Christ is being pierced every day by human thoughts, words and actions. Consider the following Bible verses:

***I am crucified with Christ:** nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20*

Why does Paul say, "I am crucified *with* Christ"? Why does he not say "I am crucified *like* Christ"? If I am crucified *with* Christ, then does this not suggest that Christ is still crucified through the sinfulness of men today?

*Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always **bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus**, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. 2 Corinthians 4:9–10*

Why does Paul speak of carrying about the dying of the Lord Jesus in our bodies? It is written in the present tense not the past tense. Does this not reflect that in the persecutions and sufferings of those who follow Christ, that Christ suffers with them and is touched by their sorrows and pain?

What then is the human response to this Cross? It is impossible to live for yourself if you think about His suffering every day. How can you live to please yourself knowing that Christ is in utter and complete agony every day?

One day as I was meditating on this subject and feeling totally overwhelmed by His suffering, I asked Him in prayer, "How can I be a blessing to you and help you in light of these things?" The answer was "Can you watch with me

for one hour?" Dear reader, I invite you to reflect on the sufferings of our Saviour. Are the things of this life that you seek to enjoy, that you know keep you from walking more closely with your Saviour worth the suffering that our Saviour feels? For each second this world continues in its present state, Christ endures untold agony. Each breath you breathe is of infinite value because of the sufferings it has cost the Son of God. His ever merciful heart will not force men to change, but He waits with longing desire for us to come to Him that we might find rest.

God does not make us responsible for all the suffering of the world and we can't change the whole world for Him by ourselves. But as we meditate each day on the self-denial of Christ and how much love and patience He shows us through His pain and self-denial, we can be changed to become patient with others and bear with their faults and weaknesses without the need for complaint or irritation.

The ceaseless ages of eternity will never tell the full length and breadth of the sufferings of the Cross this past six thousand years. The selflessness it demonstrates exposes our selfish natures completely. To think of the Cross in this way causes you to either be humbly softened or hardened to resist it and fight against such a deep revelation of the love of God.

Will you allow yourself to be drawn to the love of God in this manifestation of the Cross and consider that Christ has been slain in His Spirit from the foundation of the world until now? If it was not for the revelation of the physical Cross, we would not have known our true natural feelings towards Christ. In the death of Christ 2000 years ago, the seed of enmity in Adam was fully manifested and humanity saw the full results of what was laying in the heart of Adam undeveloped and uncomprehended.

Now that we are aware of this Cross how shall we respond to it?

COULD YOU NOT WATCH WITH ME ONE HOUR?

The story of the Cross of Christ is confronting for anyone who still retains a sense of feeling in their humanity. For the poor souls who have made a career of killing animals or people, such sensitivity is blunted to dangerous levels.

When the disciples watched their Messiah stand before the people and speak with power and conviction of the kingdom of God, they felt proud to be associated with him. It was a different story as he carried His cross on the path to Calvary. The humiliation and death of the Cross is something to which human nature does not like to be associated. This was manifested in the life of Peter as follows:

*From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. **Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"** Matthew 16:21–22*

Peter did not want Jesus to talk about the Cross, let alone actually go through the process. While Jesus was being whipped and beaten, Peter was being cornered as one of His followers, but he denied it.

And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth." But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!" Matthew 26:71–72

To accept the reality of Christ's agony and suffering involves the complete surrender of oneself to walk with Him and come into the fellowship of His sufferings in concern for others. The apostle Paul grasped this reality when he stated:

*Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, **and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death...** Philippians 3:8–10*

In order to have a life of independence from this suffering, you have to pretend it doesn't exist and if you can't pretend it doesn't exist then you have to try and sleep it off. If you want to have a "fun life" with lots of excitement, pleasure, and parties then you must forget about the Cross. If you want to own lots of property and become wealthy, you have to work in a manner to forget the Cross because the Cross places all these things into a perspective of nothingness and vanity.

Jesus tried to prepare His hapless disciples for their traumatic experience through the parable of the ten virgins.

*"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. **But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.**" Matthew 25:1–5*

Shortly after this, Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover on the Thursday evening and then went into the garden of Gethsemane to pray. The atmosphere around Christ was very heavy. The disciples could see that He was greatly burdened. He took Peter, James and John with Him to a more secluded spot to pray.

And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Matthew 26:37–39

Although the disciples could see that Jesus was deeply distressed, they still fell into a slumber and went to sleep! After a while of praying in agony Jesus came to His sleeping disciples to arouse them:

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:40–41 (KJV)

The self-confident Peter had indicated earlier that he was willing to die for Jesus, but when Jesus was dying under the weight of great distress, Peter fell asleep. Why would he do this?

In order for human nature to keep its selfish ambitions alive it must sleep to the sufferings of Christ. If we awake to Christ's sufferings and we feel for Him then we will watch with Him and we will give up our aspirations and desires for the things of this world.

Every day we are invited to consider the sacrifice of Jesus to draw us out of our selfish natures. In the Old Testament services there was a morning and an evening sacrifice. The morning sacrifice took place at around 9am and the evening sacrifice around 3pm. These times afford us the opportunity to think upon the sufferings of Christ and pray for grace and courage to stop causing Him pain by speaking and doing things that pierce Him.

We will speak more about the sacrifices shortly, but first we will see that the followers of Christ continued to come together to pray at certain times of the day while beginning to realise the meaning of Daniel that sacrifice and oblation had ceased.

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. Acts 3:1

The hour of prayer was the time around the evening sacrifice, but the apostles simply went to pray and reflect on the sufferings of Christ and to pray for grace to live only for Him.

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, I invite you to stop twice a day and devote some time to think of the immense suffering that our Father and Saviour are going through in bearing the agony of all Their children around the world. Jesus asks us today "could you watch with me for one hour?"

SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU DID NOT DESIRE

One of the main reasons that the true heartbreak of the Cross is missed is because of the institution of the sacrificial system in the Old Testament.

*Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall **take for himself a lamb**, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of **the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight**. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.' Exodus 12:3–7*

*"An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and **you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings**, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, **and I will bless you.**" Exodus 20:24*

The impression these texts give is that God wants people to kill animals in sacrifice to Him and that when they do this He will bless them. When John the Baptist presents the Messiah to the world he presents Him as the Lamb of God.

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! **The Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29*

If Jesus is the Lamb of God that was sacrificed, then the logical inference many people draw is that God wanted His Son to be killed in order to pay for our sins. Within this paradigm, mankind is not murdering the Son of God but doing what God wants.

***Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.** When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. Isaiah 53:10*

If it pleased the Lord to bruise His Son on the Cross in sacrifice, then the impression many receive is that God needed this sacrifice to satisfy His anger against our sin. The reasoning is that the justice of God needed to be satisfied. In order to show how bad our sins are, Jesus had to take our place in death to satisfy the Father's justice. A very popular Christian song portrays this idea as follows:

*In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
**'Til on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied**
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live, I live⁴*

This idea of the Cross twists things around completely. It presents God as the one who demands death and this hides from us the truth about our natures

4 *In Christ Alone.* By Natalie Grant 2008.

as we discussed in the second chapter. If God required the death of His Son because of our sins, then our natural hatred towards Him is obscured. Firstly, we can reason that it was simply those Jews and Romans who killed Him. Secondly, it could be said they were simply doing what God desired for the sacrifice to be completed. It is this line of thought that produces ideas like the following.

*According to the experts who have restored, translated and authenticated the manuscript, the so-called lost gospel of Judas says that **Jesus asked his close friend Judas Iscariot to turn him over to the Romans because he wanted to escape the prison of his earthly body.** The 26 pages — 13 sheets of papyrus with writing on both front and back — depict Judas as a Christian hero, not a villain.*

The document's existence was revealed yesterday in Washington at a news conference held by the National Geographic Society, which was part of an international effort to save the only known surviving copy. It had been badly damaged in a strange journey from a limestone box in an Egyptian tomb to a safety deposit box in Hicksville, New York.

***“The gospel of Judas turns Judas’s act of betrayal into an act of obedience,”** said Craig Evans, professor of New Testament studies at Acadia Divinity College in Wolfville, N.S., who helped interpret the document.⁵*

For those of us who believe the Bible is the Word of God, such an idea is far from the truth. Yet the questions remain. Did God require these sacrifices? Does His justice demand this?

***Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;** My ears You have opened.
Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Psalm 40:6*

The Bible plainly states that God did not want sacrifices. It also plainly states that He did not *require* burnt offerings and sin offerings. Further to this we read:

5 Anne McIlroy, Was Judas a True Christian Hero? *The Globe and Mail* April 7, 2006

“For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.” Jeremiah 7:22–23

How can God say that He did not command the children of Israel about offering burnt offerings and sacrifices when it appears obvious that He did command them to offer the Passover and established the sacrificial system? Is the Bible contradicting itself here?

“Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him [a]commander over My people Israel, that he may save My people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me.”
So when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to him, “There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over My people.”
1 Samuel 9:16–17

In this story, God is commanding His prophet Samuel to anoint a man to be king over the people of Israel. In the immediate context it appears that God is the one who is commanding these things. The broader context is that Israel wanted a king and God gave to them *their* request.

But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” So Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also.” 1 Samuel 8:6–8

The Bible confirms that God did not want to give Israel a king but allowed them to have one.

“O Israel, you are destroyed, but your help is from Me. I will be your King; Where is any other, that he may save you in all your cities? And your judges to whom you said, ‘Give me a king and princes’? I gave you a king in My anger, and took him away in My wrath. Hosea 13:9–11

What does it mean that God gave Israel a king in His anger? The anger of God is to let man have the wrong things that man desires.⁶ The Bible shows in several places God commanding things to man that man desires. Consider another example.

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them.” Numbers 13:1–2

Reading this text in the immediate context it appears that God desired Israel to spy out the land of Canaan. But when we read in a wider context we see something different.

“And every one of you came near to me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.’” Deuteronomy 1:22

It was Israel that wanted to spy out the land, so God commanded them to do what they wanted. Why does God do this?

Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Romans 5:20 (KJV)

When a person has sin in their heart the first work of God is to show the person their sin. The human heart has the capacity to deceive itself. It is blind to its own sinfulness. When we are outside of the desires of God, He will command the things that we desire in order for them to grow and that we might begin to see why they are sinful. But He does not do these things without the opportunity for the person to know that these things are wrong.

6 For an expanded study on this see chapter 13 of the book *Acts of our Gentle God* available at fatheroflove.info

The commands are interpreted by men to mean God desires them because men are blinded to their own sinfulness. They also choose to believe this because then it makes God look like them and this justifies their sinfulness.

We discovered in chapter two that the seeds of death were in the heart of Adam. He charged the Son of God with the responsibility for the actions which he believed incurred a death sentence and feared God would execute upon him. In order to escape death he shifted the blame upon his wife. He was willing for her to die in his place. Adam thought that God's justice demanded death. He also reasoned that blame could be shifted and that another could pay the debt he believed God demanded. In order for Adam to see what was in his heart, God commanded the sacrificial system. The sacrificial system is a reflection of what man is thinking, not what God is thinking. The sacrificial system is a mirror into the mind of man. In this context you can harmonise the texts of the Bible about the sacrifices.

So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams." 1 Samuel 15:22

God simply wants us to trust and obey Him by trusting in His grace. He did not desire to give men sacrifices, but He had to command that which was in the heart of man to show him his sinfulness. But why did God give all these detailed instructions to Moses about the sacrificial system?

*"And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. **Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do."** So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. Exodus 19:6-8*

When the Lord came to Israel He wanted them all to be priests and to trust in His grace to give them all the promises of the covenant. But Israel told God that everything He promised to give them they promised Him they would do instead. In telling God they would do what God had promised them, they

were actually rebelling against God.

*“For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’ **Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.”** Jeremiah 7:22–26*

The Word of God tells us that from the very day they came out of Egypt they rebelled against what God wanted for them. The night they ate the Passover lamb, they revealed their rejection of Christ for they were rejecting Him. The events that took place approximately 1500 years later in the rejection of Christ were only a repeat of what Israel did on that Passover night. They walked in the counsels of their own evil hearts. God was showing them what they were doing in the instructions given concerning the Passover lamb. It was a revelation of their sinfulness. In fact, the slaying of the Passover lamb was a revelation of their rejection of God’s gracious offer from the first time Moses came to them in Egypt.

*“Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.’” So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; **but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.** Exodus 6:6–9*

The Israelites blamed God for their Egyptian oppression rather than repent of their idolatry and apostasy. Why would they refuse such a loving and merciful offer of the Promised Land unless in their hearts there resided anger and blame towards God for their situation? These are the seeds of the Passover lamb. They would have killed the Son of God if He had come to them in person just like what happened 1500 years later.

Despite all this, God was able to teach them that He would protect them in their belief in the blood of the slain lamb sprinkled on the doorpost. The Lord taught them about His mercy through their false ideas of atonement. He began to teach them about His mercy and grace.

The second set of commandments was made by the hands of a man and God wrote on them. It represents the combination of God's work and man's work.



Within weeks of the law being given on Sinai they had broken their promise to obey by dancing around the golden calf. In anger, Moses broke the two tables God had cut out and upon which He had written the law of the Ten Commandments.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke." Exodus 34:1

The second set of commandments was made by the hands of a man and God wrote on them. It represents the combination of God's work and man's work. The people had rejected God's gracious offer to give them everything freely. They wanted to do it to demonstrate their piety and goodness. Therefore

God commanded them the things that were in their hearts in order to cause sin to abound. Their hearts were full of sacrifice and offering. Is this not what they did around the golden calf? So God gave them commandments to show them the extent of their carnal mind.

“Therefore I also gave them up to statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they could not live” Ezekiel 20:25

How can it be that God gives things to His people by which they cannot live? He gives them the things that they want. How far would the human mind travel in order to try and appease God with sacrifices?

*Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. **King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep.** So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God. 2 Chronicles 7:4–5*

Where did God require all these things? The Bible says that God did not desire sacrifice and offering. In the beginning He commanded Adam once a year at most to offer a lamb to show him what was in his heart.

***When it was time for the harvest,** Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. Abel also brought a gift—the best of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift. Genesis 4:3-4 (NLT)*

The above translation says that when it was the time for the harvest that they would come and offer their sacrifices.

***And it cometh to pass at the end of days** that Cain bringeth from the fruit of the ground a present to Jehovah. Genesis 4:3 (YLT)*

The literal reading is “at the end of the days” or “the end of the year” and this is when the harvest occurred. Notice the commentary of John Wesley on this passage:

In process of time—At the end of days, either at the end of the year when they kept their feast of in-gathering, or at the end of the days of the week, the seventh day; at some set time Cain and Abel brought to

Adam, as the priest of the family, each of them an offering to the Lord; for which we have reason to think there was a divine appointment given to Adam, as a token of God's favour notwithstanding their apostasy.—John Wesley commentary on Genesis 4:3

The same Hebrew word has been translated in other places as *end of the year*.

*"You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from **year to year**." Exodus 13:10*

*Moreover his mother used to make him a little robe, and **bring it to him year by year** when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 1 Samuel 2:19*

How does one animal a year per family turn into 120,000 lambs and 22,000 oxen being offered by one king? Men were willing to sacrifice their own children to please the god they imagined. What does the Scripture say?

Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:7–8

God wanted people to trust Him and receive His grace to obey. He didn't desire sacrifices to be appeased. A text that comes to mind in response to this is the following:

And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. Hebrews 9:22

Why does the law teach that without the shedding of blood there is no remission, pardon, or freedom? It is because the law is a mirror to show what is in the human heart.

*Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for **by the law is the knowledge of sin**. Romans 3:20*

It is not by the deeds of offering the sacrifices of the law that men are justified,

but it is through seeing that offering sacrifices is what is in our nature and then repenting of this sin. The law brings the seed into the open so that it might be confessed. It is not God who demands that “without the shedding of blood” there can be no forgiveness, but rather it is man who believes this and he can’t believe God will forgive him unless he does a sacrifice. For those who have ears to hear let them understand.

So the law concerning sacrifices is giving to us a knowledge of the sinful heart of man. We remember what the Scripture says:

“For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.” Jeremiah 7:22

The only possible way to harmonise this statement with everything written in the Torah⁷ is to understand that the Torah is a mirror into the appeasement-based mind of man and showing him this sin in himself.

Despite the depraved nature of man desiring to sacrifice and kill something to appease God, through this depravity God was able to teach man about His willingness to forgive them and point them forward to the Messiah to come who would demonstrate the character of the Lamb. The revelation of this character would turn the hearts of men back to God. For it is the character of God revealed in Christ that turns men’s hearts toward God and makes them one. This is why Christ could say the night before He died:

*“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I **have finished the work which You have given Me to do.**” John 17:3–4*

If Christ finished the work that His Father gave Him to do the night before He died then God did not need His Son to die, He only needed to show us His loving merciful character. Man needed Christ to die because to us in our natural state there can be no forgiveness without punishment. For us to accept the forgiveness of God the human race had to see Jesus die. Thus just before Jesus died He cried ***“It is finished!”*** (John 19:30).

⁷ Torah is the Jewish term for the law of God as revealed to Moses and recorded in the first five books of the Bible.

What was finished? He had done the deed that men needed to see to believe they could be forgiven. This is why God commanded the sacrifices, because men needed to see and believe that someone would die as a substitute for them.

To comprehend the true importance of this question is to present the Cross of Christ in an altogether different light, a light so pure, so precious and so freeing. Will you step into this light?

WE HAVE A LAW

In one encounter with the leaders of Israel, Jesus stated:

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” John 8:44

When the leaders of Israel spoke to Jesus, they spoke the words of Satan because Jesus told them that Satan was their father and that they would do the desires of their father, Satan. These words of the Jewish leaders reflect the mind of Satan and the whole human understanding of justice.

The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” John 19:7

And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient [better] for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” John 11:49–50

The leaders of Israel had judged Jesus in their minds. According to their reading of the law, Jesus was worthy of death. Nicodemus appealed to his

fellow leaders on this question.

“Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?” John 7:51

They would have killed Jesus much earlier except for the Roman control of their country.

Then Pilate said to them, “You take Him and judge Him according to your law.” Therefore the Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,” John 18:31

The way the leaders interpreted the law of Moses was to inflict the penalty of death on those who transgress the law. Many laws attracted a penalty of stoning. When Jesus interpreted the law of Moses, He used the law differently.

*Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. **Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned.** But what do You say?” This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, **“He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”** And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, **“Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”** She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, **“Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”** John 8:3–11*

The Pharisees caught this woman (and man for that matter) in the very act. According to their understanding of the law, she should be stoned to death. Jesus wrote in the sand in such a way as to bring conviction. In telling them

that they needed to be without sin to have the moral right to stone her, they became convicted of their own sin. Rather than ask for forgiveness, they condemned themselves and crept away from His presence. He freely forgave the woman of her sin and invited her to sin no more. This brought the woman such relief and gratitude to her Saviour. Christ used the law to save, while the Pharisees used it to kill.

This reveals the difference between God's justice and Satan's justice. Many people believe that God's justice demands death. They believe that mercy and justice are in opposition to each other and when God's mercy apparently runs out the long arm of His law crushes those who are guilty.

Let us consider the Scriptures.

[1] Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne;

[2] Mercy and truth go before Your face. Psalm 89:14

Notice the colon after the word throne. The colon in English separates two independent clauses where the second clause explains the first. This means that the explanation of God's justice is to show mercy. Justice is to do the right thing and the right thing for God to do is show mercy in light of the truth. The question is how long does God's mercy last?

*For the LORD is good; **His mercy is everlasting**, And His truth endures to all generations. Psalm 100:5*

*Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! **For His mercy endures forever**. Oh, give thanks to the God of gods! **For His mercy endures forever**. Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! **For His mercy endures forever**: To Him who alone does great wonders, **For His mercy endures forever**; To Him who by wisdom made the heavens, **For His mercy endures forever**; Psalm 136:1–5*

From God's perspective, His mercy never ends, but for those who reject Him there is no other god that is merciful, so they expect to be punished for their sins and God allows their own wrong choices to overtake them, thus allowing their sense of justice to be fulfilled.

The LORD is known by the judgment He executes; The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Psalm 9:16

What is God's judgment for the wicked? He lets them fall into the consequences of their own decisions. He does not prevent this. That is the right thing to do isn't it? If they ask for mercy, then He can extend them mercy to help them get through the consequences, but if they expect no mercy and don't ask for it then they cannot receive it even if it is offered. Sadly most people think that God is like us. They think that's God's justice is the same as ours.

"These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes." Psalm 50:21

If God's justice demanded death, then God would be the originator of death. If God ever had the intention of taking the life of one of His created beings for breaking His law, then the principle of death resides in God. But when we look at Jesus the revelation of the Father we only see life. We don't see death.

*Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life.** He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." John 11:25*

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the **life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us.** 1 John 1:1–2*

God did not create a death decree for sin. Sin is self-destructive. The wages of sin is death. It is something that is earned from engaging in sin. God does not pay sin's wages, sin does. The Bible does not say the wages FOR sin is death, it says the wages OF sin is death. The difference is vast.

The Bible reveals to us through the stories of the Old Testament how the death decree came into the universe.

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Romans 15:4

Satan is the one who conceived of a death decree for transgression. We notice in the story of Daniel and the lion's den the process of how a death decree was introduced.

*It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. **Then this Daniel distinguished himself** above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; **and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.** So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. Then these men said, **"We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God."** So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever! **All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.**" Daniel 6:1-7*

This story is written for our learning. Darius is a type of God the Father and Daniel is a type of Christ. Daniel was in the highest position after the king and the king thought to place him over the whole kingdom. This created jealousy in those under Daniel. Through this jealousy the leaders that were under Daniel devised a death decree that was aimed at Daniel. The king had not devised this plan, but it was presented to him and he signed it not knowing its implications. God knew the implications of Satan's attempts to destroy Christ who was over him. Satan was jealous of the Son of God and influenced many of the angels to join him in seeking to overthrow Christ. When Satan

drew the human race into his net, God allowed the plan of Satan to go into effect that would lead to the death of Christ. Most of the world thinks that the death of Christ is to satisfy the demands of the King, but actually it was to reveal the secret desires of Satan to destroy Christ.

In the moment of what Satan thought should be his greatest triumph, he revealed his murderous design and all sympathy for him in heaven was gone.

And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den. Daniel 6:24

Darius the king gave to the men who plotted the demise of Daniel the very thing they hoped to do to Daniel. Our Father in heaven will allow Satan to receive the destruction that he wanted to give Christ. Christ was in the lion's den of the path to the Cross overnight and into the next day. Like Daniel He came forth from the den on the resurrection morning and defeated those who sought to destroy Him.

The point of this story is that it was the persons under the Son of God that hatched the idea of death to those who do not honour the Father. God did not originate the plan, but He allowed it to go forth to expose the designs of Satan that were hidden from everyone. The law of the governors of Babylon was to provide justice for the king. It was to represent his justice; but it was a counterfeit justice that ended up destroying those who hatched it.

In another story from the Old Testament we see the difference between the justice of the king and one of his sons.

Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, "What city are you from?" And he would say, "Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Israel." Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you." Moreover

Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice." And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.
2 Samuel 15:2–6

The name Absalom means *father of peace*, but hidden under this name was a character of hatred and war. Absalom wanted his father to punish his half-brother Amnon who sexually assaulted Absalom's sister, Tamar. Because king David did not execute a sentence against Amnon, Absalom despised his father and determined to overthrow him. Absalom took matters into his own hand and executed Amnon with the justice he felt was appropriate. Then he set about winning the hearts of the kingdom of Israel.

*But Absalom urged him; so he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, "Watch now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, **and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon!' then kill him. Do not be afraid. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and valiant.**" So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and each one got on his mule and fled.*
2 Samuel 13:27–29

Satan, who was originally Lucifer, was unhappy with the fact that the Son of God was exalted. He felt it was an injustice to himself and he determined to overthrow the Son of God. When the King intervened and made clear His judgment, Lucifer determined to overthrow the kingdom. He won many of the angels to his side. The issue at hand was one of justice.

"Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice."
2 Samuel 15:4

The insinuation of Absalom was that the king was not providing justice for his subjects, but this claim was false. Earlier in the book of Samuel we read:

*So David reigned over all Israel; **and David administered judgment and justice to all his people.** 2 Samuel 8:15*

David was providing justice to his subjects, but it was not the justice that Absalom thought was needed. David showed mercy because the mercy of God was with him and established his kingdom:

*“He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. **But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.**” 2 Samuel 7:13–16*

Absalom did not want a kingdom built upon a justice that shows mercy. He wanted a justice that executed wrongdoers without mercy. This story reflects the original war in heaven. Satan convinced many of the angels that his views of justice were needed to secure the kingdom. Absalom convinced his countrymen that his ideas on justice would improve the kingdom and he stole the hearts of the men of Israel. Satan stole the hearts of many of the angels and the rest of the angels were curious about his ideas and sympathetic to him. We know this because Satan was not completely rejected from heaven until he murdered the Son of God. It was after this that he was cast to earth.

*And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”
Luke 10:18*

***His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.** And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. 5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Revelation 12:4–5*

Satan had taken a third of the angels to be physically with him. He attacked the church on earth and tried to devour her child which was the Son of God born in Bethlehem. It was after Christ returned to heaven that Satan was cast

out of the minds of all in heaven.

*And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. **So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.***

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down." Revelation 12:7-10

There had been a war at the beginning of time between Christ and His angels and Satan and his angels. One third of the angels followed Lucifer into darkness and left heaven.

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Jude 1:6

It is true that God cast them out, but they were cast out by the lies they began to believe (Revelation 12:4). God gave to them the desires of their heart. They imagined God to be harsh and merciless and they fled from their own false image of Him.

Satan had intended to establish his own throne which included his different ideas of justice. He wanted to rule all the creation of God.

*"For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, **I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;** I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'" Isaiah 14:13-14*

The story of Absalom indicates that the whole nation was influenced by his ideas of justice. The fact that Satan could still come to heaven as earth's representative indicates that his ideas were not fully understood even by

the angels of heaven.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." Job 1:6-7

The appearance of Satan at the royal council has a counterpart in the actions of Absalom in taking his father's concubines and passing his seed to them in an attempt to corrupt the royal line.

*And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong." So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and **Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.** 2 Samuel 16:21-22*

Satan's words were mind seeds and they had an influence on the universe. Until the seed of murder against the Son of God that resided in Adam was manifested 4000 years later in the crucifixion of Christ, the intentions of Satan were not truly known. This allowed Satan to attribute his own characteristics to God. As long as Satan could conceal his true identity he had power to deceive concerning what God was truly like. He has this power because he was the first of the angels and the other angels had confidence in his knowledge of God. This is what allowed him to frame mischief through the law of God.

Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You? Psalm 94:20

Satan sat upon the throne of iniquity and used the law of God to insist that there should be a death decree for violations of the law. The story of Daniel in the lion's den reveals this process. The story of Absalom shows that it was the issue of justice advanced to secure the hearts of the kingdom. All these stories are reflective of the war that was begun in heaven and then came to

this earth. The issues in the conflict have not changed.

Yet after the death of Christ, Satan was exposed as to his real intentions. Christ revealed to the universe the true loving character of God. Christ showed that God loved His enemies; He turned the other cheek and He humbly submitted Himself to the most horrible death without any self-defence. Satan's, and his agents', treatment of Christ on earth exposed Satan's true character. Christ's revelation of God showed Him to be entirely opposite in character. Thus, through death Christ destroyed the kingdom of him who has the power of death.

*Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity **so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil**— Hebrews 2:14 (NIV)*

The Pharisees were infected with Satan's ideas of justice. This is why they desired to kill Christ. Christ did not seek to kill them, nor did He threaten to kill them.

*And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. **Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.**" Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! **What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."***
Matthew 26:62–66

When Jesus tells the Pharisees of His coming in glory, He only states that they will see Him. The Pharisees on the other hand condemn Christ to death. The contrast is stark. The evidence is there for those who seek it. God's justice does not demand death but rather it is Satan's justice system that demands death. God allowed His Son to die to reveal the hatred of Satan and his kingdom's justice system.

Within this context the Cross is transformed in its meaning. God did not require the death of Christ to satisfy justice. Yet men stated that we have a law: we as humans have a law written into our hearts that require death for forgiveness to be effected.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Romans 7:23–24

Would you be free of this law of death? Would you be free of a justice system that demands death for the transgressor? Look to Jesus upon the Cross and see the ransom price that we all understood was required for justice to be satisfied. It was Satan's justice that was satisfied upon the Cross because he was the kidnapper that stole the hearts of the children of God and demanded a ransom. We, as the kidnapped ones, believed the kidnapper that the only way for us to be free was to pay the ransom of death. God did not set the ransom price, Satan did.

AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS

Within the framework that Jesus died to satisfy Satan's ideas of justice in order for mankind to accept that God would forgive them, we are now ready to cross examine the words of Jesus concerning the serpent on the pole.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." John 3:14

For many Bible students, the parallel between Jesus being placed on a cross and the serpent lifted up on a pole seems quite mysterious. How are the two connected?

*Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. **And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."** So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against*

you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us.”

So Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

Numbers 21:4–9

The reason the serpents came is that through their murmuring the people broke down their hedge of protection:

He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him. Ecclesiastes 10:8 (KJV)

Those who honour God by keeping His commandments have the protection of His angels. When people persistently break His commandments the angels are not able to protect the people as easily.

The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. Psalm 34:7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever. Psalm 111:10

God did not send the serpents, but he allowed them to come because His angels were not able to protect the Israelites anymore due to breaking His commandments. But the people thought it was God who sent the serpents. Their understanding of justice is that transgression must be punished. So, they thought that God was actively killing them because of their sin. Moses was commanded to make a brass/bronze serpent. This metal is important because it is not a metal that occurs naturally in the ground. It is an alloy of two metals that God made, and they are copper and zinc. It was one of Cain's sons that created bronze.

And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah. Genesis 4:22

Bronze is a man-made metal taken from elements that God has created and fused together. Bronze is a metal that sometimes has negative implications in Scripture. Under the lists of curses for disobedience the Bible mentions this:

And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. Deuteronomy 28:23

After listing the apostasy of Israel and their violations of the law, He tells them:

“Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they are all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver.” Ezekiel 22:18

The serpent that was made of bronze represents the justice of the serpent made in the hands of man. The serpent is a symbol of Satan.

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Revelation 12:9

After some of the Israelites had been killed by the serpents and they repented of their murmuring they had a belief that the sin was dealt with. They acknowledged the uplifted serpent as their destroyer for their sins. Those who were killed were a sacrifice for these sins. Through this man-made or brass idea, God was able to teach them that they could receive forgiveness for their sins and, therefore, be healed. They could not comprehend that their idea of justice was from Satan, so God used their idea of justice and led them to repentance and healing.

In the same way, Christ was lifted up and was surrendered to serpent justice in order that we might look to the Cross and believe we could be forgiven. Only through the death of the Son of God could we as a human race believe that God would forgive us and therefore this is the ransom price to set our minds free.

In our natural state, Jesus provided a substitutionary atonement for our sins. This atonement is symbolised by the serpent of bronze because that is the kidnapper's price for our freedom. It is the satisfaction of serpent-justice and

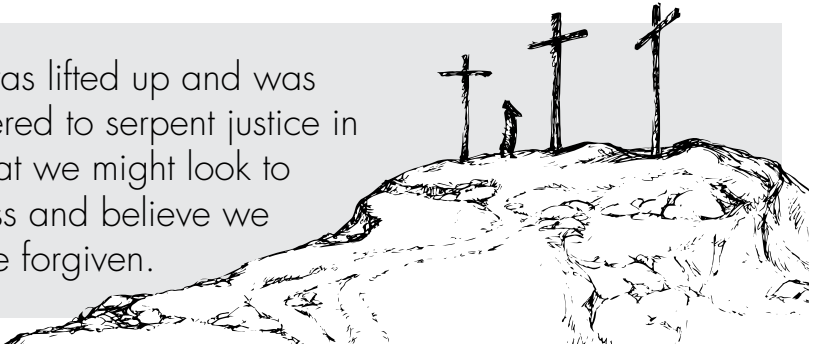
is evidenced by brass. It is not of heaven's creation but of man's creation and of the line of Cain specifically.

In this chapter you are being offered a completely fresh approach to understanding why Christ had to die for our sins. The Christian church is adamant that God required the death of His Son for our salvation. Yet the Scriptures state clearly:

*Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened.
Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Psalm 40:6*

God did not require this death, but He knew that once we had fallen into the hands of Satan He could not convince us that He would forgive us unless His Son would die in our place.

Christ was lifted up and was surrendered to serpent justice in order that we might look to the Cross and believe we could be forgiven.



If God required the death of His own Son, then the offering of sacrifices would be enthroned in the worship of God forever. But the very opposite occurred. Through the death of Christ the whole principle of offering a sacrifice for sin ceased.

*"Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week **He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.**"
Daniel 9:27a*

Christ would bring an end to sacrifice and offering. Christ was lifted up and He has drawn all men unto Him (John 12:32). Once our system of brass justice is satisfied and we accept forgiveness, we can receive the Spirit of God to be in us and have our minds transformed. We are no longer under a

schoolmaster. Once our minds are transformed, we no longer need to strike the rock but only speak to it.

*“Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. **Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water;** thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.” Numbers 20:8*

Sadly, Moses did not follow God’s directions and speak to the rock. The murmuring of the people angered him and he displayed the symbol of sacrifice in the striking of the rock, thus perpetuating the false understanding of justice and how it is satisfied. This is why God had to allow Moses to die before going to heaven. The people had to see that this idea was wrong. They needed to see that God wanted them to speak to Him and simply ask for forgiveness without anything being struck.

This weakness on the part of man does not overturn the designs of God. In fact, He works with our justice system to bring us to Christ. Within the framework of the smitten rock God draws us to the belief that we are forgiven and then the waters of life gush freely from the Rock, Christ Jesus.

And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. Galatians 3:24–25

The ministry given to Moses for a stiff-necked people was to amplify human sinfulness in the mirror of the law of God.

But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away. 2 Corinthians 3:7

It is a glorious thing for a man to see his own sinfulness. The natural man is blinded to his own wickedness, but the law given through Moses awakens

us to our great need of the Gospel in Christ. It is that blessed mirror that diagnoses our lost condition. Without this mirror, we could not be saved for we would not know our perilous state.

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:17 (NIV)

Of course the grace of Jesus has been available from before the foundation of the world and we, today, also need this mirror in the law to teach us our lost condition.

*Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but **according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began . . .** 2 Timothy 1:9*

Both the Law and the Gospel have operated together from the beginning of the fall of man till the present day. Both are needed to restore man to complete relationship with God.

The story of the bronze serpent is important for many reasons. It reveals to us that Christ was lifted up to pay the demands of a justice principle introduced by Satan and embraced by humanity. At the same time as we trace the bronze through the Sanctuary at the centre of Israel's worship we discover further evidence that our beloved Father did not desire for His Son to die, but rather gave Him up for us that we might believe.

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Romans 8:32

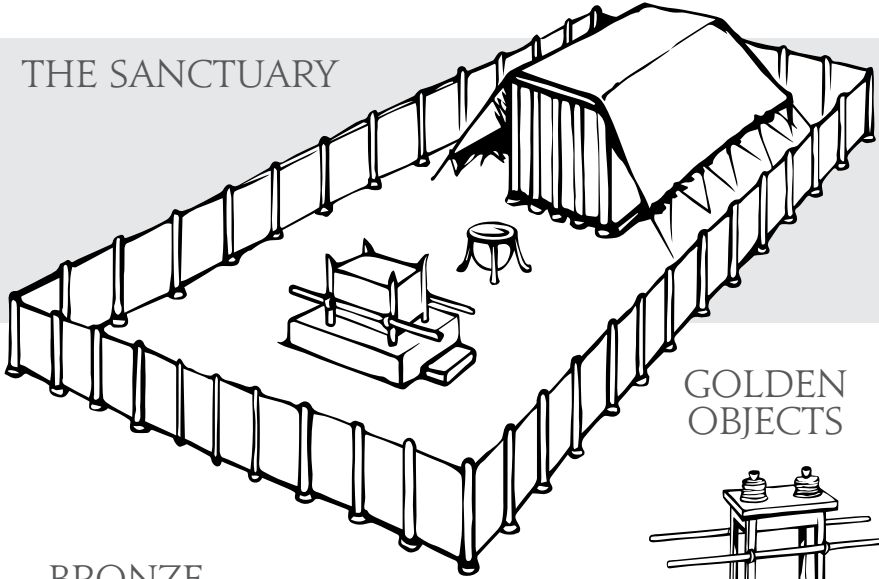
THY WAY O GOD IS IN THE SANCTUARY

As a child I recall taking on the task of reading through the Bible. When I got to Exodus I found the going very tough. Reading about all the instructions for the building of God's Sanctuary was extremely tedious for a 12 year old. Yet within these instructions there is precious truth that explains the Gospel to us. As we know a picture paints a thousand words; so on the next page are some pictures to give us a quick overview of the Sanctuary.

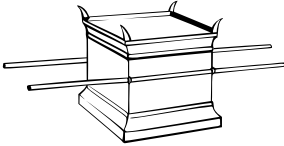
It is interesting to note the metals used for the furniture of the Sanctuary.

FURNITURE	METALS USED	LOCATION
Altar of Sacrifice	Bronze	Courtyard
Laver	Bronze	Courtyard
Candlesticks	Gold	Holy Place
Table of Showbread	Gold	Holy Place
Altar of Incense	Gold	Holy Place
Ark of the Covenant	Gold	Most Holy Place

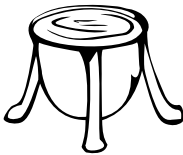
THE SANCTUARY



BRONZE OBJECTS



Altar of Sacrifice



Laver

GOLDEN OBJECTS

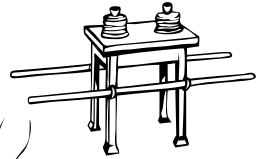


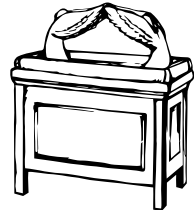
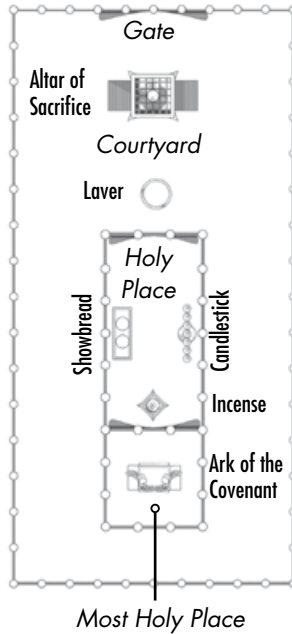
Table of Showbread



Altar of Incense



Candlestick (Menorah)



Ark of the Covenant

The Sanctuary walls were made of golden boards held together in sockets of silver.

*“For the framework of the Tabernacle, construct frames of acacia wood. Each frame must be 15 feet high and 27 inches wide, with two pegs under each frame. Make all the frames identical. Make twenty of these frames to support the curtains on the south side of the Tabernacle. **Also make forty silver bases**—two bases under each frame, with the pegs fitting securely into the bases. . . . **Overlay the frames with gold, and make gold rings to hold the crossbars.** Overlay the crossbars with gold as well.” Exodus 26:15–19, 29 (NLT)*

The inside curtains used in the Sanctuary were held together with gold, while the curtains on the outside of the Sanctuary were held together with bronze.

*“Make the Tabernacle from ten curtains of finely woven linen. Decorate the curtains with blue, purple, and scarlet thread and with skillfully embroidered cherubim. . . . **Then make fifty gold clasps and fasten the long curtains together with the clasps.** In this way, the Tabernacle will be made of one continuous piece.” Exodus 26:1, 6*

*“Make eleven curtains of goat-hair cloth to serve as a tent covering for the Tabernacle. . . . **Then make fifty bronze clasps, and fasten the loops of the long curtains with the clasps.** In this way, the tent covering will be made of one continuous piece. The remaining 3 feet of this tent covering will be left to hang over the back of the Tabernacle.” Exodus 26:7, 11–12*

Those who are sanctified by the Gospel have all bronze removed from their characters. Their words are pure words.

*A word fitly spoken is **like apples of gold in settings of silver.** Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear. Proverbs 25:11–12*

The outside curtains of the Sanctuary that still have bronze in them represent our flesh. These bronze threads will be purged out at the Second Coming when our mortal bodies shall put on immortality.

*Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. **For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.***
1 Corinthians 15:51–53

The heavenly city will be made of pure gold which is representative of the characters of those who dwell there.

*The construction of its wall was of jasper; **and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.*** Revelation 21:18

“I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich.” Revelation 3:18

As we noted in the previous chapter, bronze is a product of man (Genesis 4:22). It represents an attempt to fuse together the things of God according to man’s thinking. The way to God is in the Sanctuary. As we progress from the outer court to the Most Holy Place, the bronze is purged out and only gold and silver are left. As we progress in the Christian walk we are to leave the courtyard behind because it is left to the Gentiles.

*Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. **But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles.** And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.”*
Revelation 11:1–2

The courtyard is for the sake of the Gentiles. It is the place where sinners contaminated with bronze thinking first encounter the Gospel. The altar of sacrifice represents the Cross of Christ. The Cross is represented by bronze metal. Thus, it is a man-made item; it is something that man needed to satisfy his principles of justice. After we encounter the Cross, God causes our sinfulness to abound in the mirror found in the bronze laver.

*He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, **from the bronze mirrors** of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Exodus 38:8*

As men look upon themselves in the light of the law their sense of condemnation increases to the point where they despair of their life. When the Spirit of Christ comes in we are deeply convicted of sin.

*“And when He has come, He will **convict the world of sin**, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” John 16:8*

For those who truly believe God forgives them as they, in their desperate state, look upon the ransom while standing beside the altar of sacrifice, grace abounds towards them, and they begin to acquire the gold that is true faith in the soul and is purchased in the furnace of affliction.

Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. Romans 5:20

As the gold of our faith increases, the bronze of our former thinking is purged until finally we have no more consciousness of sin.

*For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshippers, once purified, **would have had no more consciousness of sins.** Hebrews 10:2*

Then, there is no more thought of offering sacrifices, there is no more striking the Rock but only speaking to the Rock.

*But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. **For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.** Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “**Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.** Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.’”*

*Previously saying, “**Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them**” (which are*

offered according to the law), then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Hebrews 10:3–10

Jesus died once for all as symbolised by a bronze serpent on a bronze altar. But once we are filled with the Spirit, the Cross takes on a completely different focus. The emphasis is the beautiful self-denial of Christ and the revelation of the Father's character in Him. The altar of sacrifice (striking the Rock) is replaced by the altar of incense (speaking to the Rock)—The shedding of blood at Calvary is brought into the context of the shedding of blood in Gethsemane where Jesus completed the work His Father gave Him.

"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." John 17:4

Look up and live dear sinner. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world (John 3:16–17). Within the framework of the golden altar, God sent His Son to reveal His character and to take our guilt upon Himself that we might believe in the forgiveness of God.

Our beloved Father did not send His Son to say to us "This is what I would have done to you for your sins but I decided to slay my Son instead in my anger." What Father would do this to His children? Re-examine the Cross from the golden domain and see something so precious that you will weep for sheer joy.

When you come out of the Courtyard of bronze and into the Holy Place of gold and silver you will see God's justice is very different to that of men. We are told:

*Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the LORD that He may have mercy on them. **Yes, turn to our God, for He will forgive generously. "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD. "And My ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than***

your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts. *The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with My word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it. **You will live in joy and peace. The mountains and hills will burst into song, and the trees of the field will clap their hands!** Where once there were thorns, cypress trees will grow. Where nettles grew, myrtles will sprout up. **These events will bring great honor to the LORD's name; they will be an everlasting sign of His power and love.**"* Isaiah 55:7–13 (NLT)

It is my earnest prayer that you will see the Cross of Christ in a broader more beautiful light purged of the brass justice of fallen men and fallen angels. Come into the sweet light of our Father's love where His agape has the power to remove all fear.

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found
T'was blind but now I see*

*T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear
And Grace, my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed*

*Through many dangers, toils and snares
We have already come.
T'was grace that brought us safe thus far
And grace will lead us home.*

*Amazing grace, How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now am found
T'was blind but now I see*

SELAH

To my beloved Saviour, you came to me in the darkness of my sin. You assured me of the Father's forgiveness in a way that I could comprehend and accept. I weep for the agony you suffered for me. Filled with your Father's compassion, you braved the dark night of this world to rescue your poor lost sheep.

How slow of heart to comprehend the reality of what you have done. Eternity cannot reveal to me the depths of your love. It is an inexhaustible fountain from which I will ever drink and never weary of its taste.

It is my desire to follow you, precious Lamb, wherever you go. You have purchased me at such an infinite cost. Although sometimes I feel so unworthy of your love, I trust you will never leave me nor forsake me. Thank you for sending me your precious Spirit to comfort me and bless me.

Dear beloved Saviour, I desire greatly that those also that you have given to me in this message be with us also in the Father's kingdom. I feel your love for them in my heart and my desire is great for their salvation. I thank you that I can taste of your love for your children and be united with you in your desire for the world to truly know our Father.

Grant to me your sweet Spirit that I may glorify you as you so beautifully

glorified the Father for us. May you be manifest in the flesh in us that the hearts of men may receive the atonement, for you have committed to us the work of reconciliation.

Grant to each one who reads this book the eye salve to see the true beauty of the Cross and that we all will cease to fear to be crucified with you that every knee will bow and every tongue shall confess that You are Lord to the glory of our beloved Father.

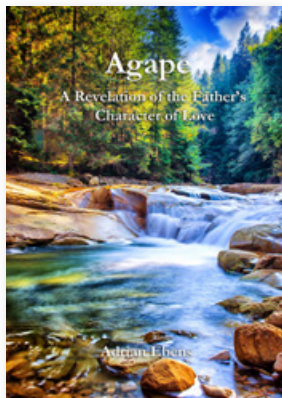
In your precious name, Lord Jesus

Amen.



Other books available at **fatheroflove.info**

also available in audiobook for download



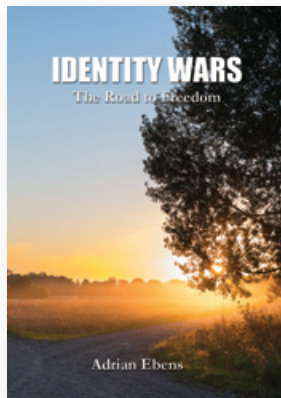
Agape

Take a deeper look at the Bible evidence that the God of the Old Testament is the same as what Jesus revealed in the New Testament. The book is a detailed and systematic examination of the facts that provide a direct way to look at several of the stories of the Bible that have not been previously considered. Just on 300 pages, this is a serious read for those really looking for answers. A great sequel to this booklet you have in your hands.



Original Love

Marriage as an institution is under serious threat. Why do so many people have a bad experience with marriage and relationships in general? *Original Love* looks at the original relationship described in the Bible to see what things we might learn that our own relationships might be enhanced and enriched. 44 pages packed with vital principles for a vibrant marriage.



Identity Wars

Identity Wars is a journey of self-discovery. It is an invitation to learn of your value in a purely relational context. This book reveals the principles that will help you escape the performance-driven mindset of this world and find freedom in your most important relationships.

Why was the Cross required
and who required it?

Why was the Cross necessary
for our salvation?

Was God's wrath satisfied
by the death of His Son?

What is God's justice and is
it different to our justice?

Why did Jesus compare Himself
to a bronze serpent on a pole?

What does the Israelite Sanctuary
tell us about the Cross?

Adrian Ebens is an international author
and speaker residing in Brisbane,
Australia. He is married to his beloved
Lorelle and they have two adult sons.



fatheroflove.info



9 780648 811428