

## **The Overarching Message Of Atonement And The Cross**

This piece was created from my own reflections and vision. I used ChatGPT as a tool to help shape the text from my original concepts and structure. The final form is the result of thoughtful revision, my own editorial hand fueled by my one page intent. Mike Haddorff

When we look across the whole sweep of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, a single story begins to emerge, one far larger and more beautiful than any single theory of atonement can hold. At its heart, the Bible is not telling a story about a God who must be satisfied, appeased, or convinced to forgive. It is telling a story about a God who enters the human condition in order to heal it from the inside out. The cross, then, is not a transaction that changes God; it is the moment that reveals God fully.

From the opening pages of Genesis, God's intent is communion, humans living in shared life with God and one another. What fractures in the fall is not God's disposition toward humanity but humanity's capacity to trust, to love, and to live free from fear. Sin introduces distortion, hostility, and death, not because God demands payment, but because creation bends under the weight of mistrust and self-protection.

Throughout the Old Testament, the sacrificial system functions not to satisfy divine anger but to restore relationship, cleanse impurity, and hold the community in covenant fidelity. The prophets repeatedly insist that God desires mercy, justice, humility, and steadfast love, not ritual appeasement. In other words, Scripture constantly pushes against the idea that sacrifice is something God needs. Instead, sacrifice is something God uses to draw wandering hearts back into wholeness.

When Jesus enters the story, He embodies this restorative vision in its fullness. His life reveals a God who heals, forgives freely, dismantles burdens, welcomes outcasts, and confronts the powers that enslave humanity. His ministry is not about securing God's love but about demonstrating it. The conflict that unfolds around Him, between self-giving love and the violent systems of this world, comes to a head at the cross.

The cross is the moment when evil overplays its hand. All the forces that deform human life; sin, shame, accusation, political oppression, religious fear, and the power of death, converge upon Jesus. Instead of retaliating, he absorbs their force in love. In doing so, he exposes their emptiness and renders them powerless. Evil collapses under the weight of its own violence; death devours Him and is itself undone. This is why the New Testament so often speaks of Jesus disarming the powers, destroying the works of the devil, and breaking the fear of death.

The resurrection is not God clapping, "You did it Son." Rather the resurrection is revelation of what is actually true: "death is conquered through death." (Hebrews 2:14) It happened once and it happens every single day, as we refuse to feed that which binds us. The cross does not change God; it can change us. It reveals a God who has always been moving toward humanity in mercy, revealing the way for us to live free from the forces that enslave us.