

Supernatural Life Forum



President's Greetings

As we step into a new year, let us embrace this fresh season with hearts full of hope and anticipation for the journey ahead. The turning of the calendar is a beautiful reminder that God's mercies are new every morning and that His plans for us are good, filled with purpose and promise.

This is a time to renew our commitment to walking in His love and sharing it with those around us. Let us begin the year with a spirit of gratitude, thanking God for His faithfulness in the past and trusting Him for the future. Whatever challenges or opportunities this year brings, we can rest assured that He is with us, guiding and strengthening us every step of the way.

May this month mark the beginning of a year where we grow deeper in our relationship with Him, serve others with His love, and experience His goodness in ways beyond what we could ask or imagine. Together, let us walk boldly into 2025, confident that He who began a good work in us will carry it to completion.

Happy New Year!

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Christ Above All: Christ's Suffering as a Means to Glory

Understanding Christ's suffering is essential to grasping the depth of God's love and the hope of glory we have through Him. Hebrews 2:10–13 reveals that Christ's suffering was not a detour but the very path to eternal glory—for Him and for us. As the “pioneer” of our salvation, Christ is described in the Greek term *archēgos* as a trailblazer, one who opens the way for others to follow. He charted a path to eternal life and glory, not through ease but through enduring suffering. His journey demonstrates that glory is not achieved by avoiding hardship but by faithfully persevering through it.

The writer of Hebrews emphasizes that it was “fitting” for God to perfect Christ through suffering. This does not imply moral imperfection in Christ but underscores His qualification as Savior. By experiencing human pain and weakness, He became the perfect mediator, fully able to empathize with our struggles. God's plan to allow His Son to suffer was neither arbitrary nor cruel but a profound revelation of His justice, love, and solidarity with humanity. Through Christ's suffering, God's character was displayed, and the salvation of the world was secured.

Christ's suffering ultimately produced glory. His resurrection and exaltation are proof that suffering in this world can lead to eternal glory in the next. This truth offers believers hope, assuring us that our pain is never meaningless. Just as Christ's suffering brought salvation to humanity, our trials can serve a greater purpose in God's redemptive plan.

One of the most profound truths in this passage is that Christ is not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters. By taking on humanity, He fully identified with us, even in our brokenness. Verse 11 declares that those who are made holy are of the same family as Christ, emphasizing our inclusion in God's family. This truth reshapes our identity and relationship with Him, reminding us of His deep love and solidarity.

The writer of Hebrews further references Psalm 22:22 and Isaiah 8:17–18 to emphasize this unity. Psalm 22:22 portrays restored community and worship as Christ proclaims God's name to His brothers and sisters. Isaiah 8:17–18 reflects trust in God during trials and highlights the unity between Christ and the “children God has given Him.” Together, these passages affirm that Christ has established a new family, uniting people from all backgrounds under God, with Himself as our elder brother.

Through His suffering, Christ proved God's unwavering love and commitment to His creation. His example shows that suffering can lead to glory and reminds us

Did God Kill Jesus?

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ stands as the centerpiece of Christian theology, but how should we understand what occurred on the cross? Some who embrace the penal substitutionary theory of atonement assert that God the Father poured out His wrath on Jesus, treating Him as a substitute for sinners. According to this view, Jesus's death was a blood sacrifice meant to appease divine anger and satisfy the demands of justice.

While this interpretation has been widely taught, it raises significant theological and moral questions: Would a loving God need to violently punish His Son to forgive humanity? Is this perspective consistent with the character of God revealed in Jesus Christ?

A Different Perspective

Brian Zahnd, in his book *Sinners in the Hands of a Loving God*, challenges the notion that God killed Jesus. Instead, Zahnd describes the crucifixion as an act of sacrificial love:

God did not kill Jesus, but Jesus's death was a sacrifice. Jesus sacrificed His life to show us the love of the Father. Jesus sacrificed His life to shame the ways and means of death. Jesus sacrificed His life to remain true to everything He taught in the Sermon on the Mount about love for our enemies. Jesus sacrificed His life to confirm a new covenant of love and mercy. Jesus sacrificed His life to Death in order to be swallowed by Death and destroy Death from the inside. The crucifixion of Jesus was a sacrifice in many ways. But it was not a ritual sacrifice to appease a wrathful deity or to provide payment for a penultimate god subordinate to justice.

In this view, Jesus's death was not about satisfying God's wrath but about revealing God's love. On the cross, Jesus embodied self-giving love, remained faithful to His teachings about loving enemies, and confronted the systems of sin, violence, and death. By willingly sacrificing Himself, Jesus broke the power of death and inaugurated a new covenant of love and mercy for all humanity.

What Does the Bible Say?

Scripture offers profound insight into the purpose of Jesus's death, often pointing to love, reconciliation, and victory over sin and death rather than a punitive transaction. For example:

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son..."

2 Corinthians 5:19: "God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them."

Hebrews 2:14: "...so that by His death He might break the power of him who holds the

that God can redeem our pain for His purposes. Imagine a general who leads troops into battle, enduring the same hardships as his soldiers. His courage inspires them, and his leadership brings victory. Similarly, Christ entered the battlefield of human suffering to lead us to eternal glory.

This truth challenges us to reflect on our own lives. How does Christ's endurance inspire us to persevere in difficult times? In what ways can we serve others and reflect His solidarity with humanity? Do we fully embrace the reality that Christ is not ashamed to call us His siblings? These questions invite us to live with a renewed sense of purpose, hope, and identity in Him.

Christ's suffering was not meaningless—it was the path to glory for Him and for us. Through His sacrifice, He became the perfect Savior, the trailblazer of our salvation, and the elder brother who welcomes us into God's family. As we reflect on His love, may we find strength to endure our trials, trust in His redemptive purposes, and walk boldly in the knowledge that glory awaits those who follow Him.

What is the Wrath of God?

I have believed for some time now that what we have imprudently called “the wrath of God” is, in reality, the unrecognized and unattributed “works of Satan.”

Even the Bible seems to conflate these two concepts—“the works of Satan” and “the anger of God.” This is easily demonstrated by considering the incident in which King David sinned by numbering Israel. This event is recorded in 2 Samuel 24:1 and, centuries later, in 1 Chronicles 21:1. In the earlier account, David's sin is attributed to “the anger of God,” while in the later passage, it is caused by “Satan's provocation.”

“And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.” —2 Samuel 24:1.

“And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.” —1 Chronicles 21:1.

These passages describe the same event where David sinned by numbering Israel. Same event. Same David. Same sin. Same result: 70,000 dead Israelites. Yet the cause of this evil differs between the two accounts. In 2 Samuel, it is attributed to the anger of the Lord, while in 1 Chronicles, it is ascribed to Satan.

Fascinatingly, I recently discovered further support for this perspective. The Jews, both in their Talmudic and post-Talmudic literature, believed that Samael (literally “the wrath or poison of God”) was another name for Satan. They equated “God's wrath” with “Satan's oppressions.”

The Talmud states: *“The evil spirit, Satan, and Sama'el the Angel of Death, are the same.” —Bava Batra 16a.*

Samael is also made synonymous with the biblical serpent in the story of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

In The Holy Kabbalah (Arthur Edward Waite, p. 255), Samael is described as the “wrath of God.” Samael/Satan is a major archangel in Talmudic and post-Talmudic lore. He is portrayed as accuser (devil), seducer, and destroyer, regarded at various times as both good and evil.

“Satan/Samael, the prince of demons and/or destructive angels, has

power of death—that is, the devil.”

These passages emphasize God’s initiative of love and reconciliation rather than divine wrath.

Theological Implications

Understanding Jesus’s death as a demonstration of God’s love rather than divine punishment reshapes how we see the character of God. It invites us to view God as a loving Father who suffers with us and for us, rather than a distant judge demanding retribution. This perspective aligns with the overall biblical narrative of God’s redemptive work through Christ, which emphasizes mercy, forgiveness, and restoration.

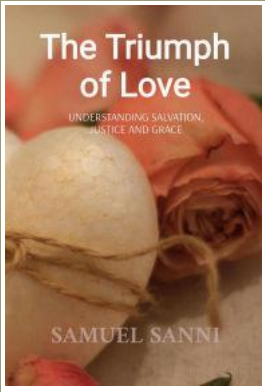
Additional Resources

For those seeking to explore this topic further, here are some helpful resources:

Eitan Bar: Read his article on this subject in depth at this link.
<https://www.ptm.org/q-r-reading-romans-without-courtroom-lenses-brad-jersak>

N. T. Wright: Watch his interview addressing this topic here.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkXl33hpe2o>

Brad Jersak: For a Q&A exploring the atonement through non-penal lenses, visit this article.
<https://www.oneforisrael.org/bible-based-teaching-from-israel/god-kill-god/>



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had many incarnations in Jewish literature. In several texts, ‘Samael’ seems to be the name of the Angel of Death. At least once in the Zohar, he is declared the ‘shadow of death,’ a kind of consort to Death (I:160b). In other texts, he is regarded as synonymous with Satan, but almost as often he is treated as a separate entity.” —*The Encyclopedia of Jewish Myth, Magic and Mysticism*, Samael entry, Rabbi Geoffrey W. Dennis.

In the Jewish Talmud, Midrash, and Dead Sea Scrolls, Satan is portrayed as being intimately involved in luring and misleading Old Testament saints into destructive attitudes and situations. Although Satan is not explicitly mentioned in their textual lives, later Jewish writers perceived Satan’s presence throughout the subtext of their Scriptures.

For instance, Satan is the one who: Lures Noah into drunkenness (Tanhuma Noah 13). Provokes the Golden Calf incident (Shabbat 89a). Lures David into a confrontation with Ishbi-benob, the brother of Goliath (Sanhedrin 45a).

These writings often portray Satan as the Death Angel of the Old Testament (Bava Batra 16a), the Angel of Temptation, Prosecution, and Destruction, running “sting operations” to destroy humanity, as seen in the book of Job.

“Samael is called ‘chief of all the satans’ (Deuteronomy Rabbah 11:10; III Enoch). In Midrash Kohen, Samael is the prince of the third gate to Gehenna.”

In Jubilees 17:16, concerning Abraham’s offering of Isaac, the text attributes the initiative to kill Isaac to “Prince Mastema,” another name for Satan in Jewish lore.

The Jewish sages even spoke of Satanim in the plural, as if “adversaries” were a class of destructive angels.

Given these traditions, who are we to dismiss Satan’s relevance to the Jewish and Christian understanding of evil, wrath, temptation, and death?

Here is why this matters. If even the later Jewish scholars and writers of the Talmud, Midrash, and Dead Sea Scrolls believed Satan was embedded within the subtext of Old Testament Scripture, then so should we. While their understanding differentiated the works of God from the works of Satan, they didn’t go far enough. They still considered Satan an obedient servant angel who operated under God’s direct commands—a left hand of wrath.

Jesus corrected this fatal misconception. He never validated Satan as serving His Abba in any capacity. Instead, Jesus identified Satan as the cosmic rebel, the “murderer” and “father of lies” from the beginning, the one to whom sins belong. Jesus revealed Satan as the rebellious “ruler of this world,” operating entirely outside of divine approval.

Thus, Jesus redefined our understanding. Until we reinsert Satan into the Old Testament narrative as a cosmic antagonist, God will wrongfully be blamed for actions unworthy of His nature.

Satan is not God’s angry voice. Jesus is God’s only voice. And that voice contains no cruelty, deception, destruction, oppression, hostility, or hypocrisy.

“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” —Luke 10:18.

Or, to paraphrase: Jesus saw the attributes of Satan drop away from our

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image of God. That day, the people saw a love divine without condition, reservation, or limit. They saw God as a rescuing healer, not a cruel afflicter. They saw God as a subject of awe, not terror. Jesus forever severed Satan's nature from God's nature. Wrath, cruelty, and condemnation are not heavenly virtues—they are the attributes of Satan, now discarded and fallen.

We Become What We Behold

There is a transformative truth at the heart of our faith: We become what we behold. Our lives take shape from what we set our hearts and minds upon. To behold Jesus is to be transformed by His glory, His love, and His truth. Take a moment to behold Him—who He is, what He has accomplished, and who you are in Him.

Who is Jesus?

Jesus is the Creator of all things, the One through whom all life exists (John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:15-17). He is 100% God and 100% man, fully embodying the loving heart of the Father who is also your Good Father. Jesus is the perfect image of God, revealing to us the true nature of God as love—faithful, kind, and good (John 14:9, Ephesians 1:3-6).

What Has Jesus Accomplished?

Through Jesus, God the Father has reconciled the entire world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). He did this once for all, removing every barrier of sin that separated humanity from Him. On the cross, Jesus bore the weight of sin, and in His resurrection, He brought new life to all creation. He has made you a new creation—a life redeemed and restored in Him. This reconciliation is not conditional; it is complete. God is not counting your sins against you. In Christ, He has fully embraced you, called you His own, and secured your place in His family forever (John 19:30, 2 Corinthians 5:14-19).

Who Are You in Him?

Your truest identity is not found in what you've done or what others say about you—it is found in Christ. Every false identity, every lie, and every failure was crucified with Him. What remains is your most real identity:

A beloved daughter or son of the Most High God. Fully loved, fully redeemed, and fully accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6). Presently and eternally in union with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (John 14:20). This truth is finished. It cannot be undone or overturned. Jesus, His Good Father, and Holy Spirit are in perfect agreement:

You are loved. Rest in His Embrace Right now, you are held in the unbreakable embrace of the Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Romans 8:38-39). No power, no sin, no failure can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

Take a moment to listen. Ask God if these things are true of you. Hear His gentle voice affirming: "You are My beloved child. You are fully accepted, fully loved, fully mine." Rest in this truth. Behold Jesus. And as you behold Him, watch as His love transforms you into His likeness.

Peace to you, beloved.



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