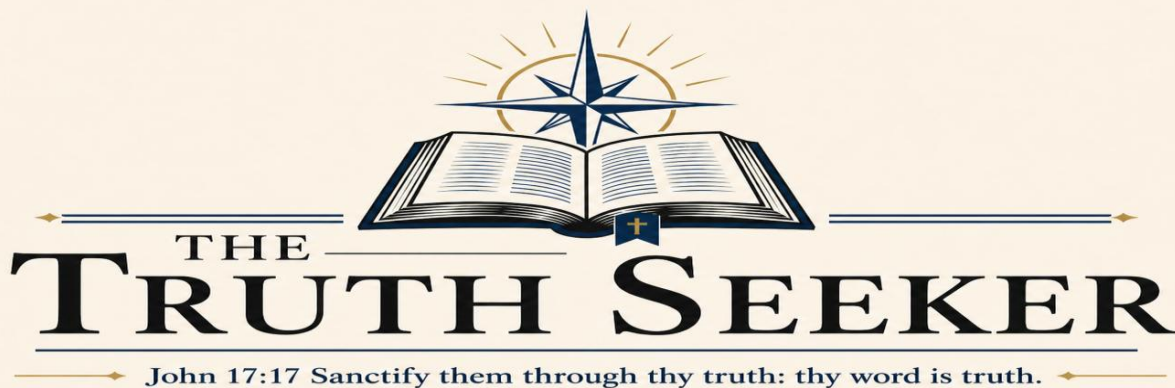


THE TRUTH SEEKER CHRISTIAN JOURNAL

The Truth Seeker - Issue No. 3

A classic Christian journal dedicated to exploring biblical truth, doctrine, and teaching.

THE COST OF REDEMPTION



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Welcome to The Truth Seeker Christian Journal, a publication dedicated to returning hearts and minds back to the absolute authority of God's Word.

In this issue we will focus on The Cost of Redemption and trace this unfolding reality by journeying through the monumental history of The Exodus, witnessing how physical liberation from Egyptian bondage points directly to our spiritual rescue. We will examine the theological bedrock of Penal Substitutionary Atonement, clear away some common intellectual stumbling blocks in One-Minute Apologetics, and look at a historic example of unwavering, courageous faith in the life of the early church martyr Polycarp of Smyrna.

Theological Insights: Clear articles explaining core Bible doctrines.

Practical Guidance: Thoughts and encouragement for living faithfully in a confused world.

Teaching Highlights: Bible lessons, word studies, and scriptural reflections.

The Truth Seeker is more than a publication - it is a call to return to the Word of God with humility, courage, and conviction.

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From the Editor

The Cost of Redemption

Dear Reader,

Welcome to this issue of The Truth Seeker Christian Journal. As stated already in this issue, our underlying theme centers around The Cost of Redemption.

Far too often, our modern culture tries to minimize sin, soften judgment, and present God's grace as some cheap commodity that doesn't require a sacrifice. Treating moral failures as simple mistakes and regarding holiness as optional. It whispers the comforting lie that God is too loving to truly punish wickedness. What this in turn does is it reshapes His holiness into a passive tolerance.

Yet, when we look through the pages of Scripture, we find an entirely different and sobering reality. True redemption carries a cost that is both staggering and profound. The reality of scripture is that a perfectly holy God cannot simply sweep rebellion under the rug without violating His own righteous character. It is a price that was paid not by our own flawed works, moral improvements, or religious efforts, which can never wash away a single stain of guilt, but by Christ Himself, who absorbed God's divine wrath in our place and offered Himself as our spotless substitute so that we might be legally and permanently reconciled unto God.

My hope is that as you read these following pages, you will be deeply challenged to reflect on how Christ personally secured your eternal salvation. I pray you are moved to ponder the breathtaking sacrifice Jesus made, and the unfathomable love He expressed, when He willingly stepped out of the splendor of eternal glory, put on human flesh, and walked among a rebellious people who would ultimately reject Him. He endured an earthly life of relentless ridicule, bitter sorrow, unjust rejection, and a brutal crucifixion which stands for all time as the greatest convergence of love, mercy, and justice the universe has ever known. What this did was prove that God will never compromise His holiness yet will go to infinite lengths to rescue those who trust in Him.

Your brother in Christ,

David Elks

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The Cost of Redemption

The Great Gulf

The Bible opens with an unspoiled creation, fellowship with God, and humanity standing without shame. However, through the entry of sin there is now a fracture in that relationship. Humanity rebelled, plunging the human race into spiritual darkness and bondage. From Genesis onward, the central narrative of Scripture is not about man finding his way back to God through moral reform, but about God's plan to bridge this great gulf at an unimaginable price. True redemption is never cheap; it always demands a sacrifice.

Lessons and Warnings

In the Old Testament, this costly reality was foreshadowed through blood and substitution. When the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt, their physical liberation required the blood of an unblemished lamb applied on both the doorposts and the lintel of their homes. That Passover night was a definitive, and unforgettable time of lessons and warnings to the world: 1. Sin carries a real, inescapable penalty 2. Salvation is by grace. 3. The reality of an innocent substitute died in their place. 4. It taught that true redemption is costly. Later, the Levitical system codified these truths through the Day of Atonement, where sins were temporarily covered through animal sacrifices, pointing once again forward to a permanent remedy. God was teaching His people that sin incurs a real, legal debt that must be paid.

The Final Passover Lamb

The full weight of that payment was finally revealed at Calvary. The New Testament declares that Jesus Christ is the final Passover Lamb. Penal substitutionary atonement is the heartbeat of the Gospel: Christ voluntarily stepped into our legal place, bearing the divine wrath our sins deserved. Isaiah 53 prophesied this exact exchange, noting that He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. On the cross, Jesus did not merely display a tragic example of love; He also executed a real, judicial transaction. He took the penalty so that God could remain completely just while legally acquitting those who place their trust in Him.

Forward in Freedom

This incredible transaction leaves every believer with a profound calling. The cost of redemption demands that we no longer live for ourselves. We were bought with a price, redeemed not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. As you read this journal, may you look away from your own flawed works, rest entirely in the finished, substitutionary work of the Savior, and walk forward in the freedom He purchased with His own life.

Key Insight

The Problem: Because of sin there is a gulf between humanity and God that human effort could never fix. *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; Isa 64:6*

The Precedent: The non-negotiable rule: redemption requires a blood sacrifice, and substitution. *...without shedding of blood is no remission. Heb 9:22b*

The Solution: Jesus Christ. ... *"HE" was wounded for our transgressions, "HE" was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon "HIM"; and with "HIS" stripes we are healed. Isa 53:5*

The Response: Recognizing this immense cost calls us to stop trusting our own flawed works and live wholly for the One who freed us. *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. 1Co 6:19-20*

A Journey Through the Bible: The Exodus

The Exodus Period is more than a historical account of national liberation; it is the grand Old Testament picture of redemption. From the slavery of Egypt to the borders of the Promised Land, every milestone mirrors our spiritual rescue through Jesus Christ.

1. The Deliverance

God heard the cries of His enslaved people and moved with power to break the grip of Pharaoh. This deliverance unfolded in two monumental stages:

- The 10 Plagues: God systematically dismantled the false gods of Egypt through ten terrifying judgments, proving His absolute supremacy:

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Water Turned to Blood (Exo 7:14) | 6. Boils (Exo 9:8) |
| 2. Frogs (Exo 8:1) | 7. Hail (Exo 9:13) |
| 3. Gnats (Exo 8:16) | 8. Locusts (Exo 10:1) |
| 4. Flies (Exo 8:20) | 9. Darkness (Exo 10:21) |
| 5. Egyptian Livestock Die (Exo 9:1) | 10. Death of the Firstborn (Exo 12:29) |

- The Passover (Exodus 12:1–51)

The Jews called the Passover Paschah or Pesach, meaning flight or passage, pointing to their hasty departure from Egypt. Many leading features of redemption by the Lord Jesus—His person, work, offices, and character—are exhibited in shadow and figure here. Because the Holy Spirit explicitly declares through Paul in 1 Cor 5:7 ("For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us"), it is our highest interest and bounden duty to study the Passover to clearly grasp the cost of our salvation.

2. The Law

- Given at Mt. Sinai (Exo 19:1–20:21): Also called Horeb. Fausset notes that Sinai was the central mass of mountains, including the specific peak from which the law was given. Thus, "Sinai" is primarily used from Exodus 19:11 to Numbers 3:1 while Israel camped near the mountain. In Deuteronomy, where Israel appears no longer in that region, "Horeb" is used.

- The Decalogue: The Ten Commandments were given to establish a holy standard for a redeemed people.

- The Journey: It is an 11-day journey from Mt. Sinai (Horeb) to Kadesh-Barnea (Deu 1:2).

3. Kadesh-Barnea

- The 12 Spies: Sent out to spy on the land for 40 days Num 13:1–24

- The Return and Report: The spies returned divided: only 2 (Joshua and Caleb) stood positive in faith. Num 13:25–33

- The Great Rebellion: Kadesh-Barnea became known as "the place of the great rebellion" and "the provocation, in the day of temptation" Num 14:20–34, 32:7–14 where Israel refused to enter the Promised Land in faith.

4. The Wilderness Wandering

- 40 Years of Judgment: Israel wandered for one year for every day the spies searched the land Num 14:34

- Fallen in the Wilderness: Everyone twenty years old and upward died in the wilderness and never entered the Promised Land, with the sole exceptions of Joshua and Caleb Num 14:30

A Solemn Warning

Notice that those who saw the mighty miracles of God in Egypt and witnessed the parting of the Red Sea are the very ones who died in the wilderness. It stands as a timeless reminder that witnessing external miracles cannot, in and of itself, create living faith within the heart of a person. True redemption requires a heart yielded completely to God and His Word.

Doctrinal Spotlight: Penal Substitutionary Atonement

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." — Isaiah 53:5

To understand why Jesus died, you must understand the biblical word *sacrifice**. Modern theories try to change the meaning of the cross, but any view that leaves out an atoning payment is completely unscriptural*. The New Testament does not present the cross as a mere moral example or a tragic accident. It presents it as a real, legal transaction: Jesus Christ died as a spotless Substitute to pay a debt He did not owe for sinners who could not pay it themselves.

1. The Divine Necessity: Holiness and Wrath

The necessity for the atonement comes down to two absolute realities: God's perfect holiness and man's deep sinfulness*.

God is holy. His righteousness demands the satisfaction of His violated law*.

Man is sinful. Sin is not a mistake; it is an open attack on God's honor and an act of willful rebellion*.

God's holy reaction to sin is what Scripture calls His wrath*. If God were to simply overlook sin without a penalty, He would cease to be a righteous Judge, and the moral framework of the universe would collapse*. At Calvary, God did not ignore sin; He dealt with it fully by executing the exact penalty it deserved*.

2. The Divine Transaction: Propitiation and Substitution

Propitiation means appeasement. It is the turning away of righteous wrath through an atoning sacrifice*. In the Old Paths, the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat covered the law and turned a throne of judgment into a throne of grace*. On the cross, Christ became our ultimate mercy seat, completely absorbing the judgment due to us*.

Substitution means taking another's place. From the animal skins in Eden to the ram dying in the stead of Isaac on Mount Moriah, God has always taught that an innocent substitute must die for the guilty*.

Being the sinless Son of God, Jesus offered a sacrifice of infinite value*. He took your specific legal place, which is why He cried out in absolute separation, *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"**.

3. The Divine Efficacy: Complete Pardon and Clean Break

The atonement was a real transaction that produced a permanent result*. It paid a real debt and removed a real barrier*. For anyone who puts their faith in the Savior, this produces two immediate realities:

Total Pardon: The legal debt of your past is entirely blotted out and canceled*. It will never meet you at the judgment*.

Power Over Sin: True saving grace is never a license to continue in rebellion. Living faith in a crucified Savior results in the crucifixion of the old nature*. By Christ's atoning death, we are completely "un-sinned" by His blood and re-created to walk in newness of life*.

The glory of Penal Substitutionary Atonement within a *whosoever will* framework is its absolute sufficiency*. By taking the penalty Himself, God remained perfectly just while legally acquitting any sinner who makes faith in Jesus their plea*.

4. The Plain Truth

Repentance alone cannot pay your spiritual bill, and a mechanical creed cannot repair the damage done by your sin*. The cross proves that God will never compromise His justice, but it also proves that His grace will go to infinite lengths to provide a Substitute*. Stop relying on your own flawed works. Turn to the cross, trust the spotless Substitute, and rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Scripture Support for Further Study

Isa 53:5–6 (*"...the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*)

Rom 3:25–26 (*"...that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."*)

2 Cor 5:21 (*"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin..."*)

1 Pet 2:24 (*"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree..."*)

1 Joh 2:2 (*"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."*)

**Note: The Theological frameworks, outlines, and select definitions marked with an asterisk are adapted from Myer Pearlman, Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House), pp. 167–196.*

One-Minute Apologetics:

Why Did Justice Require a Substitution?

...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. Jon 1:29b

The Objection: "Can't a loving God simply forgive people without needing a payment or a death?" This is one of the most common objections raised against Christianity. Skeptics look at the cross and ask why a God of love would require a substitutionary sacrifice rather than just wiping the slate clean with a wave of His hand.

Character Of God

The answer comes down to the very character of God, specifically His justice and holiness.

Imagine a human judge presiding over a case. Someone is brought before him who is guilty of horrific crimes. If the judge smiles, says, "I am a loving, forgiving judge; you are free to go," and lets him walk out of the courtroom unpunished, would we honour that judge view him as good? No, we would condemn him as corrupt, and rightfully so. For him to be a good judge, he must uphold the law and punish wickedness.

If an earthly judge cannot simply overlook crime without violating justice, how much more must a perfectly holy God maintain moral integrity? As our Creator and ultimate Lawgiver of the universe, God cannot simply sweep sin under the rug.

This is why the Apostle Paul writes in Rom 3:26 that God demonstrates His righteousness so *"that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."*

Notice the wisdom of this verse. A. If God simply pardoned sinners without a penalty, He would not be just, instead He would be violating His moral law. B. If He condemned every sinner to hell, He would not be the justifier. C. If He were to ignore sin, He would cease to be a holy and righteous Judge, and moral reality would collapse. So, the question becomes; how does God solve this impossible dilemma?

Through Substitution

At the cross, two seemingly contradictory attributes of God, His perfect justice and His profound mercy, come together in perfect harmony. God has not compromised His justice by sweeping sin away; instead, He has executed the full and legal penalty of our rebellion upon the only willing and spotless Substitute. In His profound mercy, God justifies us and we are reconciled unto Him through Christ Jesus, who stepped into our exact legal place and took upon Himself the wrath which we deserved. In doing so, God retains perfect justice while legally justifying everyone who places their faith in Christ.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all Isa 53:4-6.

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed 1Pe 2:24.

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit 1Pe 3:18.

The cross isn't a picture of divine cruelty—it is the ultimate display of divine justice and mercy meeting at Calvary.

Giants of the Faith

Polycarp of Smyrna: The Disciple of John (AD 69–155)

"Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?"

The Account: Few figures in church history bridge the gap between the apostolic era and the early centuries of fierce Roman persecution quite like Polycarp of Smyrna. Born around AD 69, Polycarp was not merely a distant observer of Christian history; he was a living link to the New Testament itself. As a young man, he sat at the feet of the Apostle John, learning the doctrine of Christ firsthand from one of the men who had literally leaned against Jesus' chest. Later, John appointed Polycarp as the Bishop of Smyrna, making him a pillar of light in Asia Minor during a time of immense spiritual hostility.

Polycarp lived a long life characterized by deep pastoral faithfulness, quiet endurance, and an unwavering commitment to apostolic truth. In his later years, he wrote an encouraging letter to the Philippians that still survives, warning them against false teachers and anchoring them firmly to the righteousness of the cross. But his ultimate legacy was forged not just with ink, but with fire. By the mid-second century, under the reign of the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius, localized persecutions against Christians had erupted into violent bloodbaths. The public blamed Christians for every natural disaster and societal ill, crying out, "Away with the atheists!"—a derogatory label given to believers because they refused to worship the pagan idols of Rome.

The Stand: When the manhunt reached Smyrna, authorities tracked down the elderly bishop in a small country home. Though he had opportunities to flee, Polycarp chose to stay, famously declaring, "The will of God be done." He welcomed his captors, ordered a meal to be prepared for them, and asked only for an hour of uninterrupted prayer. His captors were so moved by his grace, age, and peace that they regretted ever coming to arrest him.

Polycarp was brought into the crowded stadium of Smyrna on a high Sabbath, where the Roman proconsul tried desperately to save the old man's life. The proconsul urged Polycarp to recant, saying, "Swear by the divinity of Caesar; curse Christ, and I will release you."

Polycarp's legendary response echoed through the stone amphitheater and has reverberated across the centuries: *"Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?"*

Threatened with wild beasts, Polycarp remained faithful. Threatened with being burned alive, he stood firm with a calm, joyful countenance, declaring to the proconsul that the magistrate's fire burns for but a brief hour, whereas the unquenchable fire of future judgment waits for the ungodly. Realizing he could not break the old bishop's resolve, the proconsul ordered the herald to proclaim three times to the mob that Polycarp had confessed to being a Christian. The stadium erupted with the roar of pagans and Jews demanding his death by fire.

The Execution: The executioners bound him to the stake. According to the ancient, eyewitness *Martyrdom of Polycarp*—one of the earliest and most reliable accounts of Christian martyrdom outside the New Testament—when they lit the wood, the flames billowed outward, arching like the sail of a ship filled with wind, miraculously refusing to consume his body. Seeing that the fire would not touch him, an executioner was ordered to step forward and pierce him with a dagger. So much blood rushed out that it extinguished the surrounding flames.

The Legacy: Polycarp's death was not a tragedy; it was a triumphant testimony. His steadfast endurance galvanized the early church in Asia Minor, proving that no empire, threat, or executioner could sever a believer from the love of Christ. In an age of compromise, Polycarp stands as an immortal giant of the faith, reminding every generation of the supreme cost of redemption and the eternal worth of knowing Christ.