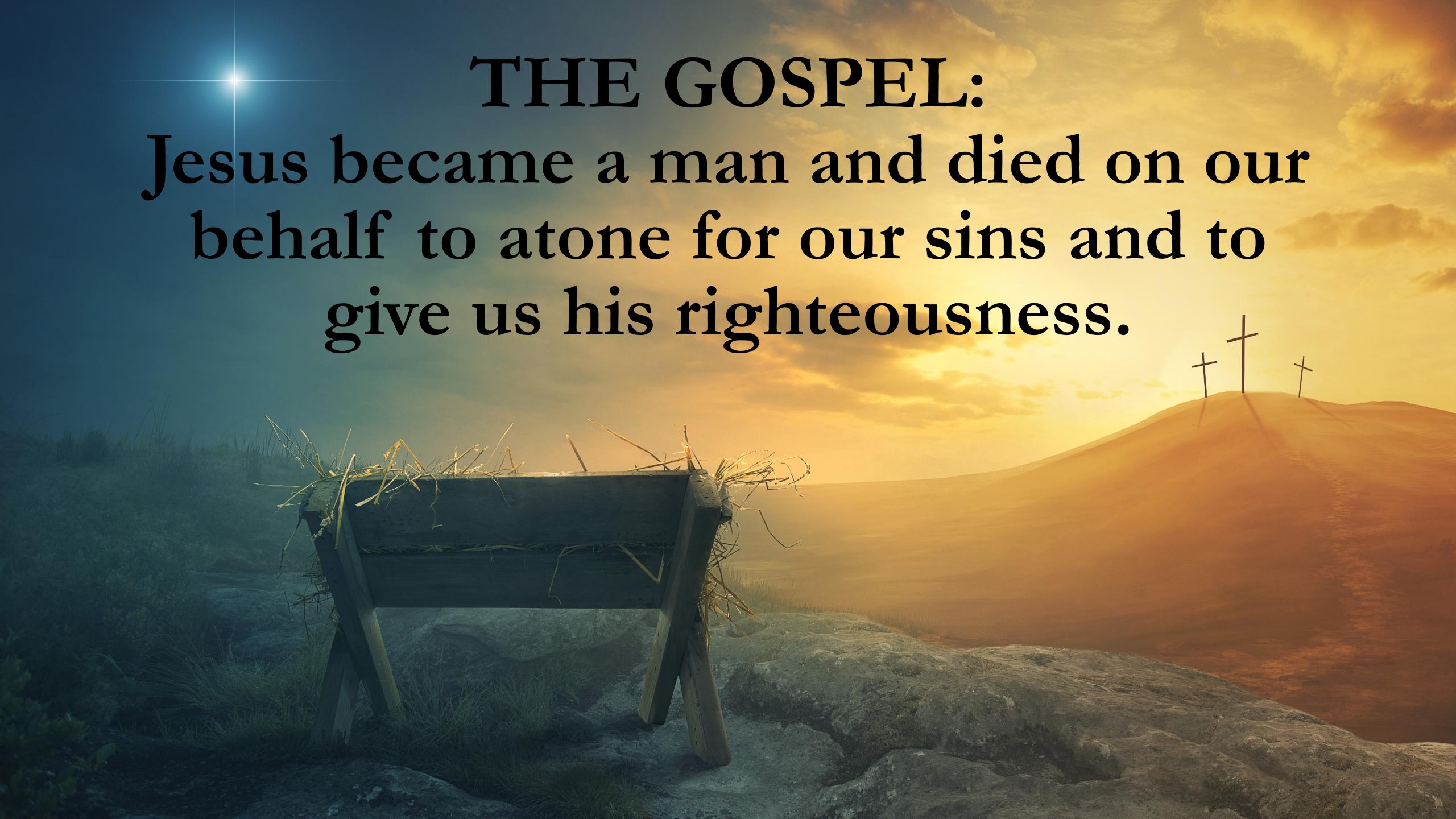




Why did God have to send his Son to die on our behalf?





Brian McLaren

Carol (the Christian): "Well, I believe that God sent Jesus into the world to absorb all the punishment for our sins. That's what the cross was all about. It was Jesus absorbing the punishment that all of us deserve. He became the substitute for all of us. As he suffered and died, all our wrongs were paid for, so all of us can be forgiven."

Brian McLaren

Kerry (the seeker): "If God wants to forgive us, why doesn't he just do it? How does punishing an innocent person make things better? That just sounds like one more injustice in the cosmic equation. It sounds like divine child abuse."

Steve Chalke

Why can't God do what he asks us to be able to do—to freely forgive without demanding retribution first.... If ... God demanded a blood sacrifice because he was unable to extend forgiveness without it, then God himself is unwilling to follow the teachings of Jesus. ... Although Jesus tell us to walk the extra mile and turn the other cheek and freely give without expecting in return, God just can't do the same. And it gets even darker than this. If God needs someone to

Steve Chalke

pay the price for our sin, the question is, "Does he ever really forgive anyone at all?" ... If you owed someone 100 pounds and they refused to release you from your debt ... until someone else paid the bill for you, in what sense did they really forgive the debt at all? ... If the cross is a personal act of violence perpetrated by God towards humankind but borne by his Son, then it makes a mockery of Jesus' own teaching to love your enemies and to refuse to repay evil with evil.

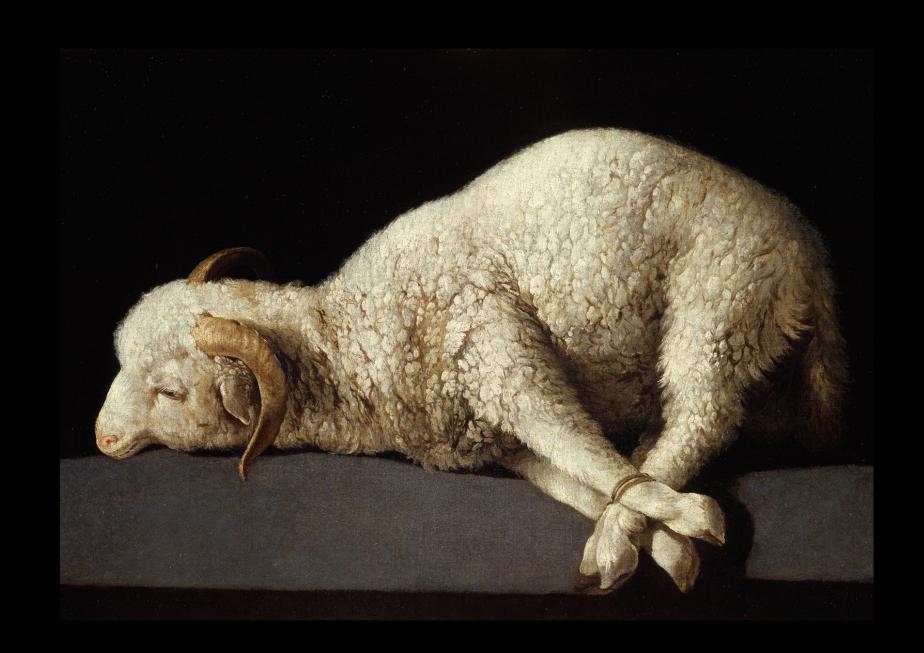
The Passover





John 1:29

The next day John saw
Jesus coming toward him
and said, "Look, the Lamb
of God, who takes away
the sin of the world!



John 1:29

Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

The Old Testament Sacrificial System





Leviticus 1:3-4

If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, you are to offer a male without defect. You must present it at the entrance to the tent of meeting so that it will be acceptable to the LORD. You are to lay your hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on your behalf to make atonement for you.



Leviticus 17:11

For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.



Hebrews 9:18-22

This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, "This is the



Hebrews 9:18-22

blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

The Day of Atonement





Leviticus 16:15-16

He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the tent of meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness.



Leviticus 16:21-22

He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness.



Hebrews 7:26-27

Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.



Galatians 3:13

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"



1 Peter 2:24

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.



2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.



Romans 3:22-25

This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his bloodto be received by faith.



Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."



Revelation 1:5-6

and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

To forgive someone is to withhold condemnation, releasing the offender from the guilt of the wrongdoing.

There is a sense of injustice inherent in forgiveness.







Miroslav Molf

I used to think that wrath was unworthy of God. Isn't God love? Shouldn't divine love be beyond wrath? God is love, and God loves every person and every creature. That's exactly why God is wrathful against some of them. My last resistance to the idea of God's wrath was a casualty of the war in the former Yugoslavia, the region from which I come. According to some estimates, 200,000 people were killed and over 3,000,000 were displaced. My villages

Miroslav Molf

and cities were destroyed, my people shelled day in and day out, some of them brutalized beyond imagination, and I could not imagine God not being angry. Or think of Rwanda in the last decade of the past century, where 800,000 people were hacked to death in one hundred days! How did God react to the carnage? By doting on the perpetrators in a grandparently fashion? By refusing to condemn the bloodbath but instead affirming the perpetrators' basic

Miroslav Molf

goodness? Wasn't God fiercely angry with them? Though I used to complain about the indecency of the idea of God's wrath, I came to think that I would have to rebel against a God who wasn't wrathful at the sight of the world's evil. God isn't wrathful in spite of being love. God is wrathful because God is love.

If all wrongdoing and evil in our world must be punished, then none of us would survive that judgment. All of us are guilty.

God saw that the only solution to this problem is that he himself must pay the price of our sin.

Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. John 10:17-18

"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

2 Cor 5:19 in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them Isaiah 53:4-5

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Hebrews 9:27-28

Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

