

Did Jesus die in our place?

From his very own toil he will see and be satisfied. With his knowledge, My servant, the tzaddik (righteous one) will make multitudes righteous; it is their iniquities that he will carry. ¹ Therefore, I will assign him a portion from the multitudes and he will divide the mighty as spoils – in return for having poured out his soul for death and being counted among the wicked, for he bore the sin of the multitudes, and prayed for the wicked.

- Jes. (Isaiah) 53:11-12 – THE MILSTEIN ED. –

The answer to this question lies in a Jewish or Hebraic Biblical understanding of the 'tzaddik', a biblical Hebrew term that means someone who is completely righteous in G-d's eyes.

Yeshua (Jesus) was not the only tzaddik. For an example, see Ez. 4:4 ² where Ezechiel as a tzaddik is told to bear the sins of his generation for some time ³. Caution though is necessary because this term cannot be interpreted according to a Christian understanding and theology that sees Yeshua as a sacrifice. Biblical sacrifices are to be brought in the Temple and the Tanach forbids human sacrifices. Furthermore one has to take in account all the verses the Tanach has to say about the person's individual responsibility when he sins and about the biblical Jewish understanding of how one can connect to the tzaddik and what this means.

Every human is responsible for his own sins: the fathers cannot die for the sins of the sons nor vice versa ⁴. Therefore the suffering and death of Yeshua cannot be considered, or labelled, a sacrifice. Human sacrifices are a purely pagan concept.

Yes, we can obtain reconciliation to G-d, not because Yeshua is a sacrifice but because of a Jewish biblical connection to our Rabbi Yeshua (or *Jesus*) as the ultimate tzaddik. This connection we establish by our daily obedience to his teaching and laying down of our lives to take up his life. When the Greek text and our translations use the word 'sacrifice' or analogue terms, we must see them in the Judaic/Hebraic technical understanding of the whole offering procedure in order "to obtain the result", not in the sacrifice itself. We know that the Messiah in the future will act as King and High Priest and then he will bring offerings. Much of what, in the Christian 'New Testament' is translated as past tense, has the aorist form in the Greek text and should be translated in the future tense and understood as a certain event yet to come.

There is an argument many people take from Ephesians 1:6-7.⁵

At first reading it seems a totally edited text if it has to be understood in the traditional Christian understanding. We always must check the Apostolic Writings to the *Tanach*:⁶ the *Tanach* or Jewish Scriptures is the biblical standard in authority. We see for instance that the students in Berea checked every word of Paul to these Jewish Scriptures.

At the time of Yeshua and the writing of the apostolic letters, the so called 'New Testament' didn't even exist. the norm thus is the *Tanach* as this was *the* norm at that time, and especially the Torah. The whole 'New Testament' has to be placed and read from this standard. The traditional Christian interpretation of Eph. 1:6-7 thus cannot be accepted as

¹ The Targum renders this verse as follows: *From the subjugation of the nations he will deliver their souls, they shall look upon the punishment of those that hate them, and be satiated with the spoils of their kings; by his wisdom he will vindicate the meritorious, in order to bring many into the service of the Torah; and for their sins he will pray.* This clearly refers to Messiah who delivers his people from subjugation, returns them to the Torah, and prays for forgiveness of their sins. (...) the suffering of the righteous itself serves as an intercession before God on behalf of the world; in effect, bearing the sins of the multitudes – THE MILSTEIN ED.: comment -

² *As for you, lie upon your left side, and place the iniquity of the Family of Israel upon it. According to the number of days which you shall lie upon it, shall you carry their sin. For I have given for your sake the years of their iniquity as a number of days; three hundred and ninety days, so you can bear the iniquity of the Family of Israel. ..* Yechezkel / Ezekiel – ARTSCROLL TANACH SERIES -

³ *There are multiple references to the tzaddik or righteous one and their merits in the Scriptures. See for example in Proverbs, chapters 9-12 and also Jes. 53*

⁴ *Fathers shall not be put to death because of sons, and sons shall not be put to death because of fathers; a man should be put to death for his own sin.* Deut. 24:16 – THE STONE ED. – see also for instance Ez. 18:19-20

⁵ *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;* Ef. 1:6-7 – KJV

⁶ *Tanach*: the so called 'Old Testament', or the Jewish Scriptures

an explanation for the suffering and death of Yeshua (labelling it as a blood sacrifice⁷), nor as the means of obtaining forgiveness, as for sins committed on purpose there weren't offerings in the Tanach, certainly not in the Torah. The offerings – we find their rulings in the first chapters of Leviticus - are first of all about worship. And about purity of the sanctum. Occasionally and within this context we can read about specific sins that are atoned by certain specific offerings but all these sins are all unintentional sins.

The *Tanach* is very clear that the standard procedure for obtaining forgiveness is by repentance, confession and tikkun (a rededication of one's life whereby one corrects past mistakes and sins in his or her life). G-d never changed this. So within this frame it would be strange to suddenly have some 'Messiah' that should be offered in order to gain forgiveness.

Forgiveness or atonement is not the central issue of the 'New Testament', nor the reason for the coming of King Messiah. The central issue is about the Jewish understanding of the Kingdom of G-d, the promise G-d gave unto David HaMelech (King David) through the prophet, that his descendant would inherit an *everlasting* kingdom. But if this Eph. 1:6-7 would still speak about forgiveness and redemption, there would remain two options.

The first option has to do with the concept of the Tzaddik, where the death of Yeshua has sense because we identify our lives with his life through our obedience to his teachings.

The second option – and maybe this could be the case though possible editing of the copyists, deals with a future event where Messiah will bring offerings in the Olam haBa⁸ when the Kingdom will be installed under his Kingship. The past tense should then be understood as a *prophetic perfectum*.⁹ One thing is for sure: only G-d forgives sins we commit against Him. Just as we forgive each other when we sin against each other. There is no replacement in the bible for this (in the Christian understanding of the term) as this would clearly contradict specific verses in the Jewish Scriptures¹⁰.

Christianity puts great emphasis on the suffering and death of Yeshua. They see it as a spiritual 'accomplishment'. But Yeshua's suffering and death would mean nothing if our master wasn't completely righteous in his living. We find another biblical example where Ezekiel – a tzaddik or righteous one - is asked while living, to bear for some time the sins of his generation¹¹. We must see these concepts through Judaic or Hebraic biblical eyes, if we want to get rid of any pagan influence we possess as a result of our past Christian education.

The whole Christian concept of Yeshua's accomplishment at the cross seems to find a way for instance in the (mystical) belief that we are now seated with Christ in heavenly places.¹² This is obviously a wrong translation of the Greek verb tense as it foretells of a future event. Many texts are poorly and even wrongly translated. But this would bring us too far for now.

Yes, we can obtain many things if we associate our lives with Yeshua through our obedience, not because of some 'spiritual mysticism' or some pagan concept of 'blood gospel'. This is totally strange to what the Tanach teaches and thus simply not true. It is brought in by Hellenists that had a pagan way of thinking and didn't understand Jewish/Hebraic concepts, or even worse, were completely anti-Semitic and enforced an improper meaning to the original.

Certain people argue we should not be surprised to find new concepts or '*things*' in the Apostolic Writings, as it presents a "New Covenant", different from the so called "Old Covenant". They argue that they have a '*sacred secret*' and refer to verses such as 1Cor. 2:7-8. The so called "New Covenant" would reveal these hidden secrets to the 'believers'.¹³

⁷ The whole theology of the so called 'blood gospel' can thus be rejected as unbiblical

⁸ Olam haba : the world to come

⁹ Prophetic perfectum : Hebraic way of expressing future events by using a past (accomplished) tense; hence the importance of the Greek aorist form for example. See this article for an in-depth look at this Hebraism - <https://goo.gl/5gYfZD>

¹⁰ See footnote 4

¹¹ Ez. 4:4

¹² *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* Eph. 1:3 – KJV

¹³ *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* 1Cor. 2:7-8 – KJV

If what they argue here were true, then it would contradict what the disciples in Berea did: these students checked what Paul said to the Tanach. Anything that was not found in the Tanach, or that contradicted the Tanach, they would reject.

If the suffering and the death of Yeshua were so essential to what Christians call the Gospel, then why did Yeshua just speak about this event only a couple of months before it occurred and only to the closed circle of his most intimate friends. Clearly this message is not so fundamental to the gospel as Christians would argue, and certainly Yeshua did not proclaim it as he brought the gospel of the *Kingdom of G-d* to the masses.

Furthermore Hebrews 4:2 teaches us that the Gospel already was brought to Sinai... this contradicts the traditional Christian understanding of the gospel and our so called position in Christ through his suffering and death. And certainly Yeshua was not at Sinai with Moses and the Jewish People.¹⁴ We can first learn about the 'New Covenant' in the Tanach (Jer. 31:30 etc. ¹⁵) which remains our standard or authority. 'New' in Hebrew is '*chadash*', a word that has at the same time the meaning of '*renewal*': it all is about the renewal of the covenant of Moshe but on better terms.

And the Scripture is very clear that this 'new covenant' will be sealed with the Jewish People. Furthermore it is about the Torah again. About the commandments. So here we can make a huge discovery: the verses in Jer. 31:30 etc. teach us about a new covenant that is most different from the so called 'new covenant' Christianity preaches. Another discovery we can make through reading these verses is: *G-d does not change*.

Once He revealed Himself on Sinai and gave the Torah, in Jer. 31 it is still about the Torah but on better terms. Yeshua thus did not bring or install a 'new' covenant. No, he is King Messiah, the appointed king that will reign in the promised Kingdom of G-d, where the better terms of the (re)-newed covenant or testament will be applied.

The missing link in Christianity is that they do not understand how the covenant was made in the Torah and what the conditions are for an individual to become part of this covenant. This never has changed. Christianity has changed the concepts of the kingdom and of the so called covenant though they didn't have the authority to do it, as Romans 9:4-5 once again clearly affirms ¹⁶: Judaism is the standard of our faith and the way to live it.

Christianity has invented all kind of new things and brought them in the understanding of the 'New Testament' because they rejected the connection with the Torah which is the foundation of everything. This is the origin and cause of all these kind of discussions we now have in Christianity. In Judaism one would never have these kind of discussions: the origin lies in the lawlessness of Christianity and this lawlessness deviates the whole nature of understanding though the 'new testament' clearly is a pure Jewish book written by Jews that were loyal to the commandments in their life. See for instance Acts 21 ¹⁷ and Acts 24:14-15 ¹⁸ where Paul asserts that he still is an 'orthodox' Jew and that our faith is (publicly) known as a Jewish sect.

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¹⁴ *There is a detail Christians often forget when building arguments from Hebrews : this letter was written to the Jews.*

¹⁵ *Behold, days are coming – the word of HaShem – when I will seal a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah ... Jer. 31:30 – THE STONE ED. -*

¹⁶ *..(my kinsmen according to the flesh (= jews that do not believe in Yeshua)) who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law (= the Torah), and the service of God (= the Jewish way of worship and service of God), and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ (= King Messiah) came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Rom. 9:4-5 – KJV -*

¹⁷ *The whole chapter 21 of Acts is very revealing about the jewish nature of our faith but see for instance Acts 21:20 – KJV – : And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law (= the Torah).*

¹⁸ *However I admit that I worship the God of our Fathers, as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law (= the Torah) and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. Acts 24:14-15 – NIV -*