

Part 1: The Shepherd and the Wolf

(Text to Read: John 10:1-13)

I was raised from birth as a Christian, a follower of Christ, and I thank my Creator everyday for allowing me to be born into this faith. I heard early on in my childhood that “You are a sinner. Christ died for your sins. Accept the forgiveness that comes through him today, and receive eternal life.” In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 Paul writes: “For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

But how does it work? I believe it, whether or not I understand how it works. You can get into an airplane, take a flight from Atlanta, Georgia to Washington state, and you don’t have to know anything about how the plane works for it to work. It seems impossible on face value, how a big hunk of metal can lift off and go that far that quick, but it happens, and there is a reason behind it. It’s the same way with Yeshua’s death being for the forgiveness of sins. I believe someone can be a lost sinner with a penitent heart who asks for forgiveness and repents of their sin, and they will be forgiven based upon the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah. Understanding exactly how it works is not a condition to receive the forgiveness offered, but you will have a greater appreciation for the Messiah as you grow to a greater level of understanding.

Our faith shouldn’t be one of mere “bumper-sticker” phrases. I’m afraid that too often cliché Christianity is what exists among Christians. We learn a set of words and phrases that quickly describe what we believe, but we don’t spend time learning what those words and phrases really mean. So I’d like to do my best to teach you how the atonement works, how the death of Christ took place for our sins, at least to the extent that I currently know (I can always grow in my understanding). My hope is that understanding the *how* will cause you to greater appreciate Yeshua’s sacrifice, and also help you explain it intelligently (yet simply) to others.

To set the stage a bit here, Almighty Yahweh is the Creator, and He is holy, set-apart from sin and wickedness, and He gives instructions to be followed. He created this beautiful paradise over in the area of the earth known as southern Mesopotamia (what we now call Iraq), and called it the Garden of Eden. Everything He made was good. Eden actually means “pleasure, luxury, delight.” Here Yahweh gave an instruction to our first parents, Adam and Eve, and they disobeyed. They were tricked into disobedience because of this creature called “the serpent” in Genesis 3. Their disobedience caused all of creation to enter a state of fallenness: from people, to animals, to the soil.

We might think that isn't fair, but we were all given a chance to be obedient as well, and we all chose disobedience. Adam was special, different than you and I. Yahweh created him and formed him from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Eve was then formed from the side of Adam. So we're talking here about a unique son and daughter of the Almighty, two virgin-births directly created by Him, not pro-created like you and I. If there were ever two good people to give it a shot, Adam and Eve were the two good people. You and I certainly would not have done any better.

After this people are born in every generation, and we all sin personally (Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 3:23). Sin is the breaking of Yahweh's law (1 John 3:4). Any instruction Yahweh gives us to follow, when it is not followed - when we decide to do what we want to do rather than what He wants us to do - we sin or disobey His instruction.

So how do we, as sinners (and thus unholy) restore our relationship with the Almighty, holy Creator? True enough, there must be penitence. Penitence is humility and sorrow for our sin. Think about when you were little, and you did something mean towards your cousin or sibling, and your Mom or Dad told you to say "I'm sorry." Did you ever say "I'm sorry" but didn't mean "I'm sorry"? Yea, all of us, a bunch of sinners. But have you ever done something wrong, and immediately (or later) regretted it, and when you told the Father in prayer, or the person you wronged, you were genuinely sorry? That's penitence, which is the first step in repenting. Remember the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector in Luke 18? The tax collector wouldn't even look up to heaven, but bowed his head (that's reverence and humility) and said, "Father, have mercy upon me, a sinner." That man's prayer was heard and he was justified, forgiven of his sin.

Penitence and repentance are necessary, but is that all that it takes? If we only want to read or focus on certain texts then it might sound like that's enough, but if we look at everything the Bible has to say we find that there is more required in order for that restoration between mankind and the Heavenly Father to take place.

I'm reminded of some people I've run into who are anti-Yeshua; people who have denied the Messiah and think you can just obey the law and be saved. They quote a text like Ezekiel 18:21-22, "But if the wicked turns from all his sins that he has committed, and keeps all my statutes, and does that which is lawful and right, he will surely live. He will not die. (22) None of his transgressions that he has committed will be remembered against him. In his righteousness that he has done, he will live." Sounds pretty straight-forward right?

So they quote this text and say we don't need Yeshua to die for our sins. But what about Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12? A good friend of mine once taught an excellent series of

lessons on the suffering servant here, showing that Yeshua of Nazareth is the fulfillment of this prophecy.¹ Do we just believe the Ezekiel text, or just believe the Isaiah text? No, we believe **both** texts of Scripture.

It's like if you hear someone teach on prayer and say, "Ask and ye shall receive! You have not because you ask not!" Okay, those phrases and concepts are in Scripture, but is that the only requirement for prayer? What about humility? James 4:3 says, "Do not ask amiss to consume upon your own desires." Are we just going to ignore that one? See, all the pieces of Scripture on a subject come together to form a beautiful puzzle. If you just focus on one piece of the puzzle you never make a complete, perfect picture. According to several texts of Scripture, Yeshua of Nazareth is the suffering servant sent by Yahweh, the second Adam, uniquely begotten by Yahweh, the perfect Anointed One, who never sinned and then died for our sin. He reversed what the first Adam messed up, and by placing our faith and trust in him, and in turn having an obedient love-faith relationship with him, we are forgiven of our sins and inherit what he inherits.

We might wonder about those who lived for Yahweh before Yeshua was ever born. The Older Testament saints were told by Yahweh and through holy prophets about a special deliverer, and they had faith in him that was to come. Those who knew him personally had faith in him during his life, and those of us now who read about him look back and have faith in him. We are just looking at him from different directions; future, present, and past. So again, by placing our faith and trust in the deliverer sent by Yahweh, and having this obedient love-faith relationship with him, we are forgiven of our sins and inherit what he inherits. Paul calls it being an heir of Yahweh and a joint-heir with the Messiah (Romans 8:17). The gift that Yahweh gives to Yeshua, we are also given, not because we are perfect like Yeshua, but because we are joined to him and thus fellow heirs.

The biggest part about this is immortality and/or eternal life. The story of Yeshua didn't stop at his perfect life, or his sacrificial death, it culminated in his victorious resurrection from death on the third day to immortality and life everlasting. So just as Yeshua was raised from the dead, we too who are joined to Yeshua - by faith and faithfulness - have the promise of resurrection, immortality, and eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Looking at John 10

That's the overview, but now - how does it work? Let's start by looking at John 10 from the mouth of Yeshua to see what he says about his mission and himself. In John 10:1-5

¹ You can listen to each of these lessons at: <https://www.ministersnewcovenant.org/isaiah-53-exegesis.html>

Yeshua gives an illustration that helps us understand who he is and how he works. He says: "I assure you: Anyone who doesn't enter the sheep pen by the door but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. (2) The one who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (3) The doorkeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (4) When he has brought all of his own outside, he goes ahead of them. The sheep follow him because they recognize his voice. (5) They will never follow a stranger; instead they will run away from him, because they don't recognize the voice of strangers."

Sometimes preachers get a bad wrap for using illustrations in their sermons. "Just teach the Bible!" some "hardcore" Christians might say. Well (as seen here), Yeshua often used illustrations to help people understand things. It's a good teaching method. When we are told something we already understand it helps us see a picture of a bigger, spiritual lesson.

Here, the shepherd enters the sheep pen by the door. He goes in through the door because he owns the pen. Thieves and robbers usually jump a fence or break through a window. The sheep then listen to the voice of their shepherd. When sheep are raised by a shepherd, they grow accustomed to that person, and recognize the sound of their voice. Other people may attempt to call the sheep by using the same words or phrases, but the sheep will not come unless they hear the voice of their specific shepherd.

In John 10:6 the people Yeshua told this to didn't understand what he was telling them, so he goes on to explain and apply the illustration: John 10:7-10 "I assure you: I am the door of the sheep. (8) All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn't listen to them. (9) I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. (10) A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance."

So Yeshua likens himself to the door of the sheep-pen (barn) that the sheep walk in and out of. They walk in, probably during the night for warmth and protection, and then walk out of it during the day to go and find green pastures for grazing. And of course the sheep are the people who love and follow Yeshua. He then says (John 10:11), "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." So now he's telling them another part of the illustration; he not only can be viewed as the door, but also as the good shepherd who takes care of the sheep.

In verse 11 we see the concept of sacrifice. The good shepherd is willing and ready to protect his sheep from harm, to the point of laying down his own life if need be.

Predators may show up, but the shepherd is there to guard his flock. Look at verses 12-13, “The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and doesn’t own the sheep, leaves them and runs away when he sees a wolf coming. The wolf then snatches and scatters them. (13) This happens because he is a hired man and doesn’t care about the sheep.”

Do you see the contrast? The shepherd is the owner, he’s invested in the sheep. The hired man doesn’t own the sheep so he isn’t as worried about trouble. The same holds true when you buy something expensive with your own money. My oldest daughter once sent me a funny video about being a young adult and newly married vs. living with your parents. You start appreciating things like heat, water, and food a lot more when you move out and have to pay for those things.

But look at the wolf here. The hired man runs when he sees the wolf coming. Remember, the good shepherd is willing to lay down his life for the sheep, *when he sees the wolf coming* (that’s the understanding). Who do you suppose the wolf is? I believe it’s a depiction of the Devil, that serpent from Genesis 3 that came to steal, kill, and destroy Adam and Eve. Yeshua is the good shepherd who sees the wolf coming and is not only *willing* to lay his life down for the sheep, but *does* lay his life down the sheep. He says so in verse 17, “This is why the Father loves me, because I am laying down My life so I may take it up again.” He’s speaking of his death and resurrection, and the one that takes his life is the wolf. There’s a greater purpose involved, so he (Yeshua) dies at the hand of the wolf (the Devil) in order to save the sheep (us). This is the beginning of understanding just what Yeshua did for us.

Part 2: Re-Thinking Human Sacrifice

(Text to Read: John 10:11-18)

It’s a difficult process to re-work a set of beliefs that you’ve held for a long time. I remember when I first started using the name Yahweh. For the first 16 years of my life I had just said God, Lord, and Jesus, and I’d memorized a lot of Bible verses using those words. When I started to say Yahweh it sounded strange. It wasn’t strange to Hebrew Scripture, but it was strange to this Pentecostal Christian. Same with Sabbath, I hadn’t ever observed a holyday of rest, and then all of a sudden I’m taking a day off every week, an entire evening-to-evening period where I’m not working. It was different, weird, and it took a while to settle into that way of life. In time it became as normal to me as going to church on Sunday morning used to be, but I had to re-train my mind and life to fit the Word of Yahweh.

The subject you are reading about right now is like the name Yahweh or Sabbath, for me. I've believed that the atonement, Yeshua's death in particular, did something in a certain way for my whole life up until about three years ago (2019). It was then that I ran across some things I'd never even heard of before. When I first heard them I could see some truth there, but man, when your brain has been programmed to think one way - and someone or something comes along and challenges that - it's hard to shift gears and look at something with new glasses on.

I ran across an N.T. Wright quote recently that is profound. He was an archbishop in the Church of England. He says, "It all becomes so complicated, people grumble, when what they really mean is, 'I am so used to reading this passage one way that I find it hard to switch and consider other options.'" I recently explained the lunar Sabbath to someone online, and I barely scratched the surface in like a two paragraph explanation. The response? *"That all confuses me and God is not the author of confusion so I'm sticking with what I know and believe."* Anything you hear for the first time can be confusing, but that doesn't mean the devil is causing your confusion. Sometimes it's truth you're hearing, and you need to slow down and re-evaluate what you believe.

My entire life I have believed that when the Bible teaches: "Yeshua died for our sins" it means that Yahweh put Yeshua to death in our place; the Almighty doled out the penalty that should have went towards me, towards Yeshua. The wrath of Yahweh against sin was placed upon Yeshua. I've used Isaiah 53:10 here for this where it says, "It pleased Yahweh to bruise him" or "to crush him." I'll talk more about this text in part 4 of this study.

On the surface this makes sense. The example I've given countless times in conversation with people is this: Let's say you are standing before a judge and you've wracked up an enormous amount of traffic fines - \$50,000 - but you don't have the money to pay the fines. I'm standing in the back of the court room, and out of sheer mercy and compassion I walk up to you and give you \$50,000 free and clear so that you can pay what you owe and you're forgiven, but the payment came from me. I took your penalty, you took my wealth. I have told people so many times that this is how the cross should be understood. You were the guilty party and Yeshua paid the price for you by taking the punishment from Yahweh.

With the example of a monetary fine this works, but let's press this a bit further. What serious crime can be satisfied by paying a monetary fine? Let's say a man is standing trial for first-degree murder. He's murdered someone in cold-blood, there's multiple eye-witnesses, the man confesses to it - he's guilty, and he's sentenced to be put to death. All of a sudden, the man's mother walks up to the front of the court room and says, "I know

my son has done wrong, but he's my son. I love him dearly in spite of all this. I'll step in and take his punishment. Put me to death instead of my son."

Just think with me about this, you don't have to answer right now, I just want to stir up your minds. *Is that just?* Would the judge say to this mother, "As long as *someone* dies and pays the penalty for this crime it will be okay." Can the judge put the innocent mother to death and let her guilty son go free? See, when you push the illustration or example further, a fallacy shows up.

Let me read you an illustrative story from a book by Philip Hess titled "Penal Substitution on Trial, How Does the Death and Life of Jesus Save Us?" He writes on page 3:

"Once there was a judge who had reason to be angry. A band of wicked men had molested his daughter. Now, they were brought to the bar, and he had a chance to throw the book at them - a chance for revenge - and to make them suffer for their crime! He brought the gavel down for a guilty verdict, but before they were hauled off to the whipping post, the judge's own son stepped forward. He said, "Dad, I know that you are just and will not be satisfied until someone is punished for this crime. I want to take these men's punishment." The judge was pleased by the character of his son. "You are right," he said. "A crime has been done. Justice will be satisfied as long as someone is punished for it." The son was hauled off to the whipping post, and justice was served."

How does that story make you feel? Is justice really served when an innocent party receives the punishment that the guilty party deserves? It works when the penalty is just monetary, but when we start pressing the illustration to serious crimes it collapses.

Yeshua Does Lay Down His Life

In John 10 we get the concept from Yeshua's own words that he is going to lay down his life for the sheep. He says the Father loves that he is willing to do this, but Yeshua doesn't attribute the taking of his life to his Father. He does say, "I lay my life down on My own," but just before this he speaks of a *wolf* coming for the sheep. The picture he gives us is that while the hired man runs away when he sees the wolf coming, the good shepherd does not run away. Because the shepherd loves his flock he fights for them and steps up to the wolf when he sees the wolf coming. In this case the sheep are saved because the shepherd gave up his life, to the wolf.

A wolf is the arch-enemy of sheep, we all know this. I believe the wolf depicts Satan, the Devil, the arch-enemy of Almighty Yahweh and thus the arch-enemy of the sheep. Somehow, Yeshua's death for our sins is at the hand of the wolf, and not at the hand of his Father. The Father is pleased with his heroic, noble sacrifice, because he's giving up his life so that others will have life. On one hand it makes the Father sad, but on the other

hand how great is it to have a Son who will give up his own life so that others would get to live. Yeshua later says in John 15:13, “No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends.” 1 John 3:16a also says this, “This is how we have come to know love: he laid down his life for us.”

Human Sacrifices

What if you and I were somewhere and some crazy armed robber approached me with a gun pulled, wanting my wallet, car, or whatever, and instead of you fleeing the scene for safety you stepped in front of me. The criminal panicked and shot you and fled the scene. In that case you, out of love, sacrificed your life for me. You were a human sacrifice, but not the kind that is condemned in Holy Scripture. See, there is nowhere in Yahweh’s law that allows for a human to be ritually sacrificed to Him. When you think about the sacrifices (clean animals, placed on altars, throat slit, blood poured out, sometimes the animal is eaten and sometimes it’s completely burned), Yahweh never calls for that to be done towards Him with a human being. We do see drink offerings of wine, or offerings of grain and flour, but never humans.

What we do see among the pagan religions of old is human sacrifice brought to a god in order to appease the god’s wrath. Yahweh condemns this in His law by saying (Lev. 18:21 WEB), “You shall not give any of your children as a sacrifice to Molech. You shall not profane the name of your Mighty One. I am Yahweh.” There’s a footnote in my HCSB here that says, “An ancient Near Eastern god to whom child sacrifices were offered by fire; Lev. 20:2-5; Dt. 18:10; 1 Kg 11:7; 2 Kg. 23:10.” I’ve known about this for a very long time, but I kind of just shoved it into the back of my mind, because I wasn’t completely sure how to reconcile Yeshua’s sacrifice with there being a command against human sacrifice.

Some people reconcile it by bringing up Yahweh’s instructions to Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22), but if you know the story, (1) this is a test (Genesis 22:1), and (2) Yahweh *stops* Abraham by having an angel call out to Abraham just before the sacrifice. When Abraham and Isaac were walking with the wood and the knife to the place of sacrifice, and Isaac asks him, “where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” Abraham replies (Gen. 22:8, ESV), “(the) Almighty will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.”²

² Growing up I heard it taught that Abraham was somewhat prophetically saying that Yahweh would one day come down from heaven and be the sacrifice for mankind. This is popular in Oneness Pentecostal circles, taken from the KJV rendering, “God will provide himself a lamb,” but it’s a misunderstanding. Abraham isn’t saying God will provide himself *as* or *to be* a lamb, he is saying that God will provide a sacrificial lamb *for* Himself, to be sacrificed *toward* Him. The GNB says “God himself will provide one,” while the LSV says, “God provides for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.”

It appears that Abraham had faith that an animal would be provided by Yahweh, and that's exactly what happens. After the angel stops Abraham, lo and behold there's a ram caught by his horns in the thicket nearby, and Abraham offers the ram as a burnt offering, and calls the name of that place "Yahweh Yireh" meaning Yahweh will provide.

The IVP Bible Background Commentary (by Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas) gives us some important Ancient Near Eastern context here (pg. 53): "Child Sacrifice. In the ancient Near East, the god that provides fertility (El) is also entitled to demand a portion of what has been produced. This is expressed the sacrifice of animals, grain, and children. Texts from Phoenician and Punic colonies, like Carthage in North Africa, describe the ritual of child sacrifice as a means of insuring continued fertility. The biblical prophets and the laws in Deuteronomy and Leviticus expressly forbid this practice, but that also implies that it continued to occur. In fact, the story of Abraham's 'sacrifice' of Isaac suggests that Abraham was familiar with human sacrifice and was not surprised by Yahweh's demand. However, the story also provides a model for the substitute of an animal for a human sacrifice that clearly draws a distinction between Israelite practice and that of other cultures."

Is Yeshua a Human Sacrifice?

Now Yeshua is called a sacrifice in Scripture, and if we go back to the example I gave of you sacrificing your life for me at the hands of a criminal, that's a human sacrifice that Yahweh does not condemn. Same with the good shepherd who dies at the hand of the wolf to save the sheep. It's one person laying down their life for someone or something they love. This is not a ritual sacrifice (like an animal on an altar), but it is still a sacrifice.

Think of a loving father who pushes his child out of the way when he all of a sudden sees a car coming or danger approaching. The child lives and the father is injured or maybe even dies. That's a human sacrifice, but not the type Yahweh condemns in the Torah. Or think about times of war where men go on a battlefield almost knowing for sure they will lose their lives, but their lives are lost for the betterment of those who continue to live. Again, a human sacrifice, but not the type Yahweh condemns.

So there is truly no greater love than someone who lays down their life for another, and we see the love of Yeshua in that he laid down his life for us on the cross, but was it at the hands of his angry Father? Was the Father crushing Yeshua on the cross, or did he die at the hands of the wicked? He says *the wolf* comes to get the sheep. I don't believe Yahweh is that wolf, I think it's the Devil, and I believe Yeshua somehow gave himself over to the Devil, and laid down his life as a sacrifice in our place, so that we - the sheep - would have life.

Sacrificial Animals are Not Tortured

Think about this? Were the animals that were sacrificed ritually to Yahweh spat upon, mocked, beaten, whipped bloody, and then hung on a cross? No. In Hebrew practice it is taught that the kosher slaughter of an animal is to be done as quickly and painless as possible. When I slaughter a lamb for a memorial Passover meal, I don't get out a whip and torture the lamb before slaughtering it, so do we really think it was Yahweh who did all that to Yeshua before he went to the cross? Was the Almighty pleased to torture His own Son? Or does it make more sense that Yahweh's arch-enemy, Satan, the Devil, the serpent, the wolf would do that to Yeshua?

We do see some illustrative parallels in the animal sacrifices and Yeshua. Isaiah 53 says Yeshua was led like a lamb to the slaughter (or a sheep when being sheared), but the picture there is his silence; just as a lamb doesn't cry out when slaughtered, Yeshua didn't cry out or open his mouth in objection when killed.

Apostle Paul calls Yeshua our Passover in 1 Corinthians 5, and Yeshua was killed as Passover time, but the image there isn't a one-to-one correlation, because we know the Passover lamb wasn't flogged and nailed to a cross. Yeshua is our Passover in this sense: his death accomplishes some type of spiritual deliverance for us in the way the Passover lamb accomplished the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt.

Another example is when Apostle Peter writes about (1 Peter 1:19, HCSB) "**the precious blood of the Messiah, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.**" Peter's point is to get us to think of the *sinless life* of Yeshua. Peter isn't saying a lamb is sinless - an animal doesn't sin or practice righteousness like a human - and neither is Peter saying Yeshua is a ritual sacrifice. He is only pointing out an illustrative parallel between a perfect, complete sacrificial lamb and the sinless Messiah.

I realize that this section might make you have more questions than answers, but then again maybe it is stretching your mind in a way that it hasn't been stretched before. A good brother in our congregation had me do a calf work-out during last Sukkot with him, and my calves were sore for three days. It's because I'm not used to doing that type of work-out, but the work-out is meant to build up your calf muscles. We need to work-out our spiritual muscles, and think about things deeper in order to see if what we've been believing is really Scriptural. Let me assure you that I still believe Yeshua died for our sins. I believe he was wounded for our transgressions (as the holy prophet says). What I no longer believe is the concept of Yahweh pouring out His wrath on the innocent Yeshua instead of the guilty me and you. I believe Yeshua handed himself over to the enemy (that old serpent, the Devil) as a substitute for the rest of humanity.

Part 3: Defeating the Devil

(Text to Read: John 10:11-18)

I no longer believe Yeshua's death was at the hands of his Father. I now believe his death was at the hands of the Devil. I want to clarify here that I'm not saying Yeshua was an offering *to* the Devil. His entire life was an offering to Yahweh, including his death. The Father was pleased with His Son being so brave, noble, and willing to give his life up so that others could have life. What I am saying is that Yeshua's death - the betrayal, the mocking, the spitting, the crown of thorns, the whipping and torture, and the nailing to a cross - was accomplished by wicked hands who were ultimately tools of the Wolf.

In Mark 10 Yeshua explains to his disciples that greatness in the kingdom isn't determined by exercising power over people or shoving them around. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great must be a servant; whoever wants to be first must put himself last. Yeshua then says that he is the example (Mark 10:45): "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (The same is repeated in Matthew 20:28.)

A ransom (from the Greek word *lutron*) means "to loosen something by a redemption price." My mind immediately thinks about a child who is kidnapped and then held for ransom by the criminal. The ransom is paid and the child is set free. Early Christians were familiar with this due to the practice of pirates taking over a ship, and selling the on-boarders as slaves unless someone paid a ransom. Yeshua says his life was given as a ransom for many. Who was the ransom paid to? Who held the many (us) captive? Do you pay a ransom to the parent of the kidnapped child?

Acts 20:28 says this (KJV), "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." This verse usually comes up in discussions about the nature of Christ. There's textual variation at the end of the verse; some translations read "with the blood of his own Son," and I do take that reading. I don't really have a problem with the alternate reading though, in the sense that Yeshua is Yahweh's Son and thus "his own blood" in a manner of speaking. But the part I want you to think about today is this: who did the Almighty purchase the church (the people) from? The price paid was the blood or death of Yeshua, but who was the price paid to? Did Yahweh purchase it from Himself? Does that make sense?

Here's another text on this from Galatians 1:3-4. It reads (HCSB), "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Master Yeshua [the] Messiah, who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will

of our God and Father.” So this is talking about the death of Christ - giving his life for our sins - and it says this was done in order to *rescue* us (there’s that concept of ransom, purchase, buying something back), and the rescue is from this present, *evil* age. In the word rescue we see the idea of pulling us away from something bad.

Look at Hebrews 2:14-15. This is one of those verses that I’d read countless times yet never really saw it. “Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Yeshua also shared in these, so that through His death He might destroy the one holding the power of death - that is, the Devil - and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death.” This text ties the knot from the strings of the other verses we’ve read. We (the children) were held under death’s power, but Yeshua (a man like us) destroyed the Devil through his own sacrificial death. Battle language is used because the Devil is the one who held the power of death over mankind. Mankind had been held in a type of slavery through the fear of death ever since the Garden of Eden back in Genesis 3.

Remember when Adam and Eve were deceived in the Garden of Eden? Who deceived them? I realize they were drawn away by their own lust, but the narrative there specifically mentions this serpent - or in Hebrew *Nachash* - that has to do with hissing, divination, spell-casting, and trickery. Twice in the book of Revelation (12:9; 20:2) it mentions “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan,” so we are talking about an enemy of Yahweh, and I believe THE main enemy of Yahweh.

In Genesis 3 the *Nachash* approaches Eve (and Adam who was with her) and gets them both to question what Yahweh had told them, and then go against the command Yahweh had given them. In doing so mankind chose the Devil as his master. So he gained a **grip** on them. Again, Hebrews 2:14 says the Devil was the one who held the power of death. Why and how? Genesis 3. Through his crafty deception he persuaded Adam and Eve to sin, and sin brought decay and death. This explains how the Devil was able to offer Yeshua all the kingdom of the world in the temptation (Matthew 4:8-9): “The Devil took [Yeshua] to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. And he said to [Yeshua], ‘I will give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me.’” Thankfully, Yeshua did not listen to him, but chose to remain true in his worship to Yahweh, citing Deuteronomy 6:13, but the Devil had some type of power to be able to make an offer like this to Yeshua.

The First and Second Adam

Mankind was doomed to die and stay dead, and in some way were subject to the Devil due to the sin of our first parents in the Garden, but Almighty Yahweh had a plan. He provided a deliverer, a second Adam, a new creation. This deliverer was similar to the

first Adam in that he came about supernaturally, made in the image of the Almighty. Adam was made from virgin soil, Yeshua was made in a virgin womb. Adam is called the Son of Yahweh (Luke 3:38), and of course we know Yeshua is called the Son of Yahweh multiple times in Scripture.

Once the deliverer was born and grew into his ministry, Satan was willing to relinquish his hold over humanity if he could have this deliverer instead. It was a trade so to speak, and Yeshua's life was the ransom price. We were purchased by the blood of Yahweh's own Son. He tried to get Yeshua to worship him at the temptation recorded in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, but Yeshua didn't yield, so the Devil thought if he could have control of this deliverer and kill him, he would win the battle and have complete control over everything. But what he didn't realize was the promise of the resurrection.

Remember in John 10 where Yeshua says "No man takes my life from me. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it back up again." What does he mean he has the right to take it back up again? ***He's making a reference to his righteous life.*** Death is a result of sin, and the reason the grave has the power to hold us to the point of decay is due to the fact that we've all sinned. Yeshua never sinned, so the grave had no power over him. He could be killed, yes (he was a man, Hebrews 2), but what can death and the grave do to a ***sinless*** man? Yeshua knew that after his death he would be resurrected. His soul would not be left in the grave; he - the holy one - would not see corruption. He had the right to rise to immortality or deathlessness because he always loved righteousness and always hated wickedness (Hebrews 1:9).

This was veiled to Satan.³ Satan took him as the ransom price for us. Yeshua was delivered up to wicked hands. It made the Father in heaven both sad and angry, but at the same time he looked at Yeshua sacrificing his life as a noble, heroic act of bravery and courage. The Devil had Yeshua mocked, beat, flogged, slapped, spat upon, nails through his hands and feet. He didn't just kill him quickly or painlessly, because he despised the Son of Yahweh. After all, this Son was the chosen deliverer. All that torture upon the Messiah happened because the one behind it hated him.

But the Messiah went through all of this for us. Because of what Adam and Eve did in the Garden, and because of you and I who pattern that act of sin in the Garden, we all deserve that torture. We are the ones who turn our back on Yahweh. We are the ones who

³ Satan is a very old and wise creature, thousands if not millions of years old. He is mentioned in Ezekiel 28 as the anointed cherub who once walked in the midst of stones of fire, but this does not place duping him beyond the realm of possibility. Satan is wise but Yahweh is wiser. Satan knows the Scripture but Yahweh had a way of speaking certain things so as to keep certain Messianic developments hidden from the Devil's crafty ways.

listen to Yahweh's commands and say "Yes!" but then go away and say "No" with our lives. Every single one of us makes promises we don't keep, and says good things we don't really mean. We deserved to be held in the Devil's power of death... but the deliverer gave his life in place of ours to ransom us, to purchase us with his precious blood.

Yeshua's blood stands for his noble death and sacrifice, and the reason his blood/death is precious is because of his law-keeping life. We're talking about a perfect man who always chose to follow Yahweh. He never turned his back on Yahweh. He kept every promise he ever made. He said all the good things and meant all the good things, and then he said, "I'll take their place. I'll let the wolf devour me if he gives up John, and Mary, and Matthew, and Martha. I'll let him have me. I'll be the ransom price. I'll take the beating." Oh what a deliverer we have!

Remember though that the Devil didn't know the whole picture. He didn't realize there was promise of a resurrection. Yeshua comes busting out of the tomb victorious over sin, death, the grave, and the Devil on the third day! He didn't see corruption! The grave had no right over him! The right he had was to lay down his life and then take it back up again.

Check out 1 Corinthians 2, we'll begin reading there in verse 6, "However, we do speak a wisdom among the mature, but not a wisdom of this age, or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. On the contrary, we speak [Yahweh's] hidden wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom [Yahweh] predestined before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age knew this wisdom, for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Master of glory."

The wisdom Paul writes about here is called *hidden* and a *mystery*. A mystery in the Newer Testament isn't something unattainable or un-explainable. A mystery is something veiled in times past that is now revealed in the Apostolic era.

Notice it's said to be *predestined* before the ages for OUR glory (Yeshua was foreknown before the foundation of the earth [1 Peter 1:19]; the lamb slain from the foundation of the world [Revelation 13:8]), and then he says that the rulers of this age - this present, evil age - did not know about this wisdom. If they would have known, they would NOT have crucified the Master of glory. That shows that this wisdom has to do with the Messiah. Had the rulers of this age (wicked rulers, led by the Devil) knew about this predestined yet hidden wisdom; had they of known he had the right to lay down his life and take it back up again, they wouldn't have put him to death, because through the sinless deliverer's death comes the promise of the resurrection.

Look then what Paul writes in verse 9, “But as it is written: What eye did not see and ear did not hear, and what never entered the human mind - [Yahweh] prepared this for those who love Him.” How many have ever read that or heard it preached that it was about heaven? I can raise my hand to hearing that in a Sunday sermon before, and look, the kingdom of heaven is the destination for all of us who are joined to the Messiah, but the immediate context here is about Yeshua and his resurrection! He is what Yahweh prepared for those who love Him! He is what eye had not seen or ear had not heard! His resurrection to immortality is what the rulers of this age did not realize; had they realized it they wouldn’t have killed him. This links beautifully with Isaiah 52:15, “So He will startle many nations. Kings will shut their mouths because of Him, For they will see what had not been told them, and they will understand what they had not heard.”

The battle that the Devil thought he had won when he murdered Yeshua, was lost at Yeshua’s resurrection. His plan backfired. Some early Christians illustrated this as a fish-hook with bait on it. The fish sees the bait, bites, not knowing the hook is inside; the Messiah was the bait and the hook was the resurrection. The Devil had relinquished the control he had on mankind, but the one he took in our place - that he just killed - came back to life, giving all of us who are joined to this Messiah the promise of resurrection, joined to him by faithfulness. The grave will not hold us, not because of us, but because of the Messiah. We inherit what he inherits when we make the decision to follow him.

Old Atonement Model

Now, this model of the atonement - what exactly happened on the cross - was believed by many early believers. You can read about it in the writings of the pre-Nicene Christians; they most if not all talked about Yeshua’s death in this way. I don’t bring them up here to try to say they had everything right or to appeal to their “unchallenged authority,” I bring them up to show you there is *another* way to view Yeshua’s death instead of the wrath of Yahweh coming down on him in the form of a penalty. Yeshua did die in our place, but it wasn’t him taking a penalty from Yahweh in the form of wrath doled out upon an innocent person. It was rather in the form of Yeshua taking a “bullet” for us at the hands of the enemy. He gave up his life for his friends.

This model of the atonement is actually where the prolific, Christian author C.S. Lewis pulled his book “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe” from. That illustrative story is meant to depict what’s called the Ransom + Christus Victor model of the atonement. I don’t agree with all of Lewis’ symbolism, but go back and read it again, or watch the movie again. I think that after this sermon, your eyes will be opened to the reality C.S. Lewis was trying to get across to us in an allegory he wrote in order for children to get a picture of what took place in the atonement.

Thanks David Bercot

I want to thank an Anabaptist man by the name of David Bercot. It was a lesson by brother Bercot titled "What the Early Christians Believed About the Atonement" that got me to thinking about this subject. Several years ago he put out some lessons on the Atonement, and I happen to run across them about three years ago (on YouTube). After the initial listening they immediately resonated with my spirit. His lessons were the beginning of my change-of-mind on the subject, and I want to give honor where honor is due. I recommend his three-part series on the subject.

Let me end here by saying that if you disagree with my view here, it's okay so long as you still believe Yeshua died for our sins. If you believe his perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection is what delivers us, you are my brother or sister even though you may explain it differently. I just think this is the best explanation of the atonement.

Part 4: Did Yahweh Crush Yeshua on the Cross?

(Text to Read: Mark 12:1-12)

If you read the recommended text above, let me ask you a question: who is the *they* in Mark 12:12? All you have to do is backtrack to Mark 11:27 where it says, "As he was walking in the temple complex, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came and asked him." It was the religious leaders of Israel that he was talking to. It was them he spoke this parable to, because the thought continues from Mark 11:27 to Mark 12:12.

The landowner who planted the vineyard, set the hedge, dug the winepress, and built the watchtower, represents Yahweh the Father. The tenant farmers that He lent the vineyard out to, represent the leaders or teachers among the people of Israel. The leaders in Israel were to work the vineyard (the people of Israel), and produce fruit from the vineyard. You can see this by comparing Matthew 21:23 with Matthew 21:45. Once the chief priests and Pharisee elders heard this parable, they knew that he had spoken it about them. The servants that the landowner sent to the farmers (to collect the fruit) represent Yahweh's prophets (2 Kings 9:7; 17:13, 23; Jeremiah 7:25; 25:4). Each time the landowner would send one of His servants, the farmers would beat, wound, or kill him.

After this we read that the landowner had one beloved son, and the landowner finally decided to send his son to the tenant farmers. The landowner said, "They will respect my son." (Matthew 21:37; Mark 12:6; Luke 20:13) But what happened? The farmers killed the son and threw him out of the vineyard like trash. This beloved, only son represents Yeshua.

I bring this up to show you the Father's attitude about the death of Yeshua. His attitude was not one of approval. He didn't say "Now that my wrath has come down on my Son as a penalty in your place, justice is settled and I am appeased." No, his attitude is one of disgust. He will destroy the farmers (Yeshua says). Yeshua's death was a sacrifice, but it wasn't one in which Yahweh was killing His own Son. It was the unrepentant, Israelite leaders (led by an adversarial spirit) who rejected and killed the Son. The Father knew it had to happen this way, and it made him sad and angry, but at the same time He was well-pleased in His Son's bravery.

Think of a parent whose son sacrifices his life to an armed robber, in order to save the life of someone else. The parent is sad, but another person is saved, so grateful, and comes to thank the parent for raising such a brave son. The parent feels some type of comfort and dignity in knowing they had a heroic child.

Salvation Sermons

In the book of Acts we have some sermons by one of Yeshua's closest Apostles, Apostle Peter. I call these "salvation sermons," because Peter is pleading with people to receive Yeshua as the Savior sent by the Almighty (Acts 5:31). You'll find these sermons in Acts 2, 3, 5, and 10, and not a single one of these sermons say that Yeshua's death was done by Yahweh as some type of justice being settled or appeasement of wrath as Penal Substitutionary Atonement teaches.

In Acts 2:23 Peter says, "Though he (Yeshua) was delivered up according to (the Almighty's) determined plan and foreknowledge, you (the men of Israel, vs. 22) used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him." I think Peter has in mind here the Roman authorities when he says "lawless people," but the Israelite crowd hollering "Crucify him!" were being lawless as well.

In Acts 3 Peter again addresses men of Israel saying (vs. 13) "The (Mighty One) of our fathers has glorified His servant Yeshua, whom you handed over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. (14) But you denied the holy and righteous one (Yeshua), and asked to have a murderer (Bar-Abba) given to you. (15) And you killed the source of life, whom (the Almighty) raised from the dead." Again, Peter speaks of Yeshua's death as an unjust act committed by rebellious Israelites.

Peter says again in Acts 5 while standing before the Sanhedrin, (vs. 30) "The (Mighty One) of our fathers raised up Yeshua, whom you had murdered by hanging him on a tree." And then in Acts 10 he preaches to the Gentile Cornelius and family (vss. 38-40) "how (the Almighty) anointed Yeshua of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good and curing all who were under

the tyranny of the Devil, because (the Almighty) was with him. We ourselves are witnesses of everything he did in both the Judean country and in Jerusalem; yet they killed him by hanging him on a tree. (The Almighty) raised up this man on the third day and permitted him to be seen.”⁴

Peter walked with Yeshua, learned directly from him, both before his death and after his resurrection. Peter was the one given the keys to the kingdom of heaven, so he had special authority. Peter was an elder at the Jerusalem Council who stood up towards the end to help make the final decision.

If Yeshua died by the wrath of Yahweh coming down on him as a penalty in our place why doesn't Peter ever say that in his sermons? He always attributes the death of Yeshua to the rebellious, Israelite leaders, through the hands of the Romans. When Yahweh is mentioned in Peter's sermons, it is as the One who raised up Yeshua from the dead. He resurrected Yeshua because He knew the grave had no right to hold Yeshua due to his sinlessness. Yahweh is the one who resurrects Yeshua, not the one who puts him to death. Wicked men, being tools of the Devil, put Yeshua to death.

Objections and Change

Now, as with any position you take on a subject, there will always be someone who takes a different position. It's good to have your view challenged by another because it leads to more fine tuning or a change of mind. I've had to change on many things over the years as I've gotten around to studying certain subjects in Scripture. I changed from calling the Creator "God" to calling Him "Yahweh." I changed from Saturday Sabbath to Lunar Sabbath. I changed from believing in Eternal Conscious Torment for the unsaved to Annihilation. I changed from Oneness, to Trinity, to being a Unitarian.

Some people chastise those who change on things, but I think someone who never changes is not studying. There's some things I've studied and didn't change on, but goodness gracious are we so prideful to think that we are right on everything? I've known preachers who now believe the exact same way they did 30 years ago. I'm telling you brothers and sisters, that's not a badge of honor to wear, that's a badge of laziness and pride. You don't have to do anything to stay the same, but it takes work and humility to change.

⁴ Stephen calls the men of Israel he preaches to in Acts 7 (vss. 2, 53) the murderers of Yeshua (7:52 LSV), "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who declared before about the coming of the Righteous One, of whom you have now become betrayers and murderers." The Greek word for murderers is *phoneus*, used 7x in the NT, and defined by Mounce as "a homicide, murderer" and Strong as "a murderer, always of criminal or at least intentional homicide."

What About Isaiah 53?

One of the key texts presented by those in favor of PSA is Isaiah 53. I love Isaiah 53, and I do believe it is the “first gospel.” Isaiah 53:5 teaches that Yeshua was (NLT) “...pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.” That’s a true verse, it’s just that many of us have been trained to think that the verse is speaking about Yahweh doing that to him, and sometimes when our minds have been trained to read something one way we can’t see anything else until someone turns the light on.

Verse 5 does teach that we are given spiritual healing based on Yeshua’s sacrifice, and that it was because of our sins *corporately* that he went through what he went through. But that can easily be understood in the Ransom model of the atonement, PSA is not necessary. Remember, in the Ransom model Yeshua is still a sacrifice, just not a ritual sacrifice to Yahweh, but a sacrifice that takes our place at the hands of the Adversary.

Isaiah 53:6 says (at the end, KJV), “But the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,” and here we are again, reading that in the way we’ve been trained to read it. But does it have to mean Yahweh was striking him down? Not according to every Bible translation from the Hebrew. The LEB translates this: “Yahweh let fall on him the iniquity of us all.” Again, that can be understood fine with the Ransom model of the Atonement, and it could also be referring to the actual sins committed against his body in the last 24 hours of his mortal life. Apart from the restraining mercies of Yahweh, all of us would be hollering “Crucify him!”

What is really interesting here is the Septuagint rendering of verse 6. Remember that the Septuagint text is translated from an older Hebrew text than the Masoretic, as shown in the comparing the readings of texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Septuagint does mirror the Masoretic text in this chapter in many places, but there are at least two distinct differences, one here in verse 6 and one in verse 10 (that we’ll get to in a moment). Isaiah 53:6 OSB says, “All we like sheep have gone astray. Man has gone astray in his way, and the Lord delivered him over for our sins.” That’s a significant variant reading there.

It wasn’t Yahweh punishing Yeshua in our place, it was Yahweh *delivering him over* - remember the parable of the Vineyard? At last, the Father says, I’ll send my beloved Son. Yahweh produced the second Adam, let him grow up, and then gave up, released, or delivered over His only begotten Son - *and* the Son was willing to lay down His life for his friends, so he wasn’t kicking and screaming, he was brave and courageous, agreeing to commit to the mission the Father outlined for him, to save mankind from the Devil’s grasp.

What about Isaiah 53:10? The first part of that verse says (HCSB) “Yet the LORD (Yahweh) was pleased to crush him,” which can be read to sound like Yahweh took pleasure in killing His own Son because he suffered the penalty from Yahweh in our place. Now I can give you an alternate explanation, about the sovereign over-all will of Yahweh, sticking with this reading, but I don’t think it’s the correct reading. I believe the Septuagint text again gives us the better, older reading. It says here, “The Lord (Yahweh) wishes to cleanse him of his wound (OSB)” or (NETS) “the Lord (Yahweh) desires to cleanse him from his blow.” So instead of Yahweh being pleased to crush Yeshua, the Septuagint teaches us that what Yahweh was pleased to do was cleanse him of his torture, referring to raising him from the dead with a perfect, immortal body. **Big difference.**

Why is there a difference in the reading here in verse 10? I’ll give you a possibility. It may hinge on one Hebrew letter. We see these two readings in English and they look very different, but the Hebrew word for crush him is *daka*, while a Hebrew word for cleanse or make pure is *zaka* (used in Isaiah 1:16). The *dalet* and the *zayin* in Hebrew can be differentiated, but they do look similar and sound similar in speech. It’s possible that a Hebrew copyist mistook the *zayin* for a *dalet*, and wrote *daka* instead of *zaka*, which results in bruise instead of cleanse, thus the bad, Masoretic text reading (hypothesis, just a possibility).

That Yahweh was pleased to cleanse the suffering servant of his wound makes so much more sense based on the totality of Scripture, especially if you read 9b and 10 together in the LES: “Because he committed no lawlessness, and there was no deceit in his mouth, the Lord is willing to cleanse him of the injury.”

Let me point out here that there is a direct quote of Isaiah 53:7-8 by an Apostle, in Acts 8:32-33. If you compare the reading from the New to the Old you will see that the Apostle (or the author Luke that records the Apostle) is pulling the quote from the Septuagint text of Isaiah. So in this case, wouldn’t Philip and the eunuch also be looking at the Septuagint text of Isaiah at verse 6 and 10 of chapter 53?

And really, when you look at all the texts in Scripture used to promote PSA, Isaiah 53:6 and 10 (Masoretic) are the strongest ones. The other ones aren’t as forceful, and once you realize there’s a different model of the atonement that was believed by many early Christians, you can see how all the atonement texts can be read in light of Yeshua giving himself over to the enemies of Yahweh to be killed, as a heroic sacrifice for us to be set free from the clutches of the Devil.

Did Yahweh Forsake Yeshua?

I'd like to cover one more popular text today, Matthew 27:45-46: "From noon until three in the afternoon (lit. from the sixth hour to the ninth hour) darkness came over the whole land. (46) at about three in the afternoon Yeshua cried out with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' That is, 'My God, My God why have you forsaken me?'"

This text has often been used by proponents of PSA to teach that the Father forsook Yeshua on the cross because He had to turn His face away from him while crushing him as the penalty for sin in our place. (R.C. Sproul from "Treasuring Redemption's Price" says, "God the Father turned His back on the Son, cursing Him to the pit of hell while He hung on the cross. Here was the Son's 'descent into hell.' Here the fury of God raged against Him. His scream was the scream of the damned, for us.")

First off, I do see this as quotation of Psalm 22:1, a Messianic Psalm, and there are several texts in the NT that link Yeshua up with Psalm 22. Another case is in Hebrews 2:10-12 about Yeshua, quoted directly from Psalm 22:22. So on the cross, I believe Yeshua was citing Psalm 22 to show that he was the promised, Davidic Messiah (Psalm 22 is a Psalm of David).

Later in Psalm 22 verse 24, it shows us that one Psalm 22 was about was actually not forsaken by Yahweh: "He did not hide His face from him, but listened when he cried to Him for help." The Father didn't forsake Yeshua, He raised him from the dead on the third day.

But let's ask ourselves: why did Yeshua say this while on the cross? Brothers and sisters... even someone who has lived their whole life for Yahweh, and seen miracles and experienced mountain tops can feel forsaken by Yahweh when they go through a trial. We sometimes forget that Yeshua was a man acquainted with grief. He hurt just like we hurt, and he had just been tortured, beaten, and bloody... and was now hanging on a Roman execution stake in humiliation. How would you feel if you had to go through all that?

Let's don't get upset with Yeshua for feeling forsaken. What he went through was tougher than anything any of us have been through, and in less trials we sometimes feel forsaken... but that doesn't mean our Father has left us. Listen my friends, if you are Yahweh's child, and you serve Him with your life, you will still go through hard times because you are a human being. None of us are exempt from this corruptible body, but that doesn't mean Yahweh doesn't love you. Going through a valley is part of life, and in our toughest times Yahweh teaches us the greatest lessons.

Hebrews 5:7-8 says this: “During his (Yeshua’s) earthly life, he offered prayers and appeals, with loud cries and tears, to the One who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of His reverence. Though a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.”

Conclusion

I could go over more Scriptures and answer more objections, but I’m going to close this study here for now. I pray it’s been a blessing to you, and I hope you understand more about what Yeshua actually did for us in his death. I pray this will open the eyes of your understanding, and that you’d take these sermons, study further, and develop more understanding, finding more and more insight into our atonement through the Messiah.

Brothers and sisters, had Yahweh not provided a deliverer, and had Yeshua not been willing to lay down his life for us (the sheep), we would all die and never live again. It is only through the life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah that we have the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of heaven. Don’t ever forget that.