

Why did Jesus have to die? Or not!

by **Yusef Vanderkimpfen**¹

Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim, "in the name of God, The Beneficent, The Merciful".

To my fellow believers in the God² of Ibrahim, Ismail, Ishaq and Yaqub.

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If you ask Christians why they believe that Jesus (peace be upon him³) should die, you can get several answers, but what they all agree on is that he died for the sins of mankind.

The basic belief for Christians is that Jesus (PBUH) was sacrificed or died in atonement.

What Do Christians Believe?

The death and resurrection of this one man are at the heart of the Christian faith. For Christians, it is through the death of Jesus that people's broken relationship with God is restored. This is known as the Atonement.

What is the Atonement? The word reconciliation is used in Christian theology to describe what is accomplished by the death of Jesus. William Tyndale introduced the word in 1526, while working on his popular translation of the Bible, to translate the Latin word *reconciliatio*.

In the Revised Standard Version, the word reconciliation replaces the word reconciliation. Reconciliation (reconciliation) is the reconciliation of men and women with God through the death of Jesus.

But why was reconciliation necessary? Christian theology suggests that while God's creation was perfect, the devil tempted the first man, Adam, and sin was brought into the world. Everyone carries this original sin that separates them from God, just as Adam and Eve were separated from God when they were cast out of the Garden of Eden. Thus, according to this teaching, man would have inherited the sin of Adam as his descendants.

So it is a basic idea in Christian theology that God and mankind must be reconciled. More intense, however, is how Jesus' death brought about this atonement.

There is no single doctrine of the Atonement in the New Testament. In fact, perhaps more surprisingly, there is no official church definition either.

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² God; the God or Jehovah in the Hebrew Bible; Allah in Arabic. I use both the English word God and Allah throughout the article, referring to the Only God, referred to by Jews as Eloh (mv Elohim), thus not the Trinitarian god of Christendom.

³ Arabic: Alayhi salaam; peace said with him. Hereafter shortened to "PBUH" for the sake of readability.

In the Christian Bible, in the letters of the apostles, we can find this idea that Jesus (PBUH) died for the sins of people.

The Apostle Peter stated that "For Christ died once for all for sins, the righteous one for the unrighteous, to lead you to God." (1 Peter 3:18). The Apostle Paul noted that "One of the first things that I passed on to you is what I also received, which is that Christ died for our sins, as it is stated in the Scriptures (Bible)," (1 Corinthians 15: 3).

The Christian idea is that everyone has sinned and the result is death. We are all on the road to judgment, condemnation and eternal death unless God Himself intervened. And God intervened - this is how they understood the coming of Jesus (upon him be peace) into this world and His death on the cross.

"For the death that he died he died to sin once for all, but the life that he lives he lives to God." (Romans 6:10)

"He Himself bore our sins on the stake (cross) in His own body, so that we might be dead to sin and live to righteousness. And "you were healed by his wounds." (1 Peter 2:24)

His death is seen as a condition of reconciliation with God. "But all things come from God, who reconciled us to himself + by Christ and gave us the service of the atonement, 19 that is to say, God reconciled a world to himself through Christ and did not account for them for their transgressions, and he has entrusted to us with the message of reconciliation. " (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19)

"Otherwise, he would have to suffer over and over again since the foundation of the world. But now at the end of the ages he has revealed himself once and for all to put away sin through his sacrifice. 27 And just as men die once for all and are then judged, 28 so also the Christ was offered once for all to bear the sins of many. The second time he comes, it won't be to take away sin. He will be seen by those who eagerly await him for their salvation. " Hebrews 9: 26-28

The writer of Hebrews explained to his Jewish readers that Jesus made a "sacrifice of himself." Jewish readers should have understood the author's point. Centuries of animal sacrifices in the Jewish tabernacles and temples performed to atone for the sins of the people, all magnified in the one sacrifice that really matters, the one time sacrifice of Jesus when He died on the cross to atone for sins of humanity.

In the Christian tradition, the doctrine of original sin is often traced back to the apostle Paul's description of human sinfulness, especially in the epistle to the Romans, as a universal condition inherited from Adam (PBUH). "All people have sinned and do not attain the glory of God. 24 It is a free gift + that he declares them righteous out of undeserved kindness on the basis of the redemption by the ransom that Christ Jesus paid. " (Romans 3:23, 24)

The idea of original sin arose during the Pelagian controversy⁴ of the fifth century, with Augustine of Hippo taking the lead in promoting the idea that, because of original sin, humans were unable to

⁴ "Pelagius was a British monk. When he went to Rome, he was appalled at the corruption observed among so-called Christians there by the clergyman, he began to urge the people to "greater moral effort." Man could not blame "original sin" for his own weaknesses, Pelagius said. "All good and all evil. . . is done by us, not born with us. " Church leaders regarded this abandonment of "original sin" as heresy. And Pelagius unwittingly played directly into their hands by advocating a now popular custom - infant baptism. A bishop named Augustine considered this a huge inconsistency. "If infants are to be baptized," argued Augustine, "what about the unbaptized?" The seemingly logical conclusion was that they should burn in hell because they were unbaptized. When this point was apparently established, Augustine gave the death blow: Since unbaptized infants were

improve themselves spiritually without God's intervening grace. For Pelagius, grace consisted primarily of the gifts of free will, moral law, and the gospel. He, like the Jews, insisted that Adam's sin had no impact on human nature, and taught that people can overcome sin through their own moral efforts following the example of Jesus (PBUH).

Augustine of Hippo responded by affirming the powerful reality of original sin, arguing that all mankind participates in Adam's sin, which is passed on from generation to generation through sexual intercourse. Because of the inherited corruption of Adam's sin, human free will is damaged and enslaved to desire, making God's special intervening grace absolutely necessary for salvation.

During the controversy, a Pope, Innocent I, decided that Pelagius' teachings were acceptable. But the group of clergy, of which Augustine was the chief spokesman, eventually prevailed, and Pelagianism was condemned as heresy. Although the Augustinian position was never officially adopted by an Ecumenical Council, it prevailed in the Latin (Roman Catholic) Church.

Eastern Orthodoxy, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Eastern Catholicism, which together form Eastern Christianity, recognize that the sin of Adam and Eve introduced ancestral sin to humans and affected the subsequent spiritual environment for humanity. However, these groups did not accept Augustine of Hippo's idea of original sin and the inherited guilt attached to it. Thus, the action of Adam has no repercussion on all humanity, even though the effects of that action have altered the spiritual and physical reality of this present age of the cosmos. Nonetheless, orthodoxy admits that Adam's descendants were punished with death and the curses given by God in the garden of Eden for the first sin. Thus, it can be said that the Eastern view is somewhat less pessimistic than Augustine's doctrine.

In contrast, the Protestant churches have accepted the Augustinian formula of original sin.

What do we learn from the current writings known as the Gospel?

Historically, Judaism has taught that the first sin did not change human nature. On the contrary, the tendency towards evil, known as the *yetzer harah*, was present in Adam (PBUH) and Eve from the beginning, otherwise they would not have disobeyed God in the first place. God gives people laws and commandments to help them overcome the inclination to evil. So each person is fully responsible for his or her own sin rather than inheriting the original sin from our ancestors. This is completely in accordance with Islamic theology. Islam teaches that everyone is born in a state of spiritual purity, but education and the appeal of worldly pleasures can spoil us. Nevertheless, sins will not be inherited and, for that matter, even Adam and Eve will not be punished for their sins, for God has forgiven them.

As we have already explained, Christians believe that Jesus (PBUH) had to suffer and die.

In the Jewish part of the Bible in the book of the Prophet Isaiah (PBUH) in Chapter 53, there is a passage of a suffering servant and Christians believe that Jesus (PBUH) accomplished those verses. But was this the belief of the Jewish disciples of Jesus (PBUH)?

truly doomed, what could be the cause if it was not "original sin"? Pelagianism was over. A church meeting held in Carthage then declared Pelagius' teachings heresy. "Original Sin" became as established an aspect of Catholicism as confession. And now the Church was pushing for the promotion of - often forced - mass conversions in order to save people from "hellfire." Infant baptism was transformed from a popular practice into an official instrument of salvation, an instrument that Protestantism would inherit. "De Wachttorens 1986 3/15 p. 5 5

The Gospels themselves provide evidence that no such understanding of the passage existed before the crucifixion. For example, what did Jesus' disciples believe? After Peter recognizes Jesus as the Messiah (Matthew 16:16), he is told that Jesus will be killed (Matthew 16:21). Rather than acknowledge this as the prophetic fate of the Messiah, he replies, "God forbid, Lord! This will never happen to you." He would never have said this if he thought that Jesus was the fulfillment of a supposedly ancient prophetic interpretation of Isaiah 53 that coincides with what is now found in Christianity.

As for Jesus himself, he asks God to "take away the cup from me" (Mark 14:36)⁵, that is, the humiliation, suffering, and death that he is about to undergo? Apparently he did not know that this is why he supposedly came to earth and that the trial he is about to undertake is said to be the fulfillment of Isaiah 53. Clearly, a removal of 'the cup' would destroy what Christians would later claim would be God's plan for the redemption of mankind. "

The article continues to show us that Jesus' disciples knew nothing about a suffering messiah.

"Jesus supposedly taught the disciples to understand the Scriptures as referring to himself as the Messiah, the suffering servant, who would rise from the dead after death as an atonement for the sins of mankind. Teaching about a suffering Messianic figure dying for other people's sins was, according to Christians, a standard Jewish interpretation until the rabbis supposedly corrupted true teaching to hide that Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 53.

However, when Jesus "taught his disciples and said to them," "The Son of man will be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and if he is killed, he will rise again three days later" (Mark 9:31) we are told" they did not understand this statement" (Mark 9:32). This was clearly a concept they were not familiar with, not something the Jewish believers knew or had been taught in the synagogues.

The news of Jesus' death provokes a "mourning and weeping" (Mark 16:10) response from Jesus' disciples. "And when they heard that he was alive ... they refused to believe it" (Mark 16:11). The Apostle⁶ John explains, "For they did not yet comprehend the Scriptures, that he must rise from the dead" (John 20: 9). The response of the disciples is not what one would expect if they saw the events as a fulfillment of Isaiah 53.

You would expect that if there were Jews from the first century C.E. were acquainted with the interpretation of Isaiah 53 that was endorsed by Christians today that it was Jesus and his followers. Yes, there are New Testament anachronisms that attribute such teachings to Jesus. Yet we find cases where Jesus and / or his followers express themselves in a way that is contrary to this new Christian interpretation.

It is clear from the Gospels that before and for some time after the so-called crucifixion, Jesus' own disciples did not see Isaiah 53 as referring to a suffering Messiah who would die for the sins of the

⁵ It is written in the Injil (Gospel) of Mark that some hours before Jesus (PBUH) is taken into custody, he is with his disciples in the garden of Geth.sem'a.ne outside the walls of Jerusalem and he sat down and prayed . "He said to them," I am deeply saddened even to death. Stay here and keep watch. 35 And as he went a little further, he fell to the ground and began to pray that if it was possible, the hour would pass for him. 36 And he said, 'Abba, Father, O all things are possible for him. you, remove this cup from me, but not what I want, but what you want. "(Mark 14: 34-36)

⁶ The Greek word a · po'sto · los is derived from the verb a · po · stell'lo, which simply means "to send away or send forth. Jesus (PBUH) had chosen 12 apostles to teach and send them out to bring the good news to their fellow Jews.

people and then be resurrected. It was not until the period after the so-called crucifixion that these views developed among the followers of Jesus. There is simply no evidence that this was a Jewish interpretation of the passage. The question remains, who are the Jews in Jesus' day who supposedly clung to what has become the current Christian understanding of the meaning of Isaiah 53? They simply cannot be identified because they never existed.

But who then is the suffering servant that Christians recognize as Jesus (PBUH)? The key to deciphering any biblical text is to view it in context. Isaiah 53 is the fourth of the four "Songs of Servants". (The others are found in Isaiah chapters 42, 49, and 50.) While the "servant" is not overtly identified in Isaiah 53 - these verses refer only to "My servant" (52:13, 53:11) - the "servant" In each of the preceding Servant Songs, it is clearly and repeatedly identified as the Jewish nation. Beginning with chapter 41, equating God's servant with the nation of Israel is made nine times by the prophet Isaiah, and none other than Israel is identified as the "servant": "You are My servant, O Israel" (41: 8.); "You are My servant, Israel" (49: 3); see also Isaiah 44: 1, 44: 2, 44:21, 45: 4, 48:20.

The Bible is full of other references to the Jewish people as God's "servant"; see Jeremiah 30:10, 46: 27-28; Psalms 136: 22. There is no reason that the "servant" in Isaiah 53 would suddenly change and refer to anyone other than the Jewish people.

An obvious question to be answered: How can the "suffering servant", to which the verses refer grammatically in the singular, be equated with the entire Jewish nation?

This question disappears when we discover that throughout the Bible the Jewish people are consistently referred to as a singular, using the singular pronoun. For example, when God speaks to the entire Jewish nation at Mount Sinai, all Ten Commandments are written as if they were speaking to an individual (Exodus 20: 1-14). This is because the Jewish people are one unity bound together with a shared national destiny (see Exodus 4:22, Deuteronomy chapter 32). This singular reference is even more common in Bible verses referring to the Messianic era, when the Jewish people will be fully united under the banner of God (see Hosea 14: 6-7, Jeremiah 50:19).

It is also important to note that Judaism and Christianity differ on important theological issues. One of the most important is **the matter of sin, atonement and salvation.**

As we have said, Christians believe that the Messiah was one who would be the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world. And Christians believe that we are born condemned and that without the practice of animal sacrifices, Jews cannot atone for their sins. This is a blatant misinterpretation of the Jewish teachings in the Tanakh.⁷

⁷ Tanakh - referred to by many as the "Old Testament" is actually the Jewish Scriptures which have come to be known as the Jewish portion of the Bible as opposed to the Christian portion which has come to be known as "New Testament" and rejected by the Jews.

Jews believe that mankind was created with a tendency to do evil (Genesis 8:21)⁸. Man has the ability to control this tendency (Genesis 4: 7)⁹. Man can choose between good and evil (Psalm 37:27; ¹⁰ Deuteronomy 30:19)¹¹.

Jews, like us Muslims, believe that sin is an act, not a state of being. In Judaism there is no such thing as "original sin," which makes all of Adam's descendants intrinsically evil.

The idea that God is "a jealous God, who punishes the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me" (Exodus 20: 5), although it implied a concept of inherited sin. the doctrine of original sin. Moreover, it was balanced by the Deuteronic legal tradition (Deuteronomy 24:16) and Ezekiel's teaching that "The son shall not share in the guilt of the father, neither shall the father share in the guilt of the son" (Ezekiel 18). : 20). While some Psalms and other Jewish writings were interpreted by Christian writers as the doctrine of original sin, the rabbinic tradition rejected this idea, affirming that the *yetzer harah* was part of the original human nature and that God had given man sufficient guidance to tendency to overcome evil.

The Quran confirms this by saying that "no one will bear the burden of another" (al-Najm - The Star 53:38). This is the first instance of this Qur'anic axiom in the chronological order of revelation (cf. 6: 164; 17:15; 35:18; 39: 7; see 35: 18c) No one will be forced to endure the punishments built up by acts of another. Nevertheless, one will be punished for influencing another to do evil deeds, as in a famous hadith: "Anyone who puts forth a sinful practice will bear his burden and the burden of everyone who does it until the Day of Resurrection. " In this vein, those who lead others astray are said to have "double punishment" (see 7: 38-39c; 33:68).

A particularly important point for Christians is that they believe it took a sacrificial death¹² to save the world.

Christians insist that blood sacrifices are a necessary condition for the atonement for sin. These Christians believe that this is a clear teaching of the Jewish scriptures. While there is no verse in the Jewish Tanakh that explicitly says, "without blood there is no atonement,"¹³ Christians still believe that the common testimony of the Jewish Scriptures would lead anyone to this conclusion.

Some Christians read Leviticus 17:11¹⁴ as if it were saying that there is no atonement without blood. However; a closer reading reveals that the verse does not say such a thing. It just says that the only part of the animal that reaches reconciliation is the blood. It does not say there cannot be atonement without blood.

⁸ "Jehovah was pleased with the fragrance of the sacrifice. That is why Jehovah said to himself: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, because the heart of man has been inclined to evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all that lives, as I did. "

⁹ "If you turn to do the right thing, won't you get my approval?" This is said to Cain (Kabil) who plots to kill his brother Abel (Habil).

¹⁰ "Avoid what is bad and do what is right, and you will live on the earth forever."

¹¹ "Today I (God) call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. And you have to choose life so that you and your descendants stay alive ... "

¹² Or a blood sacrifice.

¹³ In the Jewish part of the Bible or the Tanakh there is no such explicit verse, but you can find it in the Christian part of the Bible ("According to the law almost everything is cleansed with blood, and if no blood is shed, no forgiveness takes place. "- Hebrews 9:22

¹⁴ "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I myself have given it to you so that you can make atonement for yourselves on the altar, for it is the blood that makes atonement + by means of the life that is in it."

Christians point to the Yom Kippur¹⁵ offerings described in Leviticus 16. These offerings made atonement for all of Israel's sins. These Christians then conclude that without the Yom Kippur offerings there can be no atonement for sin.

The Tanakh never says that without these offerings there can be no atonement for sin.

Some Christians point to the fact that the laws of the sacrifices are presented as laws forever. These Christians conclude that since these laws are forever relevant, it means that without them we cannot receive forgiveness of sins.

This conclusion is also unfounded. The laws of God never change. But the circumstances in which they apply are changing. All the laws of the sacrifices are only when a temple is present (Leviticus 17: 1-7).

Many Christians point to the Passover sacrifice¹⁶ in Egypt as an indication that blood is a necessary condition for the salvation of our souls. And last but not least; on that occasion God saw the blood of the lamb and saved the Israelites on the basis of that blood.

This conclusion, too, has no basis in the reality of Scripture. Smearing the blood of the lamb on the doorposts in Egypt was a human act accomplished through Israel's obedience to the explicit command of God. It was not an act of faith in the lamb or its blood. It was an act of faith in God and His commandment. Obedience to God's explicit command is ridiculed by those same Christians.

The blood sacrifices described by Moses (PBUH) are indeed important. But nowhere does it say that we cannot achieve reconciliation without those sacrifices. And all these sacrifices are important only in the context of obedience to the explicit commandments of God. "Then Samuel said," What does Jehovah prefer, burnt offerings and sacrifices or obedience to Jehovah? Obeying is better than a victim and listening better than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as bad as the sin of divination, and acting arbitrarily is as bad as magic and idolatry. " (1 Samuel 15:22).

We can easily say that **the Islamic teachings** are in accordance with the Jewish teachings in the Torah and this is confirmed in the Quran where the Quran is said to confirm the earlier Scriptures. As our cousins, the Jews, we do not believe in original sin, more we believe that all people are born sinless.

Also, the Quran clearly states that "no one will bear the burden for another" (al-Najm - The Star 53:38). No one will be forced to bear the punishments built up by the actions of another.

Nevertheless, one will be punished for influencing others to do evil deeds, as in a famous hadith: "Anyone who establishes a sinful practice will bear his burden and the burden of whoever deals with it until the Day of Resurrection." In this vein, those who lead others astray are said to have "double punishment."

Another example in the Quran is what we can read in the Surat al-An'am - The Cattle 6: 146 where it is said "And for the Jews We forbade all (animals) with cloven hooves, and We forbade them the fat of the cow and the sheep, in addition to what their backs bear, the fat of the intestines or the fat that has grown into the bone. Thus We repaid them for their rebellion. And verily, We are true. "Some of

¹⁵ Yom Kippur (/ ˈjɒm kɪˈpʊr, ˈjɒm kɪˈpʊr, ˈjɒm kɪˈpʊr - /; [1] Hebrew: יוֹם כִּיפּוּרִים, IPA: [ˈjom kiˈpʊrim], or Hebrew: יוֹם הכִּיפּוּרִים, is also known as the Day of Atonement) the year in Judaism. The central themes are reconciliation and remorse. Jews traditionally celebrate this holy day with a day of fasting and intensive prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services.

¹⁶ Allah asked the Beni Israeli to sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood on the doorpost of his house. Where the blood was present, the angel of death would not kill the firstborn of man and beast as the 10th plague on Egypt. The account can be read in the Tanakh in the book of Exodus (Exodus) chapters 11 and 12.

the Jews disobeyed this commandment, and those who disobeyed would receive retribution for their rebellion. Those who obeyed this commandment would receive no punishment.

Or this one: "Anyone who is properly led is only properly led for the sake of his own soul, and whoever goes astray is only led astray to its detriment. No one will bear the burden of another. And never do We (Allah) punish until We have sent a messenger. "(al-Isra - The Night Journey 17:15) This verse brings together three themes often invoked by the Quran, including the related idea that the consequences of one's moral actions and one's state of guidance or deception will eventually come to themselves and that no one takes the burden of another, which means that no one is punished for the wrongdoing of another, but that everyone must bear the consequences of their own actions.

Another ayat (verse): "And no burden bearer shall bear the burden (sins) of another. And if one is heavily loaded and calls another to bear his burden, none of it will be carried even if he is a close relative. You can only warn those who fear their Lord unseen and perform their prayers perfectly. And the one who cleans himself, he just cleans himself for himself. And to Allah is the return. "(Al Faatir - The Creator 35:18)

Conclusion: Jesus (PBUH) did not have to die for any of us because God is so Great, as the Quran says in the beginning of most chapters (Surah) "In the name of the most merciful and compassionate," He forgives sinners, no matter how much or how bad their sins are as soon as they repent. According to His will, mercy, and favor, He can forgive even sinners who do not repent. Neither the Jewish Bible nor the Holy Quran teaches that you should be punished for the wrong deeds of others, so you don't need to be saved for sins that others committed before you even came into existence.

You are solely responsible for your actions and since Allah has made us weak so that he can forgive us, we have this loving God who will accept us as long as we try to please him and regret our wrongdoing. It is also important that you forgive others who have made a mistake against you and regret it.

And since this doctrine of atonement has no basis in the Jewish scriptures, nor in the Qur'an and against common sense, and this teaching is a basic principle for the majority of Christian denominations, the conclusion that Christianity as it evolved is not right foundation and thus invalid.