

### Prompt:

God's wrath is revealed on the cross through at least 3 ways

- 1) Jesus' confrontation and defeat of the powers and principalities
- 2) The condemnation of Sin and our sins (not of Jesus)
- 3) Jesus' sharing in the wounds and pangs of our exilic condition in order to heal the world

### James Reuben

How would you reconcile #2 and 2 Corinthians 5:21?

### Mako Nagasawa:

James, the early church leaders grouped the phrase "he became sin" (2 Cor.5:21) with the other "he became" phrases: "he became flesh" (Jn.1:14); "he became human" (Phil.2:6-7); "he became poor" (2 Cor.8:9); and "he became a curse" (Gal.3:13). The statement "he became poor" definitely refers to the incarnation, and should really be coordinated with "he became sin" because they are both in 2 Corinthians. And the early Christians understood all of them as referring to Jesus' incarnation into a fallen human nature. The idea is that "he shared in our fallen human nature, so we could share in his healed human nature." Here's a brief explanation of this interpretation of 2 Cor.5:21 in its overall context

[http://www.newhumanityinstitute.org/pdfs/paul\\_2corinthians.05.21.analysis.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0KJIkkPcZDh0\\_2Fw-u6eiwTuqjPODETIBM5aedaFhZv35TV\\_jqTZo7IVs](http://www.newhumanityinstitute.org/pdfs/paul_2corinthians.05.21.analysis.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0KJIkkPcZDh0_2Fw-u6eiwTuqjPODETIBM5aedaFhZv35TV_jqTZo7IVs)

### James Reuben

Mako, I think your misunderstanding the question. When he became sin, what scripture means is He was the object of punishment, I never said He literally said He is sin, this has everything to do with the atonement. And the He became sin cannot be coordinated with 'he became flesh' although Jesus became flesh like us (incarnation), we DONT 'become sin' like Jesus (the substitute Or object of God's wrath as Jesus did). That's why in the very same verse it says 'He who knew No sin' to show Jesus is the only qualifying person the lamb without blemish, so I have to disagree with you my friend.

### Mako Nagasawa

James, yes there are major differences of opinion here, although you have not engaged the questions of who is reconciled to whom, and what is "righteousness." The larger question is

whether penal substitutionary atonement (PSA) or medical substitutionary atonement (MSA) is true. Here are correctives to the PSA mishandling of Scripture:

[https://newhumanityinstitute.wordpress.com/atonement-foundations/?fbclid=IwAR3SF8OEY5c8XugzjPzkkc325\\_mhtg\\_ZtN3N0i3piNoJC4OKktzmfEH76ys](https://newhumanityinstitute.wordpress.com/atonement-foundations/?fbclid=IwAR3SF8OEY5c8XugzjPzkkc325_mhtg_ZtN3N0i3piNoJC4OKktzmfEH76ys)

### [James Reuben](#)

Mako, righteousness and justice are seen at the cross something you apparently don't understand. The cup Jesus drank was a perpetual OT reference of God's wrath, the imputation during the sacrificial system, and Isaiah 53 says it pleased God to crush His Son. So you are right, someone is mishandling scripture, and it's not me.

### [Mako Nagasawa](#)

James, you seem to think that the "cup of God's wrath" that Jesus drank was something that he drank so we wouldn't have to drink it. But before Jesus, the Israelites drank their own cup; in the New Testament, the disciples drink their own cup. Therefore, drinking "the cup of God's wrath" is not part of the substitution.

In the Old Testament, God handed the disobedient and rebellious a 'cup' of ruin, desolation, etc. until they drink it dry (Ps.75:8; Isa.51:17 – 22; Jer.25:15 – 29; 49:12; Ezk.23:32 – 34; Hab.2:16; Rev.14:10; 16:1ff and 18:6). The 'cup' to be drunk always refers to a historical experience that had an ending; hence the metaphorical use of the idea of drinking a cup dry. These references – including Jesus' use of the "cup" metaphor – are related only because they share a common metaphor to describe varied historical experiences – experiences that had an end. What's more, those Israelites drank "their own cup," and Hebrews said that God already gave them their recompense (Heb.2:2).

Jesus referred to the "cup" of the cross as physical death. We know this because Jesus said the disciples would drink from **\*\*the same cup\*\*** from which he was going to drink: "But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to him, 'We are able.' He said to them, **\*\*'My cup you shall drink\*\***...' (Matthew 20:22 – 23) In other words, the disciples will face their own deaths by martyrdom in their own ways. Since there is no other distinct "cup" introduced between this conversation and the cross, we can conclude only one thing: Jesus was simply referring to death by martyrdom. The 'cup' is physical death. In fact, in Jesus' case, it is not "the cup of God's wrath." Quite the opposite. It is "the cup of human wrath."

You brought up Isaiah 53:10: "it pleased God to crush His Son." That is the Hebrew Masoretic variation of the manuscript. But here is what the Greek Septuagint translation of Isaiah 53:10 says: "And the Lord desired to purify/cleanse him from his wound." The difference there is

significant, and if the Greek Septuagint is the more correct version, that would greatly weaken the idea that Jesus became the object of the Father's wrath. What reasons do you have for preferring the Hebrew Masoretic over the Greek Septuagint?

### James Reuben

Mako, Jeremiah 25:15, Isaiah 51:17, & Revelation 14 all deal with this 'cup of wrath' that I was referring to, in the OT the cup referred to either divine wrath or blessing (wrath more times). The disciples asked to sit at his right hand in glory which would obviously be a blessing. But the cup he asked the Father to pass was not just human suffering as I just quoted scripture above to for proof txt, so feel free to explain away. As far as the Hebrew Masoretic vs the Septu. There is nothing there that could refute what I'm saying, Plus the entire sacrificial system, and shadows and types such as Abraham and Isaac etc.

### Mako Nagasawa

James, If what you're saying is true, then Jesus should have said, "I am drinking the Father's cup of wrath so you won't have to." But instead, Jesus said, "My cup you shall drink" (Mt.20:22 – 23). So this passage doesn't prove what you think it does.

Can a judge collect on a parking ticket after it's already been paid? Wouldn't that be a sign of corruption on the part of the judge? By the same token, if the "cup" always means "the wrath of God," which Jesus supposedly absorbed and exhausted as a substitute for us, then how could the disciples "drink" it, too? Does God deal out wrath first on Jesus, then again on the disciples? And I note: Those disciples were believers, not unbelievers. If that's how God's wrath "works," then God demands that we suffer a punishment even after someone has already suffered for it. Therefore, where is the "substitution" part? Why do you think this passage supports your case?

Re: Isa.51:17 and Jer.25:15 and Rev.14:10, the more accurate way of handling the metaphor of a "cup of wrath" is to say that people have similar experiences. But again, if Jesus used the "cup" metaphor to indicate something the disciples would have to drink, too, then he was certainly not talking about substitution, and probably not atonement.

Isaiah 53 is certainly an atonement text, but about it you say, "As far as the Hebrew Masoretic vs the Septu. There is nothing there that could refute what I'm saying". But Septuagint Isaiah does refute what you're saying. The phrase, "And the Lord desired to purify/cleanse him from his wound" in no way interprets Jesus as the object of the Father's wrath. Instead, it shows the Father's desire to heal Jesus from some "wound." I can show you why that "wound" is the fallen element of human nature, which Jesus shared as a son of fallen Adam and Eve. The object/aim of the Father's wrath is the corruption of sin in human nature. The framing is all medical and surgical, like Jewish circumcision of the heart imagery (Dt.10:16; 30:6): God wants to cut something away from human nature, something that should never have been there in the first

place. Jesus did that as a human, and a Jewish human being to be precise, because God called all Israelites to “circumcise their hearts” (Dt.10:16) by fully internalizing His commandments and cutting/burning away the sinfulness within, but none of them were able to do it. And since we confess that Jesus “fulfilled the Law” (Mt.5:17 – 20), we must say that it’s because of his active, not passive, obedience as a Jew under the Sinai covenant.

Let me deepen the problem for you just a little bit more. Every single time the apostle Paul quotes from Isaiah, he quotes from the Septuagint version of Isaiah. And in the case where a discernable theological difference does occur, at Isaiah 59:20 quoted in Romans 11:26 – 27, Paul indicates his preference for the LXX. From all indications, Paul would have also preferred the LXX variant of Isaiah 53:10.

Matthew shows that, too. Matthew quotes Isaiah 53:4 in Matthew 8:17 and gives this classic “atonement” text a “healing” and “medical” interpretation, not a “penal” one. “16 When evening came, they brought to him many who were demon-possessed; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. 17 This was to “fill to the full” what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: ‘He himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.’” (Mt.8:16 – 17). Matthew frames Isaiah 53 by Jesus healing people. That is, Jesus shows wrath against the diseases, the demons, and death. But his wrath is an expression or activity of his love – and his love is for the persons. By association, Matthew strongly suggests that we should read all of Isaiah 53 in a medical, healing framework. What Jesus was doing in other people symbolized what Jesus was doing within himself, that is, within his own human nature. “The Father desires to cleanse/purify him from his wound” (LXX Isa.53:10). And so Jesus succeeded at battling temptation and killed the thing that was killing us, so he could rise cleansed and purified from the Adamic wound. “He learned obedience... he became perfect... to become the source of salvation” from human evil (Heb.5:7 – 9).

You mention “the sacrificial system.” Kindly explain why you think the sacrificial system supports penal substitution?

### [James Reuben](#)

Mako, Jesus delivers from the wrath to come I Thes 1:10, romans 5:9, He bore our sin 1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53:12, He became a curse and sin 2 Corinth 5:21 & Gala 3:13, His blood ransomed is Hebrews 9:22, 10:1-10, 1 Peter 1:19, and propitiation rom 3:25, and He fulfilled psalms 22, separation from God God’s wrath why have though forsaken Me. By the way read my post again, I clearly said ‘most’ of the time it talks about God’s wrath, so let’s try not misrepresent each other.

### [Mako Nagasawa](#)

James, I'm happy to receive your reminder that you said "most of the time" the cup "talks about God's wrath." But let's also be clear that my point about Matthew 20:22 – 23 does not depend on your caveat.

All of the passages you listed above using the terms wrath, propitiation, ransom, and even supposedly "separation from God" do not mean what you think they do. In the case of Isaiah, Romans, Hebrews, and 1 Peter, they depend on earlier assumptions about the sacrificial system. For example, you seem to depend on the translation "propitiation" for Romans 3:25, which hangs on a particular view of the sacrificial system. So let's examine that.

The sacrificial system proves medical, not penal, substitution because God was acting like a dialysis machine. He was drawing to Himself all the impurity and uncleanness of Israel, and giving back purity, as an expression of His restorative justice. God was not acting like a Western courtroom judge, giving out "punishments" to exhaust His supposedly retributive justice. I'll show that below. How we interpret the sacrificial system, and the use of the term "hilasterion" which you translate "propitiation," depends completely on which of these two paradigms is the correct one.

Other sacrifices existed before Mount Sinai and the tabernacle, but the sin offering was the unique sacrifice introduced by God being present with Israel in the tabernacle. So there is something unique about it which relates to the whole sacrificial system. When Israel carried out the sin offering, they partitioned the animal into various pieces. All this, below, seems to be because animals were not like humans in that they did not commit the fall into self-corruption, but at the same time, animals were part of the creation which was affected in some way by the fall of Adam and Eve, and ongoing contact with fallen human beings.

The Organs for Waste and Toxins: Interestingly, the kidneys, liver, and intestinal fat are the parts of the body which process waste or store toxins within the body. Any farming or herding people watching animals urinate and defecate every day would understand how these organs lined up and what they meant. Very importantly, the kidneys, liver, and intestinal fat were to never be eaten (Lev.3:17; 7:22 – 25; 8:16, 25; 9:10, 19 – 20, 24; 10:15). They were reserved for God alone. When they were consumed in fire, the Lord smelled the smoke of the fat, kidney, and liver as 'a soothing aroma' (Lev.3:3 – 5, 9 – 11, 14 – 16). Nothing else triggered this response from God, including \*\*the death of the animal\*\*. This fact shows that penal substitution advocates are making wrong conclusions about the whole process of sacrifice. For sin offerings, in particular, burning the toxin-bearing organs became 'a soothing aroma' to God (Lev.4:21). And this step in particular is connected to 'making atonement.' For example, in the sin offering, 'Then he [the priest] shall remove all its fat, just as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offerings, and the priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar, on the offerings by fire to the LORD. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin which he has committed, and he will be forgiven.' (Lev.4:35). God was not "soothed" by the death of the animal, as if the animal per se became the object of God's wrath. But if penal substitution is true, then that is what the text should say. The text does not say that at all. Instead, the text of

Leviticus 4 shows that medical substitution is true. Toxins and waste (uncleanness) must be cut away and consumed by fire. There is a sharp distinction between made between the animal itself, and something within the animal associated with uncleanness. Conceptually, this is just like “circumcision” where something impure is cut away from the human male, in order to cleanse the human male as a representative of the community (Gen.17; Lev.12). And it is conceptually identical with “circumcision of the heart” for every male and female human being: something within us must be cut away and consumed by God’s fire. Thus, God is not “propitiated” or “satisfied” by anyone’s death per se. He is certainly not “propitiated” or “satisfied” by inflicting suffering and pain, as the Israelites were absolutely not instructed to “torture” the animal, and Jewish tradition developed the most painless way possible to kill the animal. Rather, God is only “propitiated” or “satisfied,” if we want to use that term, which is questionable in itself, when the uncleanness in us is cut away and consumed. Also, the more accurate translation for “hilasterion” is “expiation” because it is conceptually more foundational, it fits with the Jewish language of salvation as surgical/medical as presented in circumcision, and it is less prone to the absolutely deadly mistake of thinking that God’s justice is retributive, as if God inflicts human suffering when He doesn’t get human obedience out of His own desire to simply “satisfy Himself.”

The Flesh: As whatever symbolic uncleanness of the animal itself was disposed of through the waste organs being burned, it could serve a purpose for the Israelites as a vehicle of atonement. When an ordinary Israelite worshiper laid a hand on the animal to identify himself with the animal in some sense, the sinfulness of the human person seems to have been communicated or identified with the flesh of the animal. The flesh of the animal, in the peace and sin/guilt offerings of Lev.3 – 7, was consumed by the priests or the common people. This is a non-negotiable part of how the priests ‘made atonement’ for the people (Lev.6:24 – 30; 10:16 – 20). Notice how mad Moses was when Aaron and his sons didn’t eat the flesh of the sin offering? Moses said it was a non-negotiable part of the priests making atonement for the people. Once again, this does not fit the imagery or framework of penal substitution. If all that was required in the sacrificial system was the death of the animal, the atonement should have happened when the animal was killed. The eating of the flesh of the animal cannot be incorporated into the PSA framework. It’s an embarrassing detail for PSA. The priests had to internalize the sin that was symbolically placed by the Israelites onto the animals. They were ‘sin-bearers’ in their role as priests, as much as the scapegoat was a ‘sin-bearer,’ too. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest, representing all the priests, brought the collected uncleanness and sinfulness to God. More on that below.

The Blood: The Israelites were to never eat the blood, because God was giving back the blood to symbolize purified life which cleansed people and objects. The blood of the animal was the cleansing agent that restores sanctity, life, and health to what it touched. Animal blood (life) was not corrupted by sin, at least not in the same way human blood (life) had been. So animal blood (life) could serve as a symbol of purity. This is the basis for saying that God was acting like a dialysis machine. Once again, if PSA is true, then contact with blood would be meaningless and superfluous, because blood flow itself – as indicating death - would be atoning. That simple fact

hints that in atonement, God does not change a disposition in Himself. He changes something in us. Atonement is medical, healing, and restorative, not penal, punitive and retributive.

So far, we have only examined the sin offering in isolation. Now it's time to integrate that one offering into the larger, annual calendar of sacrifices. Here's what happened on that day, each year:

The high priest goes in once a year on the appointed day (Lev.16:2)

The high priest wears clean white linen (Lev.16:4)

The high priest sacrifices a bull for himself and his family (Lev.16:6, 11)

The high priest sprinkles the bull's blood on the furnishings of the sanctuary (Lev.16:14 – 20)

The high priest sacrifices a goat as a sin offering, sprinkling its blood on the mercy seat in the holy of holies, and then the holy place, cleansing it (Lev.16:9, 15 – 19)

The high priest lays his hands on the live goat, the scapegoat, confessing all the sins of Israel onto the head of the scapegoat, and sent it away into the wilderness (Lev.16:20 – 22)

The priests do not eat the flesh of the bull or first goat, which is **\*\*absolutely unusual and unique\*\***, but rather burn it to ashes, so the sin **\*\*does not symbolically cycle back\*\*** into the priests (Lev.16:26 – 28)

Here's what we can say about this. God is not bloodthirsty. God is a blood donor. God was acting like what we see today in a modern dialysis machine. The Israelites passed their impurities to God through the mechanism of the animal sacrifices (specifically the sin and guilt offerings) and the priesthood. The priests, when they ate the sacrifices, stored up those impurities in themselves. Simultaneously, the priests shed the blood of the animals offered, since the animals' blood was not corrupted by sin. The innocent animal blood 'cleansed' the uncleanness of the Israelites and the objects they touched.

The two goats were two sides of the same coin. The scapegoat carried the sin of the people far away into the wilderness as a representation that God separated sin from the people. And the other goat and the bull could not be eaten, but rather, they were burned down to ash as a representation that God burned sinfulness down to nothing when we bring it into His presence with trusting obedience, trusting Him to do just that. This gave rise to Micah saying that God separates our sin from His people, and cast them into the sea (Micah 7:19), or David saying God separates our sin from His people as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12).

Furthermore, the sacrificial system has to be integrated into the narrative of the Pentateuch. The high priest's horizontal movement into the holy of holies was a reenactment-retelling (recapitulation) of Moses' vertical movement to the top of Mount Sinai. Moses experienced Mount Sinai as three levels: the base of the mountain with all Israel (Ex.19), the halfway point with the 70 elders (Ex.24), and at the top, with Joshua alone. Moses went into the divine fire, and ultimately participated in God's cleansing and purification such that his face glowed with light (Ex.34), and mediated the Sinai covenant on behalf of Israel – even though he later faltered and

showed that Israel needed a better covenant and a better mediator. But for the long history when Israel had a sanctuary (tabernacle then temple), the high priest represented Moses, making contact with the fire in the bronze altar, which made holy whatever touched it (Ex.29:37). He went into the holy place where the priests could be, since they represented the 70 elders at the halfway point up the mountain. Then he went through the smoke of incense and offering, which represented God's cloud of glory near the top of the mountain, and into the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement. The high priest renewed the covenant for Israel. In fact, that covenant renewal was so momentous and profound that on the Jubilee Year, God redistributed the land to its original family boundaries as if Israel were entering the garden land again for the first time (Lev.25). The Jubilee was proclaimed on the Day of Atonement (Lev.25:9).

And what does the sacrificial system as a whole demonstrate to us about atonement? Let's look first at Moses. God accepted Moses' mediation of the covenant not by punishing him as a substitute for Israel, which is what PSA would require, but by **\*\*purifying\*\*** him. Moses' active obedience mediated the covenant between God and Israel. It was not his "passive obedience," as if God just had to make Moses suffer something in order to be in covenant relationship with others who were not Moses. But penal substitution absolutely depends on the notion of Jesus' "passive obedience" as the passive object of God's wrath. In fact, the sacrificial system as a whole represents what God was doing within Moses' human nature as Moses approached Him with a soft and eager heart, receiving God's commandments into himself as much as he could.

Moses mediated the Sinai covenant, but Jesus mediated a better covenant (Heb.9:15). God accepted Moses as mediator not by making Moses bear a retributive punishment to satisfy His own retributive anger, but because Moses was faithful, and allowed himself to be purified to some degree. Likewise, God accepted Jesus as mediator not by making Jesus bear a retributive punishment to satisfy, exhaust, and drain God's retributive anger, but because Jesus was faithful, transfigured his whole body (not just his face) with God's light, and purified his own human nature completely.

Jesus became our eternal mediator who offered himself as priest (Heb.7 – 10) and both goats, taken together: the goat sacrificed (Heb.8 – 9; 13:11 – 12) and the scapegoat (Heb.13:13). Jesus took the corruption of sin within himself to death, burning and cutting it away, and simultaneously sent it away from us. Two sides of the same coin. Jesus' death revealed and exemplified the central inner dynamic of his entire life: to resist every temptation and live his life faithfully unto God the Father. Though his suffering and obedience throughout his life, Jesus "became perfect" (he did not start off "perfect" in the same sense that his resurrection indicates) and became the source of our salvation because he is the source of a cleansed, purified, new humanity (Heb.5:7 – 9).

Jesus also carried out God's pattern of purification by partitioning. That is, "the circumcision of Christ" (Col.2:12) in which we participate by the Spirit (Rom.2:28 – 29). Jesus' bodily death by itself was not the atoning act per se in isolation, but was a means to an end: the destruction of "the flesh" (Rom.7:14 – 8:4), or "the old self" (Rom.6:6), and the fulfillment of the Sinai



covenant, which called for “circumcision of the heart” (Dt.30:6; 10:16 notice also “Jesus is the telos of the covenant” in Rom.10:4). Thus, Jesus’ death on the cross was the revelation of what Jesus was doing his whole incarnate life: putting the flesh to death, separating the corruption of sin from human nature, so God could raise Jesus from the dead with a purified, cleansed, new humanity which he shares with us by the Spirit. This is why Jesus’ resurrection is part of the atonement, equally with his death, because we must participate in both, by the Spirit: ‘If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins’ (1 Cor.15:17). Jesus did not die instead of us. He died ahead of us. And Jesus’ active obedience is the substitutionary element in atonement. He did for us what we could not do: put the flesh to death.

Many advocates of penal substitution believe that the sacrificial system is the Old Testament lynchpin for penal substitution. But the sacrificial system does not actually support penal substitution. It supports medical substitution. God’s wrath is not against human persons per se. God’s wrath is against the corruption of sin within our human nature. That is shown especially in the partitioning of the sin offering, and the burning of the organs associated with waste and toxins.

Now, look again at Isaiah 53:12, which you quoted. Notice that Isaiah 53:12 envisions the Servant as the new mediator of the covenant (“he interceded for the transgressors”) like Moses did. But “He bore the sin of many” means he bore human nature in its fallenness, under the conditions of the fall and empire and demonic powers. Isaiah does not say, “He bore the retributive punishment of God in place of the many,” which is what PSA requires. He bore our sinfulness. That is the meaning of the “infirmities he bore, the diseases he carried” away, which is how Matthew understood Isaiah 53:4 in Matthew 8:17. Matthew tells us to read Isaiah 53 in a healing, medical, surgical frame, because the entirety of the Jewish sacrificial system was healing, medical, and surgical, and because the prophet Isaiah understood that perfectly well.

Look again at Romans 3:25, which you quoted. I asked you above, and I ask you again: What do you believe the phrase “the righteousness of God” means? “God displayed Jesus publicly as a hilasterion by his blood to demonstrate His righteousness.” Why and how is that? Because God’s righteousness is His infinite retributive justice poured out against every single sin, however big or small, therefore making stealing paper from the office logically deserving of the same punishment as Hitler’s mass murder? No. Biblically, and especially within Romans itself, God’s righteousness means God’s fulfillment of the Sinai covenant (Rom.1:16 – 17), specifically in producing a humanity that is “circumcised of heart” and offering it to Israel and the world (Rom.2:28 – 29; 6:6; 8:3 – 4; 10:4), because only “circumcision of the heart” undoes the primal fall into corruption, and brings human nature back into God’s original vision from the garden.

Look again at Romans 5:9. “We shall be saved from the wrath of God through him,” yes absolutely. Because in Romans, Paul has already defined the wrath of God as God “giving us over” to corrupt our human nature even further with every disobedient choice (Rom.1:21 – 32). That fits why the Holy Spirit’s presence in us – the subject of Romans 5:1 – 5, significantly –

brings our salvation from that corruption and wrath. And, let's include Romans 5:10. "We shall be saved by his life." Surprisingly, not, "We shall be saved by his death," as if God simply needed to vent off some "retributive justice" and as if we needed to be saved from God, as PSA asserts. Instead, "we shall be saved by his life" – his life as he lived it as a human being, and his life as he shares it with us by his Spirit, so the principle and power of resurrected new humanity might be at work in us, to put the flesh to death as we participate in Jesus' "circumcision of the heart."

Look again at 1 Peter 1:19 and 2:24. We are redeemed "with precious blood," yes absolutely. Because blood signifies "life," the purified life Jesus accomplished through his whole incarnation, life, death, and resurrection. Doesn't that fit Peter's introduction much better? We are "born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet.1:3)? Not Jesus' death on the cross taken in isolation with the resurrection as mere "proof" that God accepted it, as PSA asserts. But rather, the resurrection itself as saving us. And doesn't that fit 2 Peter 1:4 much better? We are "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet.1:4), mediated to us through Jesus' God-soaked, God-drenched new humanity, which he perfected by defeating the "corruption" of sin on our behalf (2 Pet.1:4; 2:10; 2:19)? And so when Peter encourages us to endure suffering, as in 1 Pet.2:24, he reminds us of Jesus' death as having a medical, healing, restorative purpose: "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." Peter might be speaking in such a way that there is a double-entendre. Jesus bore the sinful violence we human beings inflicted on him, which is relevant to the topic of 1 Peter: faithful Christian suffering in persecution. And the deeper level, to which his quotation of Isaiah 53:5 ("by his wounds you were healed") is relevant, is atonement through his active, not passive, obedience. He died to sin and lived to righteousness, to perfect that resurrected new humanity, so that we might also die to sin and live to righteousness. Isaiah 53:5 does not say, "by his wounds you were absolved of being wounded," as PSA asserts. Rather, "we are healed," because no one else but Jesus could die so faithfully as to perfect human nature as the capstone of a long life of faithful obedience to the Father.

Look again at 1 Thessalonians 1:10. "Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come." Of course there is a wrath to come, as in Romans 2:5 -11 and elsewhere. But Paul has already defined "the wrath of God" as expressed, at least up until Jesus, as God allowing us to make choices that corrupt our own human nature (Rom.1:21 – 32). He says that in another critical passage, Ephesians 4:17 – 19. Paul echoes all the Jewish wisdom literature on this, and of course the fall narrative. But all that was penultimate, because Jesus shows us that God's wrath is ultimately laser-focused against the corruption of sin, and requires human partnership to root it out, ultimately shown in Jesus' human choices to condemn sin in sinful flesh (Rom.8:3) by never sinning. So we only ever experience the wrath of God as an expression of the love of God – to give ourselves to Jesus so that God can root out that corruption in us with our human participation. Even looking ahead to Jesus' return, God's wrath will be like the wrath of an addiction counselor who keeps insisting that people turn from the addiction they want to

normalize and cling to, the wrath of a surgeon who keeps insisting that people let him cut away the disease of self-centeredness they want to retain.

Look again at Psalm 22 and Jesus' quotation of it. I have never seen a PSA advocate explain **\*\*the narrative context of Jesus' quotation\*\***. I am very open to hearing if you have one. Please bear with my long-ish explanation here, because I'm guessing that even if you are familiar with how biblical allusions, quotations, and echoes (intertextuality) work, that other readers on this thread are not.

In Matthew and Mark, Jesus' quotation of Psalm 22:1 fits into the sustained parallel Jesus made between himself and David's pre-enthronement story. Matthew introduces Jesus as 'Son of David' right from his genealogy (Mt.1:1, 17, 20). Like David, Jesus was anointed king (at his baptism) by John the Baptist who played the role of Samuel as Jesus played the role of David (Mt.3:13 – 17). Like David, after being anointed, Jesus defeated a 'Goliath,' Satan in the wilderness (Mt.4:1 – 11). But unlike David, Jesus never gave into temptation. Like David, Jesus was chased by those in power with murderous intent, which is why Jesus referred to David's pre-enthronement life on the run in 1 Samuel 21 – 22, when Jesus and his disciples picked grain on the Sabbath (Mt.12:1 – 4; Mk.2:23 – 27; Lk.6:1 – 4). After Jesus made that comparison to David, the wondering crowds make the point, just in case the reader missed it. 'All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, 'This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?'' (Mt.12:23)

In fact, this reference to David taking five loaves from the tabernacle sanctuary serves as an anchor point from which to interpret Jesus' mirror image miracles of multiplying bread. Jesus took five loaves in Jewish lands (Mt.14:13 – 21; Mk.6:30 – 44; Lk.9:11 – 17; Jn.6:1 – 15) and then seven loaves in Gentile lands (Mt.15:29 – 39; Mk.7:31 – 8:10), and multiplied those loaves. The numbers five, seven, and twelve are numbers associated with David's pre-enthronement story. When David was being hunted and hounded, he went into the tabernacle sanctuary and took five loaves (1 Sam.21:1 – 6) from the twelve which rested in the presence of God (Lev.24:5). Jesus deliberately recalled that episode. David, anointed king yet fleeing persecution from the established leadership, encountered twelve loaves and took five, leaving seven. Jesus, anointed king yet fleeing persecution from the established leadership, went the other direction numerically: he encountered five loaves and produced twelve basketfuls of bread (Mt.14:13 – 21). Not only did Jesus reenact David's care for his followers by using five loaves, which was a kingly gesture, he performed a miraculous multiplication instead of straight subtraction. Jesus made the loaves become basketfuls. This gesture was not simply the gesture of a claimant to the Davidic throne (Jn.6:15). It was a claim to be, indeed, something greater than the temple (Mt.12:6) where the bread is merely replenished. Jesus was disclosing himself to be a new temple, a new dwelling place of God, a new source of life who is never depleted, a theme Jesus developed further when he took seven loaves and made seven "large basketfuls" of bread (Mt.15).

When Jesus was crucified, his opponents repeated David's opponents almost verbatim, using

those very words from Psalm 22:8 mocking David (Mt.27:41 – 43). Only then did Jesus quote Psalm 22:1 (Mt.27:44 – 46). Again, I have never seen a PSA advocate explain \*\*the narrative context of Jesus' quotation\*\*. I am curious if you have one. The simple narrative explanation at work is this: If David was forsaken to the Gentiles to suffer, and yet was still actually anointed by the Spirit to be the true king, how much more would the final Son of David? Jesus quoted Psalm 22:1 to break his opponents' interpretative grip on these events and tear open the veil of their false narrative so they could see the reality. Jesus reconfigured the narrative playing field and sought to convict his detractors of being on the wrong side of the story.

David never feared that God was withdrawing His Spirit from him until he sinned with (presumably raped) Bathsheba and killed Uriah, and then said in Psalm 51, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." That's what it sounds like to fear God's abandonment or withdrawal. But in Psalm 22, David was speaking about his pre-enthronement period, when he was forsaken \*\*to the Gentiles\*\* and away from the main body of Israel, but not forsaken by God in some absolute sense. In fact, the Book of Samuel says categorically, "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (1 Sam.16:13). "From that day forward" means the Spirit never left David, including when he penned the words of Psalm 22, and whenever he experienced what he would later write about. David knew that God's love and care for him had not changed from his birth (Ps.22:9 – 11, 19). David still experienced God as having His face turned toward him with favor (Ps.22:24). Because Jesus was on his way to enthronement, as David was on his way to enthronement. Because the Holy Spirit never left either one of them.

If PSA is true, then what was the Holy Spirit doing while Jesus was on the cross?

I am asserting that Jesus never feared that God was withdrawing His Spirit from him, even at the cross. John's Gospel takes this several steps further than the Synoptics as John discloses the unity between the Father and the Son in the Spirit. It culminates in Jesus telling his disciples that they will leave him at the cross, but the Father will not, nor ever, leave him: "you [will] leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (Jn.16:32).

John 16:32, which is a high point in John's narrative disclosure of this the Father-Son theme, means that your interpretation of Jesus' quotation of Psalm 22:1 cannot be the correct one. The Father's presence and love never depart from the Son (Jn.10:30; 14:9), and when the Son shows others his love for them on the cross, he is showing them the Father's love for himself as the Son (Jn.15:10 – 13). This is essential to John's theme that the Son reveals the Father (Jn.1:14 – 18). So it makes no sense whatsoever to suggest that the Son experiences "abandonment" from the Father. The PSA interpretation drives an unnecessary and unwanted wedge between the Father and the Son (and leaves the Spirit hanging), as well as a wedge between the Synoptics and John.

In short, Jesus trusted his Father. He was not despairing or lonely. And the Father had not turned against or away from the Son. Rather, the very nature of the Son was to be a 'temple' (Mt.12:6) through whom the Father made himself known by the Spirit (Mt.11:25 – 27), in whom the Father was always 'well-pleased' as shown by the presence of the Spirit (Mt.3:17; 12:15 – 21; 17:5).

The Father had empowered Jesus to endure temptation, to fight the corruption of sin within himself, especially from the Jordan event. There, the Father anointed Jesus with the Spirit to lead a very public life as the aspiring king who would be enthroned. The Father never ceased to encourage and affirm Jesus to walk in the way of his predecessor, David, in order to inherit David's inheritance (of fallen human nature), undo David's mistakes, and retell (recapitulate) David's story to redeem it.

In medical substitutionary atonement, there is no wedge between the Father, Son, and Spirit. There is no wedge between the Synoptics and John. There is no wedge between Jesus' quotation of Psalm 22:1 and Jesus' larger engagement with David's pre-enthronement story. All is smooth sailing.

### James Reuben

Mako, well the cup of 'mere martyrdom' that Jesus wanted to pass up, many Christians faced martyrdom while they were singing hymns to their death. So according to your logic Jesus did not want to drink the 'cup of martyrdom' that many of His followers rejoiced to, doesn't sound like the true Jesus. Or Jesus did want to be separated from the Father even if it was for 3 hours, (there's your Psalm 22). Why did He not want that cup..answer: because He always loved the Lord His God with all His heart, mind and strength. According to your logic, he was having a Peter moment in Gethsemane wanting to pass on the 'cup of martyrdom'. Never once did my Jesus have a lapse in faith. By the way I'm still curious on how you 'became sin' like Jesus. Through all that text I didn't get that I'm curious.

### Mako Nagasawa

James, Thanks for engaging, I know I'm writing a ton so hopefully I'm not overwhelming you. Regarding the phrase "he became sin" (2 Cor.5:21), as well as "he became a curse" (Gal.3:13), I do believe they are referring to the incarnation, as I linked above to a short paper. Jesus took up "sinful flesh" (Rom.8:3), or "fallen humanity." Paul appears to be using the phrase "he became sin" as a shorthand, which is close to the way Jesus in John 3:14 – 15 described even his own human nature by using the image of the "serpent in the wilderness" from Numbers 21. In that story, each serpent was a source of venom, and Jesus had to take a source of "venom" to death. Effectively, the source of sin was no longer simply "Satan" but in each of our human natures, since sin now indwells us (Rom.7:14 – 25). Jesus "became a serpent" as he "became sin" in that sense. The language of "curse" is similar: We cursed our own human nature, which is apparent from the way God has to treat human nature by kicking humanity out of the garden so we could die, before we ate from the tree of life in a corrupted state, and immortalized sin and human evil within ourselves.

Jesus agonized at Gethsemane because he was so deeply troubled over the fact that he had to put something to death that he cherished and loved: his humanity. He loved his own humanity, just as he loved Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and all other human beings. The eternal Son's now incarnate

humanity was not a mere instrument, but a treasured ontological reality over which he said, 'It is good' as he did in the original creation. To put his humanity to death was to surrender something precious, as precious as any child would be to a caring father or mother, as cherished as a wife would be to her devoted husband.

The 'Johannine Gethsemane' at Bethany clarifies that for us. When Jesus wept and felt distress at the tomb of Lazarus, he demonstrated an emotion denoted by a word used to describe horses snorting in anger: *enebrimēsato* / *ἐνεβριμήσατο* (Jn.11:33). Translating this 'he was deeply moved' (NASB), 'he groaned in the spirit' (KJV, ASV), 'he was deeply disturbed' (CEB), 'he was deeply moved in his spirit' (ESV), and 'he was greatly disturbed in spirit' (NRSV) is too mild and too vague. NLT and The Message translate this phrase better: 'a deep anger welled up within him,' with NLT adding, 'and he was deeply troubled.' CEV renders it, 'he was terribly upset.' JUB offers, 'he became enraged in the Spirit and stirred himself up.'

For various reasons, it seems apparent John wrote his Gospel to help us interpret Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Matthew, Mark, and Luke told the story of Jesus to highlight how Jesus fulfilled the story and prophetic hopes of the Hebrew Scriptures. John did not leave that concern behind, but additionally wrote to engage with the gnostic heresy and the Hellenistic mindset which strictly divided heaven and earth, soul and body, Father and Son. Therefore, the nature of Jesus' agonizing struggle in Gethsemane must be brought into close dialogue with Jesus' angry and troubled emotion at Bethany. Jesus felt that emotion not just for Lazarus, and not just for the loved ones gathered around his tomb, but for all human beings and all human nature. He was angry with the devastating cost of death, the fact of death itself, and the corruption of sin which made death necessary, reluctantly so from God's perspective. Jesus' emotion at Bethany was the manifestation of focused indignation towards death as 'the last enemy,' as Paul says (1 Cor.15:26), and sinfulness as its deeper provocation.

So the agony and anguish of Jesus lies not in how painful or terrible death per se could be, but in **who** was willing the dying. Jesus' human experience of death might also have been qualitatively different from ours because of his acute awareness of life, but the key to understanding Gethsemane lies in how divinely and truly humanely loving Jesus was towards his own humanity as he was towards others. Jesus' agony and anguish are the manifestation of a divine love to wish life and not suffering and death on anyone. Jesus' emotion does not simply reflect a natural human will to live, but a divine will to bless and give life. Socrates regarded his body to be an encumbrance, and so had comparatively less love for it, not to mention awareness of it as the hemlock dulled his soul's senses. Jesus, however, did not regard his body as an encumbrance, but as **beloved**.

### [James Reuben](#)

Mako, Jesus wept because of their unbelief not because Lazarus was asleep (dead) which is why He reminded Mary He is the resurrection. And Jesus crying because he was about to Lose His

humanity/die I also disagree with since Jesus had a baptism He could not wait until it was over (Luke 12:50). And He tells the followers don't weep at His crucifix in light of what was going to happen in Jerusalem 70 AD. So why would He tell them not to weep over simply His 'loss of humanity' if He was doing it also but let me digress we can agree to disagree.

[Mako Nagasawa](#) [James Reuben](#) I respect your effort here. Just a few notes before we sign off for now. First, you seem to be remembering John 11 incorrectly. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection" to **Martha**, not Mary. That's important because Martha seems more "matter of fact" and less emotional. But you're right in the sense that Jesus did challenge **Martha** to believe that he is the resurrection – or agent of resurrection – instead of the generic Jewish belief in bodily resurrection at the turning of the ages (e.g. 2 Maccabees 7).

But here's why it matters that we get the record straight in this public forum about how Jesus responded to each sister. Mary was not like Martha. Mary was deeply emotional, and was weeping. To her, Jesus replied with emotion, and with weeping, not with words. If Jesus did not care about our human emotions about death and loss and grief, then he would have simply challenged her to believe in his power, too. Instead, Jesus showed her he shared in her tears and grief. Mary might have already believed that Jesus could raise her brother Lazarus from the grave – presumably she had heard of the incident where Jesus raised the widow's son in Luke 7:1 – 10, and read Old Testament passages involving "life from the tombs" (e.g. Ezk.37; Isa.25) which Jesus quoted in Jn.5. What mattered to Mary was how much Jesus cared about the loss. Those who argue that Jesus walked around having a "timeless" perspective (not saying this of you) appear to be wrong. He cares about human grief and sorrow in between the time that we hope for human suffering and evil to end, and the time when it actually does end, and he is emotionally affected by all the things that affect us. Probably even more deeply than we know.

Jesus dreaded his death on the cross as it loomed before him. For example, Jesus did indeed say that he had a baptism to undergo. But I'm puzzled as to why you bring this up here. Just before that, Jesus said he wanted to "cast a fire on the earth" that he "wished were already kindled" in Lk.12:49. He means the fire of the Holy Spirit, and renewed love for God, as shown by the fire over each disciple's head at Pentecost (Acts 2). Then in Lk.12:50, Jesus says, "But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!" Jesus felt "distress" about either the death he would undergo, or the lack of the disciples' spiritual strength prior to Pentecost, or some combination of both, or more. But it does sound like he dreaded his death on the cross, at a minimum. Plus, Hebrews 12:2 confirms the reading that Jesus "endured the cross" for the joy of his resurrection and his ability to send his Spirit to empower his people after his resurrection. The assertion that Jesus "sympathizes with our weakness" (Heb.4:15) would also seem to require Jesus to feel dread, etc.

But that raises one more problematic question for penal substitution, which you just raised: people's emotional development. Jesus in John 11 requires us to deepen our emotional life. He refocuses our human anger towards sin and death, and not human persons, because as the Son of

God, that is how he focused his own emotion. But, even though he felt distress and dread for himself as he approached death, Jesus does not encourage us to “pity” him, or otherwise feel sorry for him. As you mention, Jesus even told the women of Jerusalem not to weep for him (Lk.23:28). That’s because the cross was Jesus’ triumph over the corruption of sin, in his own mind; so Jesus wants us to see him as the Victor over fear, dread, anxiety, despair, etc. But Jesus did not want us to see him as the Victim. Yet, if a preacher is preaching PSA, isn’t it fairly common for that preacher to make people feel sorry for Jesus, pity him, etc.? Jesus is fundamentally a “victim,” not just at the hands of the Jewish and Roman players, but especially by God the Father who somehow turns a pitiless eye and ravages Jesus with spiritual loss and torment. In PSA, Jesus was The Victim. Isn’t that part of the emotional pull of PSA? So PSA makes us weep for Jesus after all, because retributive justice reigns supreme in the cosmos, and collaboration with Victimization is supposedly the main expression of “mercy”... I cannot begin to tell you how emotionally and morally problematic this is – the fruit of PSA. But we’ll have to save that discussion for later.

You said you want to discuss Scripture and Scripture alone, and I’m always glad to do that. In my opinion, this is the most important of all topics. So I hope you come back here, if ever you are ready to resume the conversation. Every blessing. Oh and I suggest you read this...

[https://gravityleadership.com/getting-to-know-the-god-who-looks-like-jesus/?fbclid=IwAR004ZT\\_sSTHcPgJ8qV7xU2lcowj9sfCBB0QzPLUSfR96O1xXjDIMoiFRb4](https://gravityleadership.com/getting-to-know-the-god-who-looks-like-jesus/?fbclid=IwAR004ZT_sSTHcPgJ8qV7xU2lcowj9sfCBB0QzPLUSfR96O1xXjDIMoiFRb4)