

Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

by Danny Bond

Jesus had to die to satisfy God's justice and demonstrate God's righteousness, providing a way for us to be forgiven and approach God.

Duration: 52:28

Scripture: Leviticus 16:14, Hebrews 7

Topics: "Atonement", "Redemption"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher compares studying the book of Hebrews to swimming underwater with your eyes open. He explains that just like swimming underwater, it can be difficult to move forward in understanding the book. He then discusses how Jesus, as the second Adam, can undo the ruin caused by the fall of the first Adam. The preacher also emphasizes that Jesus glorified God through defeating the devil, showing love and devotion to the Father, and declaring the righteous consistency of God. Additionally, he explores the concept of God passing over sins and explains that sin must be punished for justice to be served.

Transcript

Father, thank you for the Word of God. Thank you, Lord, for the Holy Spirit who has come to lead us step by step through the way of the Christian life. Thank you, Lord, for the thrill of learning the Bible line upon line and precept upon precept.

Thank you, God, that you have made available for us all the growth in the Christian life we could ever ask for. I pray, Lord, that you would bless us each one here as a part of this church with full Christian growth. Help us to go on, Lord, to be full-bloom Christians.

We know we have young Christians here, Lord, that are just beginning to send forth a bud, as it were, and we have those that are blossoming out. May all of us, though, Lord, go on to full bloom, full Christian growth. We do pray, Lord, that you would use this time together today to inch us forward, as it were, into the light, and we ask, Holy Spirit, that you would truly illuminate us to this end, and we pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. So, if you take your Bible and turn to the book of Hebrews, to chapter seven, Hebrews chapter seven, we are slowly moving through the book of Hebrews, and that is not unusual for being in the New Testament. I don't mind galloping through Genesis, but I like to move slow in the book of Hebrews and

Corinthians in the New Testament, so these things can sink in and we can understand them as we go.

But as we have been going verse by verse through the book of Hebrews, we have been making a journey, you might say, to the center of the book, and here we are now in, really, the center of the book of Hebrews as it relates to the teaching and the argument that the author has to give to these precious people. And as we have come to the heart of the book of Hebrews, which is chapter seven, we are really, in many regards, in the most important part of the book, and these things must be understood if we're to get the overall message of the entire book of Hebrews. And I'd like to launch right into the section we have before us today in chapter seven.

We've gone as far as verse 10. I'd like to read down from verse 11 down to verse 19, and then begin to talk about some of these things. In verse 11, it says, Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the law, what further need was there for another priest that another priest should arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change then of the law, for he of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar, speaking of Jesus as opposed to the Levites.

For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning the priesthood. And yet it is far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For he testifies, you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

For on the one hand, there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness. For the law made nothing perfect. On the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope through which we draw near to God." Now do you remember when the writer first brought up the issue of Melchizedek, and then he stopped and he digressed and he said, now there's a lot of things I want to say in regards to that, but you're not able to handle it because you haven't been moving forward, you're not mentally geared up to go where I want to go with the truth I'm going to give you.

It's intricate, involved truth for minds that are focused on Christ and used to thinking through biblical, truthful issues. And thus, if you're stuck in an immature place, you've been lazy and slothful, and your brain isn't used to processing truth in your heart, then you're not going to be able to go where I want to take you. And so he hammered away some very strong exhortations to get right, get focused, and then away he went into these things that he said were very difficult to understand, and we are in the middle of those things right now.

And they are in fact difficult to understand just the way the author said they would be. Now, you read through this section, and we are in this section all about Melchizedek. We began to look at it last time.

And you read certain statements like verse 11, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood, there wouldn't be the need for another priesthood. And you read in verse 18 of the weakness and the unprofitableness of this whole situation, this whole process that God had going on with the Levites and the sacrifices, the blood and all of this in the sacrifices. There we are told in certain terms that there was a certain weakness and unprofitableness of that system.

Then you read in verse 19 that the law made nothing perfect. And then on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope through which we draw nearer to God. Now, these things then are hard to

understand.

What do you mean the law made nothing perfect? Why do you speak of the Mosaic Covenant and the priesthood and the law, the Ten Commandments, the ceremonies, the washings, and all of the different things, the diet, the way they dressed? Why do you speak of these things as being weak and unprofitable? They came from God. And why do you say there was no perfection through the Levitical priesthood and thus there had to come another priesthood? I mean, these things are hard to understand. Perfection here, of course, has to do with the fullness of salvation.

And Chuck Swindoll years ago was preaching through this passage, and I remember he said, this is so difficult, he said to his congregation, he said, you know what I would liken this passage to? I would liken this passage to being in a swimming pool, swimming underwater with your eyes open. He said, that's what it's like to me, studying for this to teach it. And he went on to say what he meant by that was that when you swim underwater, it is hard to move forward, number one.

When you swim underwater with your eyes open, you can see, but everything's kind of fuzzy, right? And he said, that's how I feel moving through Hebrews at certain times. It's hard to move forward, and it's all kind of fuzzy to me. And I understand what he meant by that, and I think you do too, having come this far in the book of Hebrews.

We are really stretched from time to time, and a lot of that is because we don't have the sensitivity to the issues that the Hebrew people had that they grew up with and really focused their entire life on. And we just don't have that kind of understanding that gets us into the richness of some of these passages. But I have come to realize that sometimes as we move through the Bible and we try to grapple with the truth that's being taught, and we try to really receive and understand the message, sometimes we are hindered because underneath we have questions that are unanswered, questions in general that relate to the text.

You know what I mean by that? Sometimes we have articulated, long-standing questions that bother us. They remain unanswered, and thus we carry them to a certain passage, and as we're moving through the passage, we're distracted because we keep going back to those unanswered questions, and we read this, and it brings the question to the surface as it were, and we say, well wait, I don't even understand how this could be, let alone then how this could be. So sometimes we have these unanswered questions, and they're very clearly articulated in our own thinking, and they thus then distract us and hinder us, because if we can't understand that, we can't understand this.

That's kind of what the writer was saying earlier by their lack of maturity, what a problem there was. But further, sometimes we have questions in our minds that are buried deep. You could say they're deep down in our hearts, and they're not even really articulated well and clearly to our own thinking.

They just are there, they exist as burdens, burdens of confusion you might say, burdens of wonderment, where unarticulated questions lie below the surface, and we kind of carry them with us, and not even knowing that they distract us and hold us back from grasping truth that is presented to us. Do you understand what I'm saying? And what happens is that often in a message, that unarticulated question will be dragged to the surface, and all of a sudden articulated in your own thinking, you say, yeah, I've been wondering about that. I didn't quite put it in those terms, but I've been wondering about that for the longest time.

Glad you brought it up. And then it gets answered, and all of a sudden now you can relate to the text with clarity. You understand that whole process? I go through that all the time.

Well, as we've been moving through Hebrews, and as we've come into this passage last week, and as we're looking at it now, I realize this is the kind of passage where that can occur. Because as you look at this whole idea of the old system of sacrifice, and you're being told it just simply wasn't good enough, you say, well, why not? I mean, well, hey, God put it into place. Why wasn't it good enough to forgive sin? Why did there have to be something beyond that? Or why couldn't the Levitical system, the sacrifice of the animals, the blood shed on the altar, and all of that, why wasn't that enough to bring men to the perfection of full salvation? Why did there have to be something beyond that? Well, to help us answer these questions, and just to shed a little more light on the truth that is before us in this passage, I want you to turn in your Bibles back to the book of Romans, to chapter 3, if you could, to verse 25.

I want to look at verses 25 and 26. If we could sort of digress over into that section of the Bible and come to grips with some of the great truth that is taught there, I think it will help us to move through Hebrews for the remainder of our time in the book to give us some more light and help us to connect some of the truth that is there. In Romans 25 and 26, we have one of the most unique passages of Scripture, I think, to be found anywhere in the Bible.

And yet it is so important, and it's almost one of those vital, pivotal truths that are very rarely addressed, but once you understand it, it sort of clears up many things. Let's ask this question. Why did Jesus have to die so we could be forgiven? Why did that have to happen? Why did Jesus have to die anyway? Let's ask that question and then read the text.

Speaking of Christ, in verse 25, it says, "...whom God set forth to be a propitiation by his blood through faith to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed to demonstrate at the present time his righteousness, for this reason that he might be just." Who? God. "...and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ." So here we have this very loaded section. It's just loaded with truth about Christ and his death and why he had to die.

And so we ask the question then, why should our forgiveness depend upon Christ's death? Again, why wasn't the old system good enough? Why did God have to send his Son? Why did he have to actually die and go through all that he did that we could be forgiven? Why did this have to occur? To put it another way, why doesn't God just simply forgive us? I mean, he tells us to be forgiving, doesn't he? He tells us to go out and when men and women offend us, that we are to respond in a loving attitude and just simply forgive them. Now, you notice that in the process nobody has to go out and get killed. He just says, you be forgiving.

Well, let's ask this question. And if it isn't articulated in your mind at some point, it's down there, believe me. Why doesn't God just do that? Why doesn't he do what he tells us to do? Hey, you be loving, you be forgiving.

Nobody has to die in the process. Just be a loving type of individual. Let it go! All right, God, why don't you let it go? Why does there have to be this horrible, ghastly event at the cross where the Son of God who never sinned himself must die? Why don't you just let it go, God? You tell us to.

Have you ever thought that? Well, maybe, yeah. I don't want to say anything about it, but someone put it together like this in sort of a dialogue. If we sin against one another and we are required by God to forgive

one another, why can't God practice what he preaches and be equally generous? Nobody's death is necessary before we forgive each other.

Why then does God make so much fuss about forgiving us and declare it impossible without his Son's sacrifice for sin? It sounds like a primitive superstition which modern people should long ago have discarded. So, again, why did Jesus have to die? Let's begin with a few preliminary thoughts. First of all, we must realize there is the seriousness of sin that must be considered here.

The seriousness of sin. Years ago, Archbishop Anselm, at the end of the 11th century, said this. If anybody imagines that God can simply forgive us as we forgive others, that person has not yet considered the seriousness of sin, or literally what a heavy weight it is.

There is a seriousness of sin as God sees it to be considered. There's another thought here, a second thought. It might also be expressed that you have not yet considered the majesty of God and his utter holiness.

Why did Christ have to die? Well, there's the seriousness of sin, but beyond that there is the majesty of God and his utter holiness that enters into all of this. Third, there is the reality that God said to man that the day you sin, you shall surely what? Die. And so there are all of these matters before us.

Did man die immediately? He died spiritually? Yes. Did he die physically immediately? No. So these are all matters that have to be dealt with because you see God has sort of broken, it seems, some of his rules along the way.

And so there is another answer to the question of why Jesus had to die, and that is that Jesus had to die for God's sake, for the sake of the name of God. And this is in this passage before us. And what it does is it sweeps in all the issues that we're studying over in Hebrews and sheds light on it.

And I just thought, well, you know what? I'm thinking about these things. I'm thinking about this passage, but unless I bring them out to the people, they won't connect what I'm connecting. And so I wanted to come over here and do that.

So we have in these two verses before us the reality that in spite of all the sacrifices of the priests under the old covenant with Israel, these verses in Romans tell us there was still the need for a full propitiation for God. There was still the need for a full demonstration that God truly is righteous and doesn't go around breaking his own rules. That sin demands punishment.

There was still the need for full clarification on these issues, and there was still the need for full justification for man so that he could come to that perfect salvation that the old system could not provide. So let's talk about these issues. Let's talk about the fact that in spite of all the sacrifices that had been given, all the blood shed, all of the animals slain, there was still the need for a full propitiation before God for man's sin.

Look at verse 25 of Romans 3. Speaking of Christ, it said that God set him forth to be a propitiation, and he did this by his blood. What is a propitiation? It's a word that we never use in our society. Its best translation is a satisfaction.

God sent forth Jesus Christ to die on the cross and raise again to shed his blood to be a satisfaction unto God. It is the idea that Jesus satisfied God's justice and got for our sin, God's justice against our sin, that God's holiness demanded. Our sin against God demanded justice, punishment, and thus God's justice

had to be satisfied because of the holiness of God.

If I, as a sinner, am going to be able to approach God, then the issue of my sin must be dealt with. For that to be dealt with in a satisfying way to the justice of God, Jesus Christ his son had to come and shed his blood. Now, the link with all of this to what we're studying in Hebrews comes by looking at the Greek word that is translated propitiation.

It is the Greek word *hilasterion*, *hilasterion*. And the same word, *hilasterion*, that we find in the Greek and Romans, is found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which is called the Septuagint. It is a Greek rendering of the Hebrew Old Testament.

It's what they used in the days of Paul and Jesus and all of that early Bible activity time. Anyway, the Septuagint was a common translation they used in those days. And in the Septuagint in Leviticus 16:14, it speaks of, I'll just read it to you, speaks of all we're dealing with in Hebrews.

It says, And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, that's the priest, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat and eastward. And before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle of the blood of his finger seven times. Now, the mercy seat was that place inside the holiest of holies where the high priest went once a year.

And it was literally the top of the golden ark, the ark of the covenant. And you had there inside the holy of holies two angels made of gold with their wings stretched forth. And they were sort of facing each other, but they were actually looking down toward the inside of the ark.

Now, the covering of the ark was what was called the mercy seat, and that's where the blood was sprinkled. Inside of the ark, you had the stone tablets upon which were written the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were inside of the ark because they were there in that place with the blood on top of the mercy seat.

All of that spoke of the reality that here was the law of God yet unmet because man kept breaking it. And so, here is what the law of God demands. It's on the tablets.

Because man was unable to meet up to that standard and that requirement, the blood is then put on top of the ark of the covenant, and the top of it is called the mercy seat because there the blood brought mercy for the violated law. You see? Are you with me? So, when you read in Leviticus 16:14 of the mercy seat, if you look in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, you will find the exact same word for mercy seat, *hilasterion*, as we find in Romans 3:25. Now, I know this is kind of difficult stuff to think through at this early hour of the day, but I know that the most brilliant people in the church come to the first service. That is why I'm trusting you to follow me.

As John Blanchard said, now I'm working you hard and I intend to keep doing so. So, here is then this whole picture of God's mercy with the unmet demands of the law that must be satisfied so the blood is there to meet that demand. When we are told in Romans 3:25 that God set forth Jesus to be a propitiation, it is the same word used for mercy seat in the Old Testament.

That's what I'm trying to tell you. And the idea of the mercy seat is that it turned the place of judgment, which would have otherwise been a place of judgment because of all the violations of that law, it turned that place of judgment into a place of mercy by the shedding of the blood to cover the unmet demands of the law. So, what happens then is that because Jesus is our mercy seat, He becomes then the satisfaction

to God for all of the violations we have given of God's holy law.

He then satisfies the demands of God's holy law that we could not satisfy and so He satisfies God's justice completely and then we as sinners are able to come to a satisfied God and have nice, intimate, warm fellowship with Him. That is what propitiation is all about. Jesus satisfying God's holy demands in our place and so then Jesus becomes our substitute and He has as our propitiation bore the judgment that you deserve and that I deserve.

So, we read in Romans 8.32, I'll shall He not with Him also freely give us all things. God did not spare His Son. He bore every bit of the wrath that our sin deserved.

Every bit of your wrath that you deserved, every bit that I deserved, every bit that every human collectively deserved, He piled it all together and then He dumped it all on Christ. That's what it means when it says He did not spare Him. He let it all out on Jesus and thus Jesus took all the wrath of God and satisfied God's holy demands and His justice.

In the book, Major Bible Themes by Schaeffer and Walvert, on page 60 they describe all of this in a very wonderful, clear way. By His substitutionary death, they write, the unmeasured righteous judgments of God against a sinner were borne by Christ. The result of this substitution is itself a simple and, is itself, let me back up, the results of this substitution, is itself as simple and definite as the transaction.

The Savior has already borne the divine judgments against the sinner to the full satisfaction of God. And so, the point then becomes about propitiation is that God's throne for you has become a place of mercy rather than a place of judgment. And that is why you can come in and fellowship with God and go back out alive.

Did you ever think about that? Otherwise, you'd come in to fellowship with God, oh God, here I am to fellowship with you, you'd never come back out alive. Because the sin demands death and you should die. And we don't.

We live instead because Christ has fully met the demands that our sin generated. And so, Jesus became the mercy seat for us, the place where judgment, the judgment of God is swallowed up by the mercy of God, all of that by His sacrifice. And that is why we read in Psalm 85, 110, that mercy and truth are met together and righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

And that happened at the cross. And so, there was a need for full propitiation and Jesus met that need. Further, there was a need for a full demonstration of the fact that God was indeed righteous and that is why He died.

Look at verse 25 of Romans 3 again. Speaking of Christ, whom God set forth to be a propitiation by His blood, through faith, notice this, to demonstrate His righteousness. Because in His forbearance, God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.

Now watch this again, verse 26, to demonstrate, He says it a second time, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Paul says two times that Jesus Christ went to the cross to demonstrate the righteousness of God. And really, that is the purpose of salvation.

That's the highest purpose, to demonstrate God's glory, to demonstrate His righteousness, that He is totally, utterly, completely righteous. And that is why we have been saved, to demonstrate that as well. We get caught, I think today, in a selfish society, with this attitude that has us so often rushing in to see what's in it for us.

God, I'm here to get blessed, man. I mean, hey, you talk about the abundant life and we become preoccupied with blessings, rather than preoccupied with the glory of God. I have found in my life, over the years, that if I get preoccupied with the glory of God, and I seek to live to declare His righteousness and His glory, I inherit and experience all the blessings I can possibly manage.

And yet, if I seek to live just to get the blessings and I don't live for the glory of God, I find myself not getting as many blessings as I would like. Salvation is all about declaring the righteousness and the glory of God. We need to understand that.

That's what Jesus was demonstrating at the cross. David Brainerd understood it. You know what he saw heaven as? We think of heaven, I think, so often as, man, I get out of this body.

I'll be free from sin. Oh, I'm going to experience the glory of God. The tingles I've had here, when I've been filled with the Spirit, are nothing compared to the tingles I'll have there.

Oh, I hate my apartment. I'm going to have a mansion there. I can see now how I'm going to decorate it.

Oh boy, it's just going to be great. What's in it for me in heaven is fabulous. It's interesting, the first thought David Brainerd had about heaven, his most primary thoughts.

He was a missionary to the Indians here in this country years ago. Died at 28. Left a great legacy.

He said this, heaven is where you go to glorify God in an unhindered way forever. On his deathbed, David Brainerd said to his biographer, Jonathan Edwards, my heaven is to please God and glorify him and give all to him and to be wholly devoted to his glory. I do not go to heaven to be advanced for what I can get, but to give honor to God.

It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high place or a low seat there. That doesn't matter to me. What matters to me is that I get to go to heaven and live and please and glorify God forever.

Christ died on the cross for the glory of God to declare his righteousness. Brainerd knew that salvation was for God and not for him, primarily for the glory of God. See, in all of that thinking, just understanding that opens up our heart to the teaching of this text that we have in front of us, this full demonstration of God's righteousness and glory of the cross.

See, the primary purpose in Christ's death was to glorify God. In John 17, 1, Jesus spoke these words and lifted up his eyes to heaven, it says, and said this, father, the hour has come. Glorify thy son.

Glorify your son also that he may glorify thee. In John 21, 19, this he spoke signifying by what death he should glorify God. You see, you see the intent of the cross to glorify God? And when he had spoken this, he said unto him, follow me.

Now, how then did Jesus glorify God at the cross? I love going through issues like this, because it's highly theological. These are lofty theological things, but at the same time, they have a way, as I think of them, of

dislodging me from my own selfish Christian existence. You know what I'm talking about? How did Jesus glorify God? Well, he did that basically in four ways.

One, he manifested his love, God's love, that he would be gracious enough to save us. That glorifies him as being beyond the beyond of that he would even want to do that. Second way that he glorified God was by defeating the devil.

He demonstrated God's righteousness and glory by defeating the devil, the cross, and that's a cosmic, that is a fantastic universe-wide, you know, it includes all the other dimensions of reality, the angels and all that they have seen to this point. I mean, it goes far beyond what we understand. He defeated the devil, and the ramifications of that are endless.

A third way that he glorified God was by showing his own love and devotion to the Father. And a fourth way that he glorified God was by declaring the righteous consistency of God, showing how consistent God is. Now, let's see how Paul begins to unfold this great truth.

He said that he did this to demonstrate his righteousness concerning the sins that God had previously passed over. What does that mean? Does that mean that God just ignored sins and was kind of mushy and said, well, you know, you're really wicked, but I, you know, you're my friend. I'll let it go.

I'll just let it go. Now, I'm going to judge these other people. I'll kill them, in fact.

I'll open up the earth and swallow them, but you, I like you. You're one of my favorites. I'll pass over your sin.

Come on. You just come along with me and be my pal. Is that what it's talking about? Did God do that? Well, this is all about the fact that this is the way it seemed that God had passed over sins and that he was supposed to be this holy God, but here it is.

He seems to be letting people go and not require justice of them. And so this is all here to clear God's name. God sent forth Christ to declare publicly his righteousness.

Notice his righteousness, not Christ's righteousness, not righteousness for you, but to declare God's righteousness. And here's why. Because in God's forbearance, God had passed over sins that were previously committed.

Now, stay with me. This is what we're studying in the book of Hebrews. Every time an offering was made, every time an animal had its throat cut, the blood drained out, every time that blood was then put on the mercy seat, God in his forbearance then simply passed over the sins of the people and did not judge them for their sin.

But those offerings were inadequate. Those offerings could never really take away sin. They could only temporarily cover it because God said it would.

That's all. And so those offerings always looked forward to the day when the true and perfect offering would come. Now you begin to see the weakness of the old system.

Only the blood of Christ can be the propitiation for God, satisfy him. A blood of an animal, the blood of an animal could never satisfy God. And so God in his forbearance passed over the sins that were committed because he was looking toward the cross, you see.

So Jesus died to declare his righteousness, to give a demonstration, a full demonstration of that. Let's go on and let's get into the full clarification of how this all worked out. Look at verse 26.

To demonstrate at the present time his righteousness that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Romans 3 26. Here's the problem.

A God of love wants to forgive sinners. But on the other hand, a God of holiness must punish sinners and uphold his righteous law. So the problem then becomes, how can he be the God of righteousness and be just, and at the same time be the God of righteousness and justify people who have sinned? The God of love wants to forgive, the God of righteousness must punish the sin.

How can he be both at the same time? That's a pretty big problem, isn't it? Well, it's like this. Imagine a judge in a court hearing your case and you're guilty, absolutely dead guilty, just guilty. And he listens to your case and here's how he responds.

He says to you, you know, I've always known about you and everything I've known about you and in spite of everything I've known about you, I want you to know I've always loved you. I know you're just as guilty as you can be, but I've always known about you and I've always loved you. It's just so nice to be face to face with you here now.

Further, in spite of the fact I know you're guilty and in spite of the fact I know you deserve to be punished, not only have I always loved you, but I've always had this desire to adopt you. Now, what I would like to do is just forget about it all and waive the sentence that you deserve and the punishment and not only are you not going to go to prison and not only will you not be executed, but I'm going to adopt you. I want you to come and live at my house.

And I happen to be the wealthiest man in the land and for the rest of your life, I just want you to enjoy. You can have all my wealth at your feet. The resources of all that I have will be yours.

Come on into a great life. You mean I'm not going to die? No. You mean I'm going to have a great life? Yes.

You mean I'll have resources abundant at my fingertips? Yes. Come on. It's too good to be true.

Yes, I know it is, but it's true. Well, that's exactly what God has done, you see. Now, how could He do that? And be fair and be just.

Be fair to His own attribute of righteousness and infinite holiness. Well, to be just, sin must be punished. It must be.

Somehow the punishment must be given out. He can't just say, I love you so much I'm going to forget about it. He must do it because God cannot deny who He is and what His attributes are.

And so in Genesis 2.17, we read there, But of the tree of knowledge God said of good and evil, You shall not eat of it. For in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. There must be the punishment of death for sin.

In Romans 6.23, God Himself has stated in His Word that the wages of sin is death. Where there is sin, there must be death. In Ezekiel 18.20, God Himself said again, The soul that sins shall surely die.

Now, from the garden when God gave that statement and issued that decree and that sentence on sin, all the way down to the time of Jesus Christ, you have men sinning and not dying. Furthermore, you have men in relationship with God and not dying. And you have men such as Moses going into the glory of God so deep into the glory of God that when he walks out to be with other people, his skin is saturated with light and he's glowing physically and he didn't die.

Well, that's kind of scandalous, you know. Think about it. Here is this great, righteous, holy, infinitely holy God who says, With all authority from heaven, you sin, you die.

Well, Moses didn't die, God. And neither did Abraham, God. And actually, Adam didn't die until he had lived hundreds of years, God.

This is pretty scandalous, God. God, you shouldn't go around making statements. You're not going to follow up on God.

Oh my, can you imagine the scandal among the demons as they talked about a God who spoke with such authority and never followed through. This is scandal in the universe we're dealing with here. And so, sin must be punished.

But you see, for at least, probably more, but at least 4,000 years, going back to the time, from the time of Christ 2,000 years ago, back to the time of the garden, could have been 4,000, could be longer. But at least 4,000 years, there was scandal in the universe from the time man sinned and wasn't immediately dead. Kenneth Weiss put it this way.

It was this passing by of sin before the cross in the sense that God saved believing sinners without having their sins paid for, thus bestowing mercy without having justice satisfied, which would make God appear as if He condoned sin. That had to be set right in the thinking of the human race. The matter was always right in God's eyes, for He looked forward to the satisfaction of the broken law at the cross.

You see, it makes no difference to God whether He saves sinners before or after the cross. The cross is an eternal fact in the reckoning of God. Of course, the cross had to come, for a righteous God could not pass by sin, but must require that sin be paid for.

His justice must be satisfied and His government maintained. And so, the cross did come, you see, and God was not being unfaithful to His own Word. God does not live bound in time, so it only appeared to be that God was waffling on the statements that He had made.

These verses in front of us in Romans show us how God worked out a way to redeem sinful man and to be just and at the same time be His justifier. And He worked it out by means of a substitute. This is tremendous.

You see, here's how it works out. This is why you can be forgiven through Jesus Christ. Because Adam in the garden as a first man, when he sinned and brought sin down on the human race and polluted the human stream, he sinned as our representative.

We are all held guilty as human beings because our representative in the garden blew it, and we are held accountable because we're inseparably connected to Him. And so, God will condemn every man who rejects Jesus Christ because he is guilty, just as guilty as Adam because Adam as our representative for the human race blew it and God holds us all accountable. Furthermore, we're all His kids in His stream.

His offspring is polluted with His sin. And so, if we can then become guilty because of a representative who went before us, in the same way then we can become righteous by a representative who will represent the human race. And that is what salvation through Jesus Christ is all about.

See, 1 Corinthians 15, 21 and 22 says, For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive. Charles Spurgeon summed it up this way.

He said, I came to understand that salvation was possible through vicarious sacrifice, and that provision had been made in the first constitution and arrangement of things for such a substitution. I was made to see that he who is the Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, had of old been made the covenant head of a chosen people, that he might in that capacity suffer for them and save them. Inasmuch as our fall was not at first a personal one, for we fell by the first Adam, it became possible for us to be recovered by a second representative.

We are saved by him who is undertaken to be the covenant head of his people in order to be their second Adam. I saw that before I had actually sinned, I had fallen by my first father's sin, Adam. I rejoiced that therefore it became possible, in point of law, for me to rise by a second head and representative.

The fall by Adam left a loophole, as it were, of escape, and another Adam can undo the ruin that was made by the first. Did you follow that? He preached that to his congregation. That tells me the people in the 1800s could follow that kind of thinking in a sermon, and that's why I'm preaching this sermon to you, because I believe you can follow it too.

And I'll preach it to the ones who stay awake the whole time, and the rest of you, the two of you that are snoozing, can snooze on. And so to justify the guilty, the sin must be punished on a substitute. And this is the principle that God always uses in the Old Testament, and that's what we're talking about in Hebrews.

But those were types. They were not the type, the nature of those types, those animals, was such that they could not fully be the ultimate substitute. And so you have in the Old Testament, on the Great Day of Atonement, the scapegoat.

And they would take the blood and go, the high priest would go into the holiest of holies and sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat, and you know what that's all about now. And then they would take a second goat and put their hands on him, signifying placing the sin of the people on that goat. And then they would turn him loose, and he would run off into the wilderness.

And they would stand on the mountaintops and watch him run. And when the last guy, miles out on the mountaintop, saw him disappear into the wilderness, he'd holler back to all the other guys standing on the mountaintops, he's gone, he's gone, he's gone, he's gone. And then he would holler back to the camp, and when they would hear the word that the goat was gone, that meant that their sin for an entire year was gone, and they'd have a party for the rest of the day.

It was just the greatest day of the whole year because all their sins were forgiven. Well, all of that was only a type. And furthermore, it only provided a temporary covering for the sins of that whole year.

It didn't really take them away from before the throne of God. And so, it was only effective because of the reality that it looked to, which was the cross, you see. It was effective because it looked to the substitutionary death of Jesus on the cross.

And so, Jesus became our substitute. Jesus became the high priest. Jesus became the sacrifice on the altar.

Jesus' blood became the blood that was put on the mercy seat. Jesus became the goat who bore away the sin as far as the east is from the west so that God will remember it no more. He is the high priest, the sacrifice, the goat, the mercy seat.

He is all of that in one as our substitute. So, let's sum up what we've been saying here so far. How then is God just and, at the same time, a loving justifier? Well, again, I quote Walvard and Schaeffer from major Bible things.

They put it this way. In forgiving sins in the Old Testament period, God was acting in perfect righteousness. Since He anticipated the coming of His own Son as a sacrificial lamb who would in no way pass over or cover sin temporarily but would take it away forever.

And so, God set forth Jesus to declare His righteousness. He glorified God by vindicating His name and actually providing the way for Him to be just in judging sin and the justifier forgiving sins at the same time. Now, listen very closely.

Here then, we have the answer to a very often asked question. The question is this. Why do you say there's only one way to God? How could you possibly say there's only one way to God? Well, based on what we have just seen, there could only be one way to God.

There could only be one way to God. See, for God to save man, somehow His justice must be served against sin and there must be the death of man in the process. If God condemned us by a federal representative, then another representative could be the substitute.

By the same principle that man became guilty, then he can be forgiven. But here's the problem. It must be a man.

The problem with man is that he sins. Therefore, he must die for his own sin. So, if it is going to be a man, it will have to be a perfect man, a sinless man.

To have a sinless man, it will have to somehow have something to do with a man who is God at the same time. In John 10.33, the Jews answered saying, for a good work we don't stone you, but for blasphemy and because you being a man make yourself to be what? God. So, if this man who is going to be our substitute is going to stand in our place, he must be 100% man.

He must be 100% sinless. Therefore, he's going to have to be God at the same time. In order to do that, he's going to have to be born of a virgin.

The only way to become a man and not be a sinner by nature, that can only happen if the virgin conceives by an action of God the Holy Spirit. And that can only happen if God comes Himself down to man. And that is exactly what happened.

And thus you see, that is why there is only one way to God. There could be no other way to God than God's way. In Matthew 1.20, but while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream saying, Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto you Mary your wife, for the thing which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew 1.23, behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us. Based on what we've just looked at, since there really is only one God, and because the substitute would have to be God, then there can only be one Savior. And that is why there is only one way to God.

And that way is Jesus Christ, God with us, God come in the flesh. 1 Timothy 2.5 says there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and man, and that is the man Christ Jesus. And that is why Jesus Christ said in John 14.6, I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life, and no man comes to the Father but by me.

And so, that brings us to our very last thought, which was the fact that there needed to be full justification. And that is exactly what we have in Jesus Christ, right? Because he was sinless, because he was God, because he did stand as our substitute, our sins are permanently forgiven, they are permanently dealt with, and thus we can stand before God just as though we have never sinned. And we are told in the Bible then concerning our sin that however many or however great they have been, they are pardoned, and they are cleansed, and they are gone forever.

They are blotted out from the book of God's remembrance. They are, we are told, sunk into the depths of the sea. We are told they are cast behind God's back.

We are told that they are searched for and they are not found. We are told they are remembered no more. We are told that though they were like scarlet, they have become as white as snow.

We are told that though they have been red like crimson, they have become as wool. And so you see, we have been given a total full justification in Jesus Christ, and that is why Jesus Christ had to die. And that is why we read in the book of Hebrews in chapter 7, in the verses that we began with, that the old system just simply couldn't quite accomplish what needed to be done.

It was merely a type, a system set up by God that looked forward to what Jesus would do, and that is why the entire system complete from front to back with the priests and all the ceremonies and everything else had to be completely done away with when Jesus Christ came to stand and to fulfill what all of that simply looked toward. I hope that that helps you in your thinking, and that as we move on in the book of Hebrews, it will be there on the top of your thinking to shed light on the difficult passages that we have yet ahead of us. Let's bow for a word of prayer.

Father, God, we love you so much. We love your word so much, Lord. We thank you, Lord, that not only is your word enlightening, but your word is alive.

We thank you, Lord, that it cleanses us. We thank you that it cleanses our thinking. We thank you, Lord, that at the same time, even though this wonderful intellectual enlightenment and spiritual enlightenment occurs, at the same time there is this life imparted to our souls, a nourishment that creates a well-being within us that is not to be found anywhere else.

Thank you, Father, for a full meal on the living bread this morning, and we bless you and praise you for Jesus, our Savior, and for all that you have done on our behalf. Thank you, Father, that you truly are the just one and at the same time the loving, gracious justifier of sinners. We bless you and we praise you in Jesus' name, amen.

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