

SHADOWS OF THE CROSS, PART 1

THE CARCASS IN THE GARDEN

Genesis 3:21 and Selected Scriptures

The cross is God's crowbar that separates sinners from their sin, allowing them to be forgiven.

The Shadow: A Garden Called Eden

In the garden of Eden, Adam has a choice to make.
The one "tree of no" makes love possible.
Adam says to God, "Not thy will, but mine be done."
Weeds of alienation start springing up everywhere.
For Adam and Eve to wear garments of skin, God had to take the life of one of his own creatures.

Consider the QUESTION of Atonement

Why did Jesus have to die? Why is forgiveness not by divine decree?
Is there a way for God to separate sinners from their sin so that he can judge the sin while sparing the sinner?
Galatians 2:21; Hebrews 9:22; Hebrews 9:26; Ephesians 1:7
Atonement = at-one-ment = a reversal of all the alienations begun at the fall of humanity

Consider the SOURCE of Atonement

The atonement proceeds from the loving heart of God.
John 3:16; Romans 5:8

Consider the NECESSITY of Atonement

Why did the love of God adopt this particular method (i.e., the cross)?
Scripture indicates the cross was necessary for atonement to be made for our sins (Hebrews 8:3; 9:23).
The concept of substitution (Isaiah 53:6)
There's a "divine must" in the atonement—an actual necessity, not a hypothetical one.

Consider the RIGHTNESS of Atonement

Paul argues in Romans that the cross of Christ as a demonstration of God's *righteousness*. How so?

- If God forgives sin, he may appear to be morally indifferent toward sin and the consequences it inflicts upon his image bearers (e.g., crime, abuse, trauma, defilement, etc.).
- If God does not forgive sin, he may appear to be morally indifferent toward his image bearers themselves (i.e., they remain in their state of fallenness, alienation, defilement, etc.).

Romans 3:21-26
On the cross, God's holiness and justice are satisfied, and God's mercy and grace are realized.
God did not sweep human sins under the rug, he swept them onto his Son.
Hebrews 10:1-5

The Reality: A Garden Called Gethsemane

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus has a choice to make.
Jesus begins to bleed in this garden before anyone lays a hand on him.
Jesus, the Last Adam, says to God, "Not my will, but thine be done."
The Garden of Gethsemane is *reversing* the Garden of Eden.
Jesus will go to the tree of death in order to give us back the tree of life.