

# JESUS' THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

Letting Jesus speak for himself.

# Introduction

The Bible tells us that through Jesus' death and resurrection we have the forgiveness of sin, entry into God's family and the gift of eternal life.

Exactly how Jesus' cross brings this reconciliation, or at-one-ment, has led to many atonement theories over the years. These theories tend to depend upon the perceived problem:

1. God deals with a problem in the cosmos (sin, death and the devil):
  - Ransom Theory -the idea that mankind was enslaved by the devil, and Jesus's death was a "ransom" paid to the devil in order to free mankind.
  - Christus Victor -the idea that Christ was defeating sin, death and the devil.
  
2. God resolves a tension within himself (Mercy versus Honour/Justice):
  - Anselm's Satisfaction Theory -the idea that mankind had incurred a debt to God by failing to fully honour him, and so Jesus was satisfying that honour-debt. With honour satisfied, forgiveness could then flow.
  - *Penal Substitution* -the suggestion that Jesus was bearing the punishment for our sin, absorbing God's wrath against us, in order to satisfy God's justice. With justice satisfied, forgiveness could then flow.
  
3. God acts to change something in us:
  - Christus Exemplar - the idea that Christ was setting an example of how to live a life of love.
  - Scapegoat Theory – the idea that Jesus submitted to man's lust for violence, becoming the ultimate scapegoat, in order for humanity to "wake up", reject violence, and usher in God's kingdom of peace, love and forgiveness.

All of these theories can find supportive Bible texts.

*Penal Substitution* is the prevalent view today and the lens through which we tend to read the Bible.

But what happens if we examine the narrative free of such suppositions and allow **Jesus' own words** to flow from the text unconstrained....

## 1. Jesus and the Father.

There are many verses where Jesus describes an apparent inseparability between himself and the Father (John 5:19, John 10:30, John 10:38, John 14:10-11, John 17:21-23) The Apostle Paul confers (Col 1:19; Col 2:9). To describe the Father and Son as “joined at the hip” would be inadequate. In the words of the Nicene fathers they are “of one substance” or “one being”. So did/could the Father separate himself from the Son when he was on the cross?

In John 8 we see a dialogue with the Pharisees about the crucifixion. Jesus tells them “*When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know:*

- that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me, and
- he who sent me is with me; *he has not left me alone*, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.” (John 8:28,29).

In this exchange Jesus appears to link together the theme of the cross (lifted up) and the Father being with him, not leaving him alone.

And there is more.

In John 16 as Judas' betrayal nears, Jesus says to his disciples:  
"Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. *Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.*" (John 16:32)

Twice in connection with his Passion Jesus appears to claim that the Father will not leave him alone. In the epistle to the Corinthians, Paul seems to corroborate that God was there, in Christ, on the Cross (2 Cor 5:19). The passion narratives also illustrate Jesus praying "Father" both before and, most importantly, after what is thought of as a "cry of dereliction".

With no mention of separation, and Jesus' apparent testimony to the contrary, the narrative suggests the Father never deserted Jesus.



**Q. But didn't Jesus cry out that he was forsaken?**

## 2. Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani (my God, my God, why have you forsaken me)

Jesus' cry is actually *only mentioned in 2 Gospels* (a mere 50% hit rate). What is more it is never mentioned or referenced again in the entire New Testament. Even though the Apostles were taught directly by Jesus over a period of 40 days after his resurrection (Acts 1:3) they never allude to Jesus' cry. Can it really be a critical piece of the puzzle?

What is often overlooked is that *the darkness is about to end* when Jesus issues this cry. It is dark from the sixth until ninth hour, and it is at around the ninth hour, *moments before his death*, that Jesus issues this cry (Matt 27:45-46, Mark 15:33-34) followed shortly by "Father into your hands I commit my Spirit" (Luke 23:46).



The cry is unmistakably the opening line of Psalm 22. All 4 Gospels mention the *casting of lots* for Jesus' garments (Matt 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, John 19:23-24). This event is so unique that any Jewish observer would recognise the correlation with Psalm 22:18, especially on hearing the opening line of that Psalm. Also, the Apostle John, *the only actual disciple on the scene, omits the cry altogether*

preferring to make the link to Psalm 22 explicit (John 19:24).

Further, the ninth hour was the hour of prayer (Acts 3:1) when Psalms were often recited. Given Jesus' experiences on the cross it is inconceivable that this Psalm would not have been on Jesus' mind. His final few words equate further with the Psalm ("I thirst" with 22:15, "it is finished" with 22:31).

On the brink of death, at the hour of prayer, Jesus had only the strength to utter a few words. And how better to witness to those watching that this event was the fulfilment of Psalm 22 than to pray out the opening line? Given that Jesus never declared there would be (or was) a separation, and the Apostles don't either, is it not possible that the sole purpose of the cry was to witness to Psalm 22?

Coming at the end of the period of darkness suggests the cry was not related to the darkness.

**Q: But didn't the darkness represent God pouring out his wrath?**

### 3. The reign of darkness

The sky turning dark from the sixth until the ninth hour is recorded in 3 of the Gospel narratives (Matt 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44-45). *It is never mentioned again in the New Testament and there is no interpretation as to what it represented.* Despite learning directly from the resurrected Jesus over a period of 40 days (Acts 1:3) the Apostles provide no analysis.

So where can we turn? *The only other mention of darkness is by Jesus himself.* In Luke 22 Jesus says to the Jewish leaders, as they arrest him, that this was their hour and the hour when 'darkness would reign' (Luke 22:53).

That's all we have.

Jesus' reference to a looming 'reign of darkness' is the only tangible clue we have in the entire New Testament as a possible explanation for why the sky turned dark for three hours.



Paul will later align the power of Satan with darkness (Acts 26:18) and describe the realms of this world as a dominion of darkness (Col 1:13, Eph 6:12).

It is not beyond the realms of logic to suggest, then, that the three hours of darkness most likely represent the temporary reign of the 'realms of this world' and 'the power of Satan', when Jesus was engaged in a cosmic battle with these powers of darkness.

**Q: Couldn't the "reign of darkness" just refer to the Chief Priests and Pharisees having their way? Why bring Satan in to it?**

#### 4. A Cosmic Battle

Scripture records that after Jesus was baptised by John, he went into the wilderness for 40 days where he was tempted by Satan. At the end of this period Satan left Jesus but not for good - only '*until an opportune time*' (Luke 4:13). Satan wasn't finished with Jesus.



As the time for his betrayal and crucifixion approached,

*Jesus talked in terms of a confrontation with Satan:*

"Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out." (John 12:31)

"the prince of this world is coming but he has no hold over me" (John 14:30)

It certainly appears that Jesus was expecting Satan to come after him again, and that Jesus would cast him out. Satan may rule for a while - but his was not the victory. Jesus stated with confidence "the ruler of this world has now been judged" (John 16:8,11)

If we look for this theme elsewhere we find that the Apostles describe the cross as a cosmic triumph: Jesus 'stripped the rulers and the authorities, making a show of them in public, triumphing over them' (Col 2:15); Jesus 'destroyed the works of the devil' (1 John 3:8), and defeated 'the one who has the power of death, that is the devil' (Heb 2:14).

The gospels and epistles attest to a cosmic battle, and Jesus describes a confrontation with Satan just as the time for his betrayal and execution looms into view. It is thus most likely that the period of darkness responds to the 'reign of darkness' – a cosmic battle with the dark powers.

What is more the NT simply refuses to furnish us with even the hint of a suggestion that this darkness was connected to God's wrath.

**Q: But wasn't the cup Jesus drank the cup of God's wrath?**

## 5. The Cup of Suffering.

In the Bible a cup represents a "lot" or a "portion". It can be bad (Is 51:17, Ezek 23:33) or it can be good (Ps 16:5, Ps 23:5, Ps 116:13, Jer 16:7).

In Gethsemane, as his ordeal closes in, Jesus prays that, if possible, "this cup" pass from him (Matt 26:39). Some have suggested, picking up imagery from Revelation and selective OT passages, that this is the cup of God's wrath.

But this is not the first time Jesus has talked of his impending death as his "cup" - an earlier occasion is recorded in Matthew chapter 20 and Mark chapter 10. On this earlier documented occasion, in the midst of Jesus informing his disciples of his coming trial and execution, James and John ask to sit in places of honour! (Mark 10:37)



In response to their request Jesus asks them whether they can drink the cup he is about to drink. Not understanding the metaphor they naively assure Jesus that yes, they can drink his cup... and Jesus confirms that they would indeed *drink the same cup as he* (Matt 20:23, Mark 10:39).

*Jesus is testifying that the cup that awaits him at the cross is a cup that will also be drunk by James and John.*

Nobody would claim that James and John drank the cup of God's wrath. So whatever the cup was that Jesus associated with his passion and death - it was not that.

Sensibly, therefore, down through the ages it has most commonly been described as the cup of suffering.

**Q: But the cross was also about the "judgement of this world". Isn't this where punishment for sin comes in?**

## 6. Jesus is Judge

Firstly, in section 4, the Cosmic Battle, we saw Jesus link the judgement of the world with the casting out of Satan (John 12:31) not the punishment of sin.

Secondly, we discover that long before he got to the cross, Jesus had already been assigned *all authority* concerning judgement.



Jesus states: “..the Father judges no one, but has *assigned all judgment to the Son*” (John 5:21-23)

and again..

“..the Father ... has given Him authority *to execute judgment*, because He is the Son of Man” (John 5:27).

Jesus is Judge!

From the Gospel narratives we know that Jesus’ authority included the authority to freely forgive sin (Matt 9:6).

On the cross Jesus’ heart is for mercy: "Father forgive them, they know not what they are doing". Jesus is ‘Judge of the World’ and his decree is for forgiveness even for those who are brutally murdering him.

It is difficult to propose therefore, as some do, that the cross involves God's due punishment for sin because this requires the Father a) to have *taken back* the authority to judge from the Son, and then b) to have acted directly *against* the Son's will.

But the Gospels attest that Jesus was fully submitted to his Father's will (Luke 22:42) and could only ever speak in harmony with the will of his Father (John 5:19, John 12:49-50, Matt 26:42). Jesus’ testimony offers *no avenue other than that his decree was ‘at one’ with the Father's will*, which means the Father was also in favour of, and committed to, the act of forgiveness.

**Q: But if the Father was also forgiving sin on the cross, not punishing it, how could justice have been satisfied?**



## 7. God's "justice" is all about mercy.

Some claim that there must be retribution (punishment for sin) or else God could not be "just". To show mercy would be to thwart justice, so justice and mercy stand opposed.

Yet Jesus points out that the weightier matters of the law concern "*justice and mercy and faithfulness*" (Mat 23:23). Jesus indicates that mercy is not opposed to justice but rather a *partner* to it. Armed with this insight, we find this thread runs through the OT.

We find that 'Steadfast love' and 'justice' can go hand-in-hand (Hosea 2:19, Jer 9:24). In Isaiah, God shows mercy *precisely because* he is a God of justice (Isa 30:18). And Micah 6:8 says that to "do" God's justice is not merely to *act* in kindness and mercy but to *love doing so*.

Further, when God defines "true justice" his definition is shocking, for in God's economy *true justice is to show mercy and compassion!* (Zech 7:9).



It seems we have brazenly assumed God's justice embraces a retributive model rather than a restorative one, despite the Biblical witness to the contrary.

Yet Jesus knew. Twice he explicitly reinforced Hosea 6:6 that God requires mercy not sacrifice (Matt 9:13, 12:7). He claimed that to be sons of our Father we must *love our enemies* and *be merciful* as God is merciful (Matt 5:44-45). Forgiveness is to be abundant (Matt 18:22).

It seems God's justice requires mercy and forgiveness, *not punishment*.

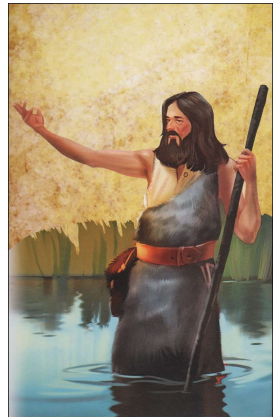
**Q: But didn't God require a sacrifice for sin before sin could be forgiven?**

## 8. Mercy not sacrifice

As we have just seen Jesus is unequivocal that it was mercy not sacrifice that God required (Matt 9:13, Matt 12:7).

And if we are to ignore Jesus and still claim that sacrifice is a necessary prerequisite for forgiveness, then how come...

- a) ... the OT has examples of God forgiving sin without a sacrifice (e.g. 2 Chron 7:14, Isaiah 6:7, Isaiah 55:7)?
- b) ... King David declares God neither requires nor is pleased by sacrifice (Psalm 40:6, Psalm 51:16,17)?
- c) ... the OT explicitly claims that, rather than sacrifices, God wanted obedience (1 Sam 15:22), right judgements (Prov 21:3) and mercy (Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:6-8)?
- d) ... John the Baptist appeared calling for people to repent and be *baptised* for the *forgiveness of sins* (Mark 1:4)? No blood sacrifice was involved - so were their sins forgiven or not? Or was it all a deception, a delayed gratification? Yet his mission was from God and Jesus sanctioned it.
- e)... Jesus was declaring people's sins forgiven long before his death on the cross?



There is, therefore, a strong Biblical witness that forgiveness is not dependent on blood sacrifice.

So why the sacrificial system? We need to look back at the Old Testament. When God brought Israel out of Egypt, they were an idolatrous nation: they already had sacrificial priests (Ex 19:24) and were prostituting themselves to goat idols (Lev 17:7). But God did not initially command sacrifice - the command was to obey him and become a treasured possession, a Kingdom of Priests (Jer 7:22,23, Ex 19:5-6) but the people stubbornly refused (Jer 7:24). They were afraid of God. So God commanded they continue to offer their sacrifices - but make their sacrifices to God alone and on a dedicated altar (Ex 20:20-24) no longer in open fields (Lev 17:5).

The writer of Hebrew confirms: the law required sacrifices and offerings, but they were neither desired by God nor pleasing to him (Heb 10:5,8).

God did not need a sacrifice to forgive sin. But the law did. And perhaps our fear.

## SUMMARY

In the above examination of the Scriptures, we have explored how Jesus' own testimony as recorded in the Gospels runs counter to the theory of penal substitution. Indeed, it would seem that embracing penal substitution requires someone to:

1. Reject Jesus' testimony that his Father would not leave him alone
2. Take Jesus' death-cry literally, ignoring the timing and context, and then make this the main focus of the cross despite it being absent in 2 Gospels and entirely missing from the Apostle's teaching
3. Create a new narrative about the darkness, ignoring Jesus' reference
4. Brush to one side the cross-endured Cosmic battle described by Jesus and the Apostles
5. Ignore Jesus' assertion James and John would also drink his 'cup'
6. Reinstates the Father as Judge (rejecting Jesus' explicit testimony to the contrary) and have him override Jesus' plea for forgiveness
7. Reject the hand-in-hand nature of justice and mercy and instead impose on God a notion of justice that is retributive and full of wrath
8. Reject Jesus' teaching that God requires mercy not sacrifice, declaring the exact opposite.

That's quite a list.

Exactly how the cross works may remain a mystery. But we can be certain that this was a rescue mission born of the Father's love for us (John 3:16). We were enemies of God (Rom 5:10), and yet he was not an enemy of us (Rom 5:8, Acts 17:27-28) but reached out in love to reconcile us to him, even though he knew we would brutally murder him (Mark 10:33-34). God loved us and gave himself for us, not to satisfy retributive justice but in mercy – to take away our sin (John 1:29) and set us free from the powers of darkness and death (Heb 2:14, 2 Tim 1:10). He came that we might have life (John 10:10).

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## APPENDIX: OBJECTIONS

It should be clear by now that Jesus' own testimony is in direct conflict with the theory of penal substitution. There are, nonetheless, many other Bible passages that appear to support the theory. Let us address the most common.

|                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Q1: What about OT prophecies, like Isaiah 53, that claim God crushed Jesus?</b> |
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Firstly we need to examine how the Apostles used Isaiah 53. By examining the New testament to see which verses they quoted in support of the gospel we discover that two verses that today's evangelists use centre stage simply do not appear *at all* in the witness of the Apostles. The NT never references the verse 6 that we are familiar with ("The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all") nor verse 10 ("It pleased the Lord to crush him").

So basing our gospel message on those two verses indicates that we are out of step with the Apostles.

Secondly, the Bible of Palestine in AD30 was the Greek Septuagint (or LXX) and it does not contain these verses as rendered in our Bibles. The LXX, Jesus' Bible, was based on a different Hebrew source text to that commonly used today for our Bible translations, and its version of Isaiah 53 is different for these pivotal verses (verses 6 & 10).

Rather than laying our iniquity on Jesus, verse 6 in the LXX reads "the Lord gave him up for our sins". We see Paul utilising this in Romans 8:32, clearly basing it on the LXX version of Isaiah 53:6.

Rather than being pleased to crush Jesus, verses 10 & 11 in the LXX read: "the Lord also is pleased to purge him from his stroke..... the Lord also is pleased to take away from the travail of his soul.." The focus here is on the Lord removing the pain, not causing it.

The Apostles, taught by Christ himself, never claim the Father desired to cause pain to his son; rather they claim this was man's desire. Their accounts in the NT attest to this *more than 40 times\**

One further consideration. Isaiah prophesied that we would misunderstand.

When verses 4 & 5 of Isaiah 53 say "we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted, but he was pierced for our transgressions..." many fail to notice that a direct contrast is taking place. The presence of "but" indicates

that the previous assumption was wrong. What the passage is actually saying is "we esteemed him smitten by God ... *but* [he wasn't smitten by God] he was pierced for our transgressions".

The New Testament fills in the corrective detail that Isaiah could not have known. The Suffering Servant was 'pierced for our transgressions' not by God but by the Roman soldiers, at the behest of the Chief Priests and Pharisees.

We thought he was smitten by God... but... we got it all wrong. And Isaiah foretold that we would.

*\*The Bible is abundantly clear it was man who plotted and conspired to kill Jesus. See:*

*Matt 12:14; 16:21; 17:12; 17:22-23; 20:18-19; 26:45; 26:59; 26:66; 27:1; 27:20; 27:22; 27:23; 27:25.*

*Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; 14:1; 14:10-11; 14:41; 14:55; 14:64; 15:12-13; 15:14.*

*Luke 9:21; 13:31; 17:25; 18:32; 19:47; 20:19; 22:2; 22:4; 23:10; 23:21; 23:23; 23:33-34; 24:7.*

*John 5:18; 10:31; 10:39; 11:53; 13:2; 18:31; 18:35; 19:6; 19:7; 19:12; 19:15.*

*Acts 2:23; 2:36; 3:13; 3:15; 4:10; 4:27; 5:30; 7:52; 10:39; 13:27-28;*

*Epistles: 1 Cor 2:8; 1 Thess 2:15; Heb 12:3; 1 Pet 2:4.*

## **Q2: What about Jesus becoming a curse for us?**

Paul writes: "... he humbled himself and became obedient to death, *even death on a cross*" (Phil 2:8)

Why was death on a cross such a big deal? Because of Deuteronomy 21:23:

*"...his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall bury it in that day; for every one that is hanged on a tree is cursed of God".*

The Law of Moses required a blasphemer to be *stoned to death* by the entire assembly (Lev 24:16), and yet despite their charge against Jesus being one of *blasphemy* (Luke 22:70-71) the Pharisees strove to involve the Romans and invoke crucifixion (Luke 20:20). They knew that if Jesus was crucified it would imply he was cursed by God - and so couldn't be the Messiah.

Yet when Paul alludes to that Deuteronomic passage he is very selective: *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—*

for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree". (Gal 3:13). Note how he omits any reference to the curse being "by God".

Further both Paul and Peter make a distinct point of demonstrating God's total vindication of Jesus *despite him dying on a tree*. Peter explicitly contrasts Jesus dying on a tree with God then exalting him (Acts 5:30,31). Paul similarly and no less pointedly contrasts Jesus being hung on a tree with God then raising him from the dead (Acts 10:39,40). This contrast is clearly there in order to erase any confusion; despite dying on a tree God didn't curse Jesus, he vindicated him!

For Paul it would have been a huge deal that Christ humbled himself not just to death, but death on a cross. In so doing, Jesus allowed himself to be portrayed in the eyes of all the Jews as cursed by God.

This explains why Paul calls the preaching of Christ *crucified* a stumbling block to the Jews (1 Cor 1:23). Of course crucifixion was a stumbling block!

**Q3: But what about the sins God had left unpunished?**

Answer: Many quote the following passage in Romans to support the notion that Jesus had to be punished because former (OT) sins were not properly dealt with:

*"God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time..." (NIV)*

There you go, many say, "he had left former sins unpunished, and in Christ is putting that right so as to be 'just'".

However, the notion that God left anything undone (in this case "unpunished") is entirely absent in the original Greek. What the text says in its most literal form is:

*"(Christ)... whom God set forth a mercy seat, through the faith in his blood, for the showing forth of His righteousness, because of the passing over of the bygone sins in the forbearance of God for the showing forth of His righteousness in the present time, for his being righteous, and declaring him righteous who is of the faith of Jesus"*

Paul's rambling sentence is somewhat muddled and difficult to follow, but we can see there is nothing "left unpunished". Paul talks of the "passing over" of sins previously committed (covering over them, we might say, not counting them against us) in an act of "divine forbearance" (i.e. with patience and love). And what is more this was a showing forth of God's righteousness; God cannot act in an unrighteous manner!

Secondly, Christ is a "mercy seat" (hilasterion). In the OT we see that this is the place God inhabits (Lev 16:2) and from which he speaks (Ex 25:22, Num 7:89). It is also the place sprinkled with blood when sacrifices are offered for forgiveness, thereby acknowledging that they have been offered to God and not goat idols. In other words Christ is the means through which God speaks to us, he is God's presence for us, and also the "seat" of mercy and forgiveness.

Holding the original Greek in mind, then, the most likely meaning of this passage is that God has opened up a new and permanent way to meet with him (via Christ who is now our 'Mercy seat'). And having passed over bygone sins in his forbearance (a good thing, surely?) God has (in demonstration of the same righteous faithfulness) repeated that merciful act once-for-all in Christ.

**Q4: But doesn't Hebrews tell us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin?**

Firstly we need to look at the entire verse:

*"In fact, the law requires that almost everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness". (Heb 9:22)*

The writer is concerned with the rules for forgiveness 'under the law'. And yet even under the law there was the allowance for forgiveness without the shedding of blood:

*"If, however, they cannot afford two doves or two young pigeons, they are to bring as an offering for their sin a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour for a sin offering..... In this way the priest will make atonement for them for any of these sins they have committed, and they will be forgiven." (Lev 5:11-13)*

So *under the law* a sacrifice was required, and this was almost always via the shedding of blood – but not exclusively.

Secondly we know that God required mercy *not sacrifice* (Hosea 6:6), and Hebrews reminds us of this in the very next chapter:

*“...“Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law.” (Heb 10:8)*

Although the Law required sacrifice, there has always been forgiveness ‘apart from the law’. The Law was a condescension and for a limited time only (Gal 3:19, 24-25). And so we see that blood sacrifice was not essential for forgiveness from God’s viewpoint:

*“You do not delight in sacrifice or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit” (Psalm 51:16-17)*

*“To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.” (Proverbs 21:3)*

*“You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings, nor honoured me with your sacrifices....But you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your offences. ‘I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake and remembers your sins no more’ ” (Isaiah 43:23-25)*

*“These are the ones I look on with favour: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word. But whoever sacrifices a bull is like one who kills a person, and whoever offers a lamb is like one who breaks a dog’s neck; whoever makes a grain offering is like one who presents pig’s blood, and whoever burns memorial incense is like one who worships an idol. They have chosen their own ways, and they delight in their abominations” (Isaiah 66:2-3)*

God did not require sacrifice, but the Law did. So Jesus offered himself as a sin offering for us to fulfil the law (Matt 5:17) and put an end to sacrifice forever (Heb 10:12,14).

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