

## DID JESUS BECOME AN ACURSED SINNER?

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*(Excerpt from the booklet "The Vicarious Atonement of Christ")*

Jesus did not literally become a sinner on the cross nor did Jesus literally become guilty of our sin. Certain Theologians have claimed that Jesus literally became a sinner when He hung on the cross, or that Jesus literally become guilty of our sin. But when the Bible says that He who knew no sin "became sin" for us (2 Cor. 5:21) it simply means that He became our "sin offering" (Isa. 53:10). And when it says that Christ bore our sins (Isa. 53:12; 1 Pet. 2:24), this is language meant to signify that the atonement takes care of our sin, that the atonement is made on behalf of our sin (Gal. 1:4; 1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Jn. 4:10). Jesus bore our sins in that Jesus was offered for our sins (Heb. 9:28). To say that Jesus bore our sins, and that Jesus suffered and died for (on behalf of) our sins is to say the same thing. To bear someone's sin means that you suffer for the sins of another (Lam. 5:7). Just as the scapegoat did not literally become a sinner and the scapegoat did not literally become guilty, nor did the scapegoat take the punishment of the people, neither did Christ who is our scapegoat. But the scapegoat bore the sins of the people in that it was offered on behalf of the sins of the people (Lev. 16:9-10). Jesus died for our sins, He was offered for our sins, but He did not become guilty of our sins. Jesus was a spotless sacrifice, not a sinful sacrifice. Because we are told that if the offering "hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not be acceptable for you" (Lev. 22:20).

Therefore the actual moral condition of Christ at his death was sinless and pure, not sinful and defiled. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, the he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (1 Pet. 3:18). The moral character of Jesus never changed; He is always the same (Heb. 13:8). He was a perfect sinless offering (Heb. 4:15) without spot or blemish (1 Pet. 1:19) because "he offered himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9:14). Jesus was always morally perfect, especially during the crucifixion (Isa. 53:7, 53:9; Lk. 23:9; Jn. 19:9; Acts 8:32-33; 1 Pet. 2:22-23). When Jesus hung on the cross, God saw him as the sinless offering not as a sinful person, but as a spotless Lamb that was being slaughtered for the sins of the people. Christ was the sinless Lamb of God who offered Himself for the sins of the people. This is what it means that he became sin (sin offering) for us, and that Christ bore the sins of the whole world.

It was the world that esteemed Jesus as a sinner (Isa. 53:3-4, 53:9, 53:12; Heb. 12:2-3), who numbered Him with the transgressors (Mk. 15:28-32; Lk. 22:37). It was the world that considered Jesus to be a sinner. But God viewed Jesus exactly as He was, as a spotless sin offering being made for the sin of the world. If Jesus was not morally sinless at His death, His offering would not have been acceptable unto God; His blood atonement would not be an adequate substitute for the punishment of hell because it would have lost its purity and value.

Jesus was forsaken of God (Matt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34) only in the sense that the Father gave the Son over into the hands of wicked men to be crucified (Matt. 17:22, 26:35; Mk. 14:41; Acts 2:23), when He lifted up the protection He previously had over the Son (Matt. 4:6; Lk. 4:11; Jn. 7:30, 10:31, 10:39). The Son was forsaken by the Father only in that the Father was “far from helping” or delivering the Son (Ps. 22:1). Pilate had no power over Jesus except what the Father gave to Him (Jn. 19:11). It was wicked men who crucified Jesus (Mk. 12:7, 27:35; Mk. 15:24-25; Lk. 20:14-15, 23:33, 24:20; Jn. 19:18, 23; Acts 2:23, 2:36, 4:10; 1 Thes. 2:14-15). The Apostle Creed says that Jesus “suffered under Pontius Pilate”. That is because it was Pilate who “delivered” Jesus to be “crucified” (Matt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15; Lk. 24:7; Jn. 19:16). In this same way the Father can be said to be the one who bruised the Son (Isa. 53:10), in the sense that the Father gave the Son over as an offering, lifting up the protection that He once had over the Son, delivering His Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. The Father bruised the Son in the sense that He made “his soul an offering for sin” (Isa. 53:10).