

## Christian Blood Atonement Refutation

### A Comprehensive Historical-Critical Refutation of Blood Atonement Theology in Christianity:

A Textual, Philological, and Historical Examination of Old and New Testament Evidence, Doctrinal Development, and Comparative Theological Frameworks.

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#### Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive, historically grounded, and philologically rigorous refutation of the claim—commonly advanced within mainstream Christianity—that God does not forgive sins without the shedding of blood, and that this principle allegedly spans from Adam through the Old Testament and culminates in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Drawing exclusively upon the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), the New Testament, documented non-Islamic academic scholarship, and historical-critical methodology, this research demonstrates that the doctrine of necessary blood atonement is neither uniformly taught nor textually mandated within the canonical scriptures. Instead, forgiveness in both Testaments is repeatedly shown to be grounded in divine mercy, repentance, ethical transformation, and covenant fidelity, rather than the metaphysical necessity of sacrificial blood.

Through detailed analysis of sacrificial law, prophetic literature, wisdom texts, Second Temple Judaism, New Testament textual variants, and the evolving theology of atonement from early Church Fathers through the Reformation to modern scholarship, this study shows that Christian blood-atonement doctrines reflect historical development, doctrinal innovation, and syncretic influence from surrounding pagan sacrificial motifs. Philological analysis of key Hebrew and Greek terms—including *kipper*, *dam*, *ḥaṭṭā't*, *hilasterion*, *lytron*, and *aphesis*—demonstrates that many Christian theological claims rest on mistranslations or anachronistic doctrinal interpretations. The paper concludes with a critical comparison to alternative theological frameworks of divine mercy and personal accountability.

Overall, this research establishes that Christian blood-atonement theology is not a consistent biblical teaching but a later doctrinal synthesis shaped by historical context, theological innovation, and cultural influence, and thus cannot be defended as a universal divine requirement.

**Keywords:** Atonement, Sacrifice, Forgiveness, Blood, Old Testament, New Testament, Historical-Critical, Philology, Christian Theology, Pagan Parallels.

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### **Introduction**

The Christian doctrine that God does not forgive sins without the shedding of blood is frequently presented as a universal and immutable divine principle, stretching from Adam through the Old Testament and culminating in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This assertion forms the backbone of penal substitutionary atonement and related models that dominate many branches of contemporary Christian theology, especially within Evangelical and Reformed traditions. Proponents claim that the sacrificial system of Israel, the prophetic writings, the teachings of Jesus, and the apostolic writings all support this central thesis: that blood is the divinely mandated means of forgiveness, and that God is metaphysically incapable of forgiving without a perfect sacrifice.

However, this sweeping claim presents significant problems when evaluated through historical-critical methodology, philological analysis of the biblical texts, and a survey

of doctrinal development across centuries. The canonical scriptures themselves provide a far more diverse and nuanced picture of forgiveness, covenant relationship, sacrifice, and divine justice than the later Christian doctrinal synthesis suggests. Numerous passages throughout the Hebrew Bible unambiguously teach forgiveness independent of sacrificial blood; many others explicitly elevate repentance, moral reform, and covenant faithfulness above ritual observance. Likewise, the New Testament—particularly the teachings of Jesus and the early apostolic community—nowhere asserts an immutable divine law requiring literal blood for forgiveness. Instead, forgiveness is repeatedly granted through repentance, faith, ethical transformation, and divine mercy.

Moreover, the historical development of Christian atonement theology reveals that the dominant models of blood atonement—particularly the satisfaction theory of Anselm and the penal substitution theory of the Protestant Reformers—are theological innovations shaped by the sociopolitical, philosophical, and legal frameworks of their respective eras. These doctrines do not represent a straightforward continuation of biblical teaching but rather reinterpret biblical concepts within new intellectual paradigms. Comparative analysis further demonstrates that many core elements of Christian atonement theology reflect parallels with and possible influence from pagan sacrificial religions, particularly within the Greco-Roman world.

This paper aims to demonstrate, through rigorous academic analysis, that the Christian doctrine of necessary blood atonement is not a consistent teaching of the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament, nor is it grounded in the earliest strata of Christian thought. Instead, it is a historically conditioned theological construct that cannot be sustained when measured against the full weight of textual, linguistic, and historical evidence. By systematically analysing Old and New Testament texts, evaluating the evolution of Christian doctrine, examining pagan parallels, and engaging critically with the interpretations of major Christian theologians, this research establishes that the claim of universal and necessary blood atonement is doctrinally unsound, historically inconsistent, and textually indefensible.

## **PART I — Old Testament Foundations**

Old Testament Foundations: A Textual, Historical, and Philological Refutation of Universal Blood Atonement.

## **PART I — Old Testament Foundations**

This section dismantles the core Christian claim that **the Old Testament consistently teaches that God *never* forgives without the shedding of blood.** Through comprehensive textual, linguistic, and historical analysis, this section demonstrates conclusively that:

1. **Blood atonement was never the exclusive, necessary, or universal means of forgiveness in the Hebrew Bible.**
2. **Numerous explicit passages show forgiveness granted with no sacrifice at all.**
3. **Prophets and wisdom literature explicitly repudiate blood sacrifice as a means of forgiveness when moral life is absent.**
4. **The Christian claim that “blood is required since Adam” has no Old Testament basis.**
5. **The Mosaic system itself includes *non-blood* sacrifices for sin and for atonement.**

## 1. The Mosaic Sacrificial System in Context

Christian apologists often cite Leviticus—especially 17:11—as “proof” that blood is the only biblical mechanism for forgiveness. However, when examined within the wider context of Torah, ANE sacrificial practice, and the internal diversity of the legal codes, this claim collapses.

### 1.1. Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East (ANE)

Scholars widely agree that sacrificial systems in the ANE served multiple overlapping functions:

- Feeding or honouring deities
- Maintaining cosmic or social order
- Marking festivals, vows, or purity states
- Symbolising thanksgiving or communal fellowship
- Appeasing divine wrath (in some cultures)

Israel’s sacrificial codes share structural similarities with neighbouring cultures (Levine, 1974; Milgrom, 1991), but significantly:

- They **do not** teach that *blood is metaphysically required* for forgiveness.
- They incorporate **grain, incense, and monetary offerings** with atoning functions (Milgrom, 2000).

Christian arguments often ignore these categories because they contradict New Testament dogma.

## 2. The Misinterpretation of Leviticus 17:11

The verse reads:

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar **to make atonement for your lives.**” (Lev. 17:11)

Christian apologists claim this proves universal necessity. This is incorrect for several reasons:

### 2.1. The context is dietary, not salvific

Leviticus 17 is not about sin offerings; it is about regulating the consumption of blood. Milgrom (1991) notes that the chapter aims to prevent Israel from engaging in Canaanite blood rituals.

### 2.2. “Atonement” (*kipper*) does not always mean forgiveness

The Hebrew *kipper* can mean:

- purify
- cleanse
- ransom
- appease
- wipe clean
- remove impurity

It does **not** universally mean “forgive sins” (Wright, 1999).

### 2.3. Many atoning rituals in Leviticus do NOT use blood

**Examples:****A. Grain offerings atone for sin**

Leviticus 5:11–13 explicitly allows a grain offering to “make atonement.”  
No blood is shed.

“The priest shall make atonement for him... and he shall be forgiven.” (Lev. 5:13)

**B. Incense atonement**

Numbers 16:46–47—Aaron makes atonement with incense only.

**C. Money ransoms atone**

Exodus 30:15–16—silver “makes atonement” for Israel.

This alone destroys the Christian claim that “blood is required.”

**3. Direct Old Testament Statements: God Forgives Without Sacrifice**

The Hebrew Bible explicitly rejects the idea that sacrifice is needed for forgiveness.

**3.1. “I desire mercy, not sacrifice” (Hosea 6:6)**

Christian tradition often cites this—but ignores that it **contradicts** their doctrine.  
God explicitly declares:

- forgiveness is based on repentance and loyalty
- not on ritual sacrifice

**3.2. Psalm 51:17 — Repentance replaces sacrifice**

King David states:

“You do not desire sacrifice... the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.” (Ps. 51:16–17)

If blood were required for forgiveness, David could not say this after *murder* and *adultery* (both capital crimes). Yet he receives forgiveness without sacrifice (2 Sam. 12:13).

**3.3. Ezekiel 18 — Forgiveness through repentance alone**

The entire chapter refutes blood atonement theology:

“If the wicked person turns from all his sins... he shall surely live.” (Ez. 18:21–22)

No sacrifice. No blood.

### 3.4. Isaiah 1 — God rejects sacrifices

God condemns sacrifices as *meaningless* (vv. 11–13) and instead demands:

“Cease to do evil, learn to do good... seek justice.” (vv. 16–17)

Forgiveness results from moral change, not shedding blood.

### 3.5. Jonah 3 — God forgives an entire nation with repentance only

Nineveh repents.

God forgives.

No sacrifice.

No blood.

This is devastating to Christian theology because the narrative explicitly demonstrates:

- blood is unnecessary
- God forgives pagans
- forgiveness is based on repentance

## 4. Sacrificial Categories That Do NOT Involve Blood

Christians incorrectly conflate all sacrifices as atonement offerings. This is inaccurate.

**Sacrifice types:**

- Burnt offerings (*‘ōlāh*)
- Peace offerings (*šēlāmîm*)
- Grain offerings (*minḥāh*)
- Sin offerings (*ḥaṭṭā’î*)
- Guilt offerings (*’āšām*)
- Incense offerings



- Purification rituals

Many have nothing to do with sin or forgiveness.

Grain and incense offerings explicitly “make atonement” (Lev. 5; Num. 16).

If blood were mandatory, **God would not allow exceptions.**

## 5. The Christian Claim About Adam Is Unsupported

Christians assert that blood was shed “for Adam’s forgiveness.” This doctrine:

- appears nowhere in the Old Testament
- is derived from later Christian imagination
- is absent from Jewish tradition
- is contradicted by the narrative structure

Genesis 3 contains:

- no sacrifice
- no altar
- no mention of forgiveness by blood

The “garments of skins” (Gen. 3:21) are not a sacrifice.

Every major Jewish authority rejects this interpretation (Sarna, 1989; Cassuto, 1964).

## 6. Prophetic Theology Rejects Blood as Forgiveness Mechanism

The prophets repeatedly undermine sacrificial theology:

**Micah 6:6–8 — God rejects even extreme sacrifices**

“Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression?” (v. 7)

God rejects this premise entirely.

This explicitly refutes Christian claims that a human sacrifice can atone for sin.

**Amos 5:22–24 — God rejects sacrifices of Israel**

Forgiveness comes from justice and righteousness.

## 7. Wisdom Literature Undermines Sacrificial Necessity

Proverbs, Psalms, and Job consistently teach:

- righteous living
- repentance
- fear of God—not sacrificial blood—lead to forgiveness.

### Key example:

Proverbs 16:6:

“By *steadfast love and faithfulness* iniquity is atoned for.”

No blood. No sacrifice.

## 8. Non-blood Atonement in Post-Exilic Literature

The Second Temple period refined non-sacrificial atonement methods:

- fasting
- charity
- prayer
- repentance
- Torah study

This is seen in:

- Daniel 4:27
- Tobit 12:8–10
- Sirach 3:3

These sources shaped the Judaism of Jesus’ time—demonstrating that **blood sacrifice was not essential to forgiveness** even then.

## Conclusion of Part I

The Old Testament does **not** support the Christian claim that:

- forgiveness requires blood
- sacrifice is the only path to reconciliation
- God cannot forgive without a death
- atonement began with Adam

The Hebrew Bible presents a complex, multifaceted system in which:

- repentance
- moral transformation
- prayer
- charity
- justice
- obedience—are all valid paths to divine forgiveness.

This completely dismantles the Christian premise that Old Testament theology necessitated Jesus' sacrificial death.

## Message 3 — PART III: Historical-Critical Analysis of Atonement in the Old Testament

### III. Historical-Critical Analysis of Atonement in the Old Testament

*(A refutation of the claim that blood was the exclusive, divinely mandated mechanism for forgiveness from Adam through the entire Hebrew Bible)*

#### III.A. Introduction

Christian apologists commonly argue that the Old Testament establishes an unbroken system in which forgiveness is granted only through the shedding of blood, beginning with Adam and continuing until Christ. This assertion collapses under historical-critical scrutiny. The Hebrew Bible contains **multiple, explicit, and unambiguous statements** affirming that **God forgives without sacrifices**, that **blood is not**

**inherently necessary**, and that **obedience, repentance, and ethical conduct** are the true vehicles for reconciliation. Modern biblical scholarship strongly supports this reading.

### **III.B. No Sacrificial System Before Moses: The Claim “From Adam Onwards” Is a Historical Anachronism**

#### **III.B.1. There is no evidence of divine blood-sacrifice legislation for Adam, Noah, or Abraham**

The Hebrew Bible provides **no divine law** requiring sacrifices from Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah, or any patriarch before Moses.

- **Genesis 3–11** contains no mention of sacrificial commandments.
- Christians often cite **Genesis 4** (Cain and Abel), but Abel’s offering is **not commanded**, and the text does **not** identify it as atonement or blood-based forgiveness.
- The first divinely legislated sacrificial system appears **only in Exodus–Leviticus**, during the Sinai covenant, which applies **only to Israel**, not to humanity as a whole.

Leading scholars (e.g., John Walton, Marc Brettler, Benjamin Sommer) note that Genesis portrays early offerings as *gifts* or *expressions of devotion*, not mechanisms of salvation.

#### **III.B.2. Abraham’s near-sacrifice of Isaac was explicitly interrupted**

Christians often attempt to retroject the crucifixion into **Genesis 22**, yet the text demonstrates God **rejecting** human sacrifice:

“Do not lay your hand on the boy.” (Gen 22:12)

This indicates the opposite of Christian claims: **God prohibits human sacrifice**, yet substitutionary atonement requires a human sacrifice.

### **III.C. Blood Sacrifice Was Only One Category of Atonement (and often unrelated to forgiveness)**

#### **III.C.1. The sacrificial system included *non-blood* offerings that effected atonement**

The Hebrew Bible explicitly confirms that certain offerings **without blood** provide atonement (*kippur*). Examples:

### (a) Grain offerings (מִנְחָה / minhāh)

Leviticus 5:11–13 provides a non-blood atonement mechanism:

“If he cannot afford two turtledoves... he shall bring one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour... and the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven.”

Here, **forgiveness** (*wēnispālō*, “and he shall be forgiven”) occurs **without blood**.

### (b) Incense and prayer

Numbers 16:46–48 describes Aaron stopping a plague by **burning incense**, not offering blood. The Hebrew verb *kipper* (“made atonement”) is used.

### (c) Monetary restitution

Exodus 30:11–16 describes atonement via a **half-shekel payment**, again using *kippur* with no reference to blood.

These passages alone refute the Christian claim of absolute blood necessity.

## III.D. Prophetic Literature Rejects Blood Sacrifice as a Means of Forgiveness

### III.D.1. Prophets declare that God does *not* desire sacrifice

Repeatedly, the prophets criticise sacrificial dependence and emphasise ethical repentance.

Examples:

- **Hosea 6:6**

“For I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”

- **Micah 6:6–8**

The prophet rejects even extravagant sacrificial suggestions—including human sacrifice (“my firstborn”)—and concludes:

“What does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

- **Isaiah 1:11–17**

God rejects sacrifices and declares the true path to forgiveness is ethical reform:

“Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean... cease to do evil, learn to do good.”

- **Jeremiah 7:21–23**

Jeremiah asserts that God **did not command sacrifices when He brought Israel from Egypt**, but commanded obedience—contradicting Christian atonement theology at its core.

### III.D.2. Psalmic theology places forgiveness in repentance

- **Psalm 51**, considered the great penitential psalm, explicitly denies the necessity of sacrifices:

“You do not delight in sacrifice... the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.”

This passage directly undermines substitutionary atonement and emphasises inner transformation.

### III.E. Forgiveness Without Sacrifice Is Explicitly Affirmed

#### III.E.1. God forgives directly, without blood or offerings

Numerous verses document divine forgiveness without any sacrificial intermediary:

- **Exodus 34:6–7** — God proclaims Himself “forgiving iniquity.”
- **2 Samuel 12:13** — David is forgiven **instantly** without sacrifice.
- **Jonah 3:10** — Nineveh receives forgiveness with **only repentance**.
- **Ezekiel 18** — God proclaims unequivocally that repentance leads to forgiveness and life.

#### III.E.2. The Christian doctrine of “blood only” contradicts the Torah

The Torah provides at least **five** pathways to forgiveness:

1. Repentance
2. Prayer
3. Good deeds / justice

4. Monetary compensation
  5. Certain sacrifices
- Christian theology isolates (5), despite (1)–(4) being equally or more prominent.

### III.F. The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) Was Not a “Blood-Only” Ritual

#### III.F.1. The scapegoat ritual involved no blood

Leviticus 16 includes:

- One goat killed (blood ritual)
- One goat **sent alive** into the wilderness, carrying sins—no blood involved

Both goats constitute **one atonement rite** (Lev 16:5).

Thus, Yom Kippur incorporates both **blood and non-blood atonement**.

#### III.F.2. The high priest received forgiveness through purification, not substitution

The blood rituals in Leviticus 16 purify the sanctuary from ritual impurity—not moral guilt.

Modern scholars (e.g., Jacob Milgrom, Baruch Levine) are unanimous:

- The Day of Atonement cleans the *sanctuary*
- Moral repentance cleans the *sinner*

Christian apologists collapse these distinct categories.

### III.G. Blood Rituals Were Tied to the Sanctuary, Not to the Removal of “Original Sin”

#### III.G.1. The Hebrew Bible contains no doctrine of inherited original sin

Ezekiel 18, Deuteronomy 24:16, and Jeremiah 31:29–30 all deny inherited guilt.

Because the Christian doctrine of Christ's sacrificial death presupposes Adamic inherited guilt, its absence in the Hebrew Bible means the Christian reading cannot be sustained.

### **III.G.2. Sacrificial blood purifies sacred space, not human souls**

Leviticus 17:11 is universally misinterpreted by Christian apologists. The verse states that blood is given “**on the altar** to make atonement for **your lives.**”

The context concerns **ritual impurity**, not eternal salvation.

### **III.H. Summary: Old Testament Theology Completely Undermines Christian Blood-Atonement Claims**

**The Christian claim requires the following to be historically accurate:**

1. Blood was required from Adam onward.
2. All forgiveness required blood.
3. Sacrifice was the only valid path to reconciliation.
4. The OT foreshadowed a perfect human sacrifice.
5. Forgiveness without blood is impossible.

**The evidence demonstrates the opposite:**

- No sacrificial mandate exists before Moses.
- Bloodless atonement is legislated repeatedly.
- Prophets condemn reliance on sacrifice.
- Ethical repentance is central.
- Human sacrifice is forbidden.
- Original sin is rejected.
- Blood rituals cleanse the sanctuary, not souls.
- God forgives directly without blood.



**The Hebrew Bible fundamentally contradicts every pillar of Christian atonement theology.**

## **PART IV: Historical Development of Christian Atonement Theology**

### **IV. Historical Development of Christian Atonement Theology**

*(Demonstrating that Christian blood-atonement doctrine is not apostolic, not uniform, not rooted in Judaism, and heavily shaped by pagan, philosophical, and political forces.)*

#### **IV.A. Introduction**

Christian apologists often assert that blood atonement—culminating in the sacrificial death of Jesus—has been the central and consistent doctrine of Christianity from the time of the apostles. Historical evidence strongly contradicts this. Atonement theology has undergone **dramatic, discontinuous, and often contradictory** developments across two millennia. This fluidity undermines any claim that the doctrine is divinely mandated, uniformly apostolic, or grounded in a consistent biblical tradition.

Modern scholarship (e.g., Frances Young, J.N.D. Kelly, Alister McGrath) confirms that no single, unified doctrine of atonement existed for the first 1,000 years of Christianity. What later became “orthodox” is the result of theological evolution, philosophical borrowing, and institutional power—not the teachings of Jesus or the Hebrew Bible.

#### **IV.B. The First Christian Century: Absence of Substitutionary Atonement**

##### **IV.B.1. Jesus did not teach blood atonement**

The Synoptic Gospels present Jesus teaching repentance, obedience, and God’s direct forgiveness—never blood substitution. Examples:

- The Prodigal Son (Luke 15): forgiveness without sacrifice
- The paralytic (Mark 2:5): forgiven instantly
- The Lord’s Prayer: forgiveness through forgiving others (Matt 6:12)

There is no teaching that his death is a blood sacrifice required by God.

#### **IV.B.2. Early Jesus followers maintained Jewish atonement concepts**

The earliest community in Jerusalem (Acts 21:20) remained observant Jews performing Temple rites until 70 CE. This contradicts the claim that Jesus' blood immediately replaced the sacrificial system.

#### **IV.B.3. Paul's letters contain multiple atonement metaphors—not a unified system**

Paul uses:

- **Ransom** (lytron)
- **Reconciliation** (katallagē)
- **Passover metaphors**
- **Justification language**
- **Adoption imagery**

None of these form a coherent theology, and none claim that God cannot forgive without blood. Paul's metaphors are pastoral and rhetorical, not doctrinally systematic.

#### **IV.C. Second to Fourth Centuries: The “Ransom Theory” Dominates (Rooted in Pagan Concepts)**

##### **IV.C.1. The earliest church fathers rejected substitution and embraced ransom motifs**

Writers such as:

- **Ignatius of Antioch**
- **Irenaeus**
- **Origen**
- **Gregory of Nyssa**

taught that Jesus was a ransom paid to Satan, not a blood payment demanded by God. This is the dominant patristic view for the first four centuries.

##### **IV.C.2. Pagan mythological influence is explicit**

The “ransom to Satan” motif parallels:

- Greco-Roman myths of gods tricking or paying demons
- Mystery cult initiations involving symbolic liberation from dark powers
- Platonic dualism involving cosmic conflict

Christian intellectuals of this period were heavily influenced by Hellenistic concepts.

#### **IV.C.3. No father before the 4th century teaches penal substitution**

This alone refutes modern Christian claims of a “consistent biblical doctrine.”

### **IV.D. Fourth–Fifth Centuries: Imperial Christianity and Augustine’s Innovations**

#### **IV.D.1. Atonement doctrine shifts through political centralisation**

After Constantine, bishops gain institutional authority, leading to doctrinal consolidation. This political consolidation coincides with theological innovation, including changes in how Christ’s death was interpreted.

#### **IV.D.2. Augustine introduces the seeds of “original guilt”**

Augustine develops the doctrine of original sin as inherited guilt, not merely inherited weakness. This theological innovation **necessitates** a new understanding of Christ’s death as a compensatory act.

#### **IV.D.3. Augustine’s views are not grounded in Jewish scripture**

His doctrine is shaped by:

- Neo-Platonic anthropology
- Roman legal categories
- Personal experience
- Anti-Pelagian polemics

The Hebrew Bible denies inherited guilt (Ezekiel 18), making Augustine’s framework incompatible with Judaism.

### **IV.E. Eleventh Century: Anselm’s “Satisfaction Theory” (Feudal, Not Biblical)**

#### IV.E.1. Anselm introduces feudal logic into theology

In *Cur Deus Homo*, Anselm argues that sin is an insult to God's honour. Since God's honour is infinite, only a divine-human sacrifice can satisfy it.

This model is:

- **Feudal** (based on honour-debt relationships)
- **Legalistic**
- **Absent from early Christianity**
- **Absent from Jewish scripture**

#### IV.E.2. Anselm rejects ransom theology—but the Hebrew Bible rejects satisfaction theology

Anselm insists that:

- God could not simply forgive
- A debt must be paid
- Only blood can satisfy the offended divine honour

However, the Hebrew Bible repeatedly teaches that God **does** forgive freely—with no blood required.

#### IV.E.3. Anselm's model became dominant only in the medieval West

Eastern Orthodox Christianity never accepted it.

### IV.F. The Reformation: Penal Substitution Formalised (Luther & Calvin)

#### IV.F.1. Luther

Martin Luther reframes Anselm's model into a legal courtroom paradigm:

- Humanity deserves divine wrath
- Jesus absorbs the punishment
- God's justice is satisfied through penal substitution

This is purely juridical, not biblical.

### **IV.F.2. Calvin**

Calvin intensifies substitutionary atonement by asserting:

- Jesus experienced God's full wrath
- God punished Jesus in place of humanity
- Justice requires violent satisfaction

This view has no foundation in Jewish atonement law, Temple practice, or prophetic theology.

### **IV.F.3. Reformation theology relies on Roman legal categories**

Calvin was trained as a lawyer and applied forensic tools to theological constructs. This further distances atonement doctrine from its supposed Hebrew foundations.

## **IV.G. Eastern Christianity: Atonement Without Blood as Central**

### **IV.G.1. Orthodox churches emphasise the Incarnation, not penal death**

Eastern theology centres on:

- **Theosis** (spiritual transformation)
- **Christ's victory over death**
- **Healing of the human condition**

Blood sacrifice is peripheral or absent.

### **IV.G.2. The East rejects Western punitive and satisfaction theories**

Patristic authors like Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Maximus the Confessor describe Christ's work as ontological healing, not payment.

### **IV.G.3. There is no cross-centred substitution in Eastern liturgy**

This contradicts the Protestant claim that substitution is universal Christian doctrine.

## **IV.H. Modern Theology: Rejection, Revision, and Abandonment of Blood Atonement**

### **IV.H.1. Liberal and post-Enlightenment theologians**

Scholars such as Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Harnack reject substitutionary atonement as:

- Morally problematic
- Historically unsupported
- Incompatible with the character of God

#### **IV.H.2. 20th-century models**

Leading theologians propose alternative models:

- **Gustaf Aulén:** Christus Victor revived
- **Karl Barth:** reconciliation as divine initiative, not payment
- **Jürgen Moltmann:** suffering as solidarity, not satisfaction

#### **IV.H.3. Biblical scholarship undermines blood necessity**

Modern Jewish and Christian scholars (e.g., Milgrom, Wright, Hayes) conclude:

- Blood rituals purify the sanctuary
- God freely forgives
- Sacrifice is not substitutionary
- Jesus' death was interpreted variously in later communities

### **IV.I. Summary: Christian Atonement Theology Has Never Been Unified or Apostolic**

Christian claims of a divinely mandated, universally held blood-atonement doctrine collapse for several reasons:

- 1. Early Christians did not teach substitutionary atonement.**
- 2. The dominant early theory (ransom to Satan) is mythological.**
- 3. Augustine invented inherited guilt.**
- 4. Anselm invented satisfaction using feudal concepts.**
- 5. Luther and Calvin invented penal substitution using legal categories.**

6. Eastern Christianity never accepted these doctrines.

7. Modern scholarship rejects the doctrine as historically and ethically untenable.

Therefore, Christian blood atonement is not biblical, not Jewish, not apostolic, and not historically continuous. It is a later theological construction shaped by philosophical and cultural influences entirely foreign to the Hebrew Bible.

## PART V —Pagan Parallels and the Non-Jewish Origins of Christian Blood-Atonement Concepts

### V.A. Introduction

Christian apologists frequently assert that Jesus' blood sacrifice is the natural and inevitable fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrificial system. However, a vast body of scholarship demonstrates that the *specific* theological structure central to mainstream Christian atonement—namely **substitutionary, salvific, universal blood sacrifice of a deity's son**—has no roots in Judaism but is **strikingly consistent with ancient pagan religions**, including Near Eastern, Mediterranean, and Greco-Roman mystery cults.

This section surveys the broader ancient sacrificial environment and demonstrates that **Christian atonement theology aligns more closely with pagan mythologies than with the Hebrew Bible**, where God frequently forgives sins without blood, explicitly rejects ritual sacrifices, and never demands the death of an innocent human.

### V.B. The Ancient Near Eastern Background: Blood Sacrifice as Cosmic Transaction

#### V.B.1. Sacrifice as a universal pagan ritual category

Across Mesopotamia, Canaan, Anatolia, and Egypt, sacrifices functioned as:

- Food offerings to sustain the gods
- Magical transactions
- Means of appeasing divine wrath
- Ritual purifications

Notable parallels include:

- **Baal cults** (Canaan) involving blood rituals
- **Ugaritic rites** where sacrificial blood sanctified sacred spaces
- **Mesopotamian “substitute king” rituals**, in which an innocent person died in place of the king during omens

These practices establish a broader environment of **vicarious death**—but *none* are endorsed by the Hebrew Bible.

### V.B.2. Hebrew Bible polemic against pagan sacrifice

The Hebrew Bible repeatedly rejects pagan sacrificial theology:

- **Micah 6:6–8**: God explicitly rejects sacrificial offerings, including human sacrifice.
- **Jeremiah 7:22**: God denies commanding sacrifices upon Israel’s exodus.
- **Psalms 40:6–8**: God does not desire blood sacrifices but obedience.
- **Deuteronomy 12:31**: God prohibits the pagan practice of child sacrifice.

This shows that **blood sacrifice was embraced by surrounding nations** and that Israel’s God **differentiates Himself** by rejecting such practices.

Thus, the Christian inference that God *requires* blood is **anti-biblical and resembles paganism more than Judaism**.

## V.C. Greco-Roman Parallels: Dying-and-Rising Gods and Salvific Blood

Modern Christian atonement doctrine aligns closely with the mythological structure of dying-and-rising gods in Greek and Roman religion.

### V.C.1. Dionysus and salvific death

Dionysian cults taught:

- A divine being suffers and is torn apart
- His followers gain spiritual renewal
- Ritual wine represents divine blood



This is a conceptual prototype for Eucharistic symbolism.

### **V.C.2. Attis and self-sacrifice**

In the Phrygian cult of Attis:

- The god dies violently
- His blood renews the earth
- His followers participate in symbolic rebirth
- Priests engaged in blood rituals to emulate the god

The parallels with the Christian claim that Jesus' blood saves humanity are clear.

### **V.C.3. Osiris and eternal life**

Egyptian religion described Osiris:

- Murdered
- Resurrected
- Bestowing life to his followers through mystical union

Early Christian theology developed in an environment where **sacrificial deity mythology** was already culturally dominant.

### **V.C.4. Heracles and vicarious suffering**

Greco-Roman literature includes motifs of heroic suffering on behalf of others, including Heracles, whose suffering brings benefits to humanity. This becomes part of the Greco-Roman cultural grammar in which Christian texts were interpreted.

## **V.D. Mystery Cult Parallels: Mithraism, Eleusinian Mysteries, and Salvation Through Blood**

### **V.D.1. Mithraism**

The Mithraic tauroctony (slaying of the bull) involved:

- Blood as the source of cosmic life
- Symbolic cleansing and rebirth
- Initiates receiving salvation through sacred blood

Scholarship (e.g., Cumont, Beck) notes structural parallels with early Christian soteriology.

### **V.D.2. Attis–Cybele cult**

This cult involved:

- Salvific blood (“taurobolium”) poured over initiates
- Ritual washing in blood for purification
- A dying-and-rising deity providing salvation
- “Rebirth” rituals analogous to Christian baptism

### **V.D.3. Eleusinian Mysteries**

Though less violent, the mysteries included:

- Symbolic death
- Ritual cleansing
- Promise of eternal life

These motifs provided a cultural backdrop that early Christians adopted and adapted.

## **V.E. Roman Imperial Religion and the Logic of Sacrificial Loyalty**

### **V.E.1. Sacrifice as allegiance to a lord**

Roman emperor worship involved:

- Ritual offerings
- Confession of loyalty
- Viewing the emperor as “son of God”

This political-theological environment shaped early Christian use of:

- “Lord” (Kyrios)
- “Son of God”
- Sacrificial loyalty models

## V.E.2. The “pietas” obligation

Roman pietas required:

- Paying honour-debt to divine figures
- Ensuring cosmic order through ritual offerings

Anselm’s medieval satisfaction theory is a direct theological descendant of Roman honour-debt models, not Jewish sacrificial theology.

## V.F. The Logic of Vicarious Human Sacrifice in Pagan Cultures

Christian penal substitution doctrine resembles **pagan practices of vicarious human death**, not Jewish atonement law.

Examples include:

- The Mesopotamian “substitute king”
- Greek pharmakos rituals (killing a scapegoat to purify the community)
- Carthaginian child sacrifice to Baal Hammon
- Roman “devotio” rituals, where a general sacrifice himself for the army

In all these cases:

- **The innocent dies for the guilty**
- **Blood restores cosmic balance**
- **The deity’s wrath is satisfied**

Judaism *explicitly rejects* all such theology (Deut 24:16; Ezek 18:20).

## V.G. Distinctiveness of Jewish Theology Against Paganism: No Vicarious Human Sacrifice

### V.G.1. The Hebrew Bible rejects substitutionary human sacrifice

Ezekiel 14:12–23 denies that another person can suffer for the sins of the wicked. Ezekiel 18 states the same explicitly.

### V.G.2. Sacrifice never removes the guilt of moral sins

Sacrifice in Judaism is:

- Ritual purification
- Symbolic cleansing
- Never a penal substitute

Major Jewish scholars (Milgrom, Levine, Hayes) affirm:

- Blood **purifies the Temple**, not the sinner
- God forgives directly

This is the opposite of Christian theology.

### **V.H. Summary: Christian Blood-Atonement Is Culturally Pagan, Not Biblically Jewish**

After comparing Christian atonement theology to ancient pagan patterns, several conclusions emerge:

#### **1. The concept of a dying-and-rising saviour god is pagan, not Jewish.**

Judaism never teaches that God requires the bloody death of His son.

#### **2. The idea of salvation through divine blood is pagan.**

Hebrew scripture emphasises repentance, justice, and mercy.

#### **3. The notion of universal sin inherited from Adam has pagan and philosophical roots (Stoic, Platonic), not biblical Jewish roots.**

#### **4. Ritual blood cleansing for salvation mirrors Mithraic, Attis, and mystery cult initiation rites.**

#### **5. The idea that an innocent human or God-man must die for the guilty is rejected by the Hebrew prophets but embraced by many pagan systems.**

#### **6. Christian atonement theology reflects Hellenistic, Roman, and mystery-cult syncretism—not Old Testament theology.**

### **PART IV — (Section C onward): The Internal Logical Failure of Christian Blood-Atonement**

## C. Ethical Contradictions in Substitutionary Atonement

### 1. Moral Incoherence: Punishing an Innocent Instead of the Guilty

Substitutionary atonement requires that **God transfers guilt** from sinners onto a perfectly innocent being—Jesus. This raises an ethical problem that Christian philosophers and theologians outside Islamic tradition have pointed out:

- **G. F. Moore**, Harvard scholar of religion, argued that vicarious punishment *contradicts the foundations of biblical ethics*, which repeatedly affirms that “the soul that sins shall die” (Ezek 18:20), not someone else.
- **Hastings Rashdall** (Oxford) in *The Idea of Atonement* dismantles the logic of penal substitution as a form of *moral injustice at its core*.

Biblically, penal substitution is explicitly condemned:

**Ezekiel 18:20** — “*The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son.*”

Yet penal substitution asks the opposite:  
A sinless Son must bear the guilt of all humanity.

This is not a Qatari, modern Islamic, or polemical critique—it is a **contradiction explicitly stated inside the Bible itself**.

### 2. Justice Cannot Be “Transferred” Without Becoming Injustice

A standard premise of Christian atonement is:

God must punish sin → Therefore someone must be punished → Jesus is punished.

But this violates the core biblical principle that:

- guilt is not transferable,
- righteousness is not transferable,
- and moral accountability is individual.

This principle is stated repeatedly:

- **Deut 24:16**
- **Jer 31:29–30**

- **2 Chron 25:4**

These texts deny the foundational mechanism Christianity insists on.

Christian theologian **Derek Flood**, in *Healing the Gospel*, argues that penal substitution is incompatible with Jesus' own ethical teachings and cannot be reconciled with biblical justice.

Thus, the theory contradicts:

- the Hebrew Bible,
- Jesus' ethical framework,
- and basic coherent morality.

### 3. Problem of Divine Impassibility and Immutability

Classical Christian doctrine (Augustine → Aquinas → Calvin) asserts:

- God is impassible (cannot suffer),
- God is immutable (cannot change),
- the divine nature cannot die.

But penal substitution claims:

- God suffered,
- God's wrath was appeased,
- and God's nature was "satisfied" through blood.

This produces a **philosophical impossibility**:

Either:

1. God did not die (then Jesus' death is not divine and cannot have eternal salvific value), or
2. God *did* die (contradicting classical Christian metaphysics).

This is why philosophers like **Charles Hartshorne**, **John Hick**, and even within conservative circles **Thomas McCall** have declared penal substitution logically incoherent.

## **D. Anthropological and Theological Contradictions: God Changes, But Claims Not to Change**

Christian atonement theology assumes:

- God was angry,
- then Jesus died,
- and then God became forgiving.

But the Bible says God does **not** change:

- **Malachi 3:6** — “I the LORD do not change.”
- **Numbers 23:19** — “God is not a man... nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.”

Yet the atonement scheme requires change in God’s disposition:  
from anger → appeasement → forgiveness.

This contradiction has been acknowledged by Christian scholars themselves:

- **Friedrich Schleiermacher,**
- **Paul Tillich,**
- **Jürgen Moltmann,**
- **Alister McGrath.**

They concede that penal substitution cannot be reconciled with the doctrine of God’s immutability.

## **E. The Trinity Problem: Who Was the Blood Paid To?**

There is no consensus in Christian theology on **who receives the “payment”**:

### **Theory 1 — Paid to the Father (Anselm, Calvin)**

But this creates:

- a division of will between Father and Son,
- an ethical dilemma where the Father demands the torture of His innocent Son.

## Theory 2 — Paid to Satan (Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine sometimes)

This directly contradicts monotheism and biblical theology by making Satan:

- the owner of humanity,
- the recipient of ransom,
- and more powerful than God until the payment is made.

Even C.S. Lewis' popularisation of this view in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* cannot hide the absurdity of a God paying ransom to His enemy.

## Theory 3 — Paid to “Divine Justice” (Aquinas)

This turns “Justice” into a quasi-deity higher than God, forcing God to obey an external moral principle.

Thus, Christian theology oscillates:

- between polytheistic implications,
- internal conflict within the Trinity,
- or subordination to an abstract metaphysical law.

This is why modern theologians increasingly reject the model as unworkable.

## F. Logical Redundancy: If Jesus Is God, Then God Sacrificed God to God to Satisfy God

This is not a caricature—it is a precise representation of the Trinitarian logic applied to penal substitution.

If Jesus is God:

1. God required a blood sacrifice to forgive,
2. God sacrificed Himself to Himself,
3. to appease Himself,
4. so, He could do what He could have done without sacrifice.



This sequence is internally circular and violates all principles of classical metaphysics, ethics, and rationality.

Christian philosophers like **John Hick, Ramsey, and Bishop John A.T. Robinson** have categorised it as *philosophically incoherent*.

## **G. The “Satisfied Justice” Argument Collapses Under Its Own Premises**

The Christian claim:

If God forgave without blood, justice would not be satisfied.

But then:

- If Jesus died instead of sinners → justice is *not* satisfied, because the guilty go free while the innocent suffers.
- If Jesus is God → God punished Himself for sins He did not commit.
- If Jesus is distinct → God violated His own justice by punishing an innocent third party.

Thus: Christian atonement either destroys divine justice, divine mercy, or divine unity.

## **PART VII: Historical Errors, Anachronisms, and Scriptural Contradictions in Christian Atonement Theories**

This section demonstrates that **Christian blood-atonement theology contradicts the historical record, Jewish scripture, Jewish interpretive tradition, and internal Christian textual history**, and therefore cannot be defended as a continuous or divinely mandated doctrine.

### **A. Historical Anachronism: The Claim That “Blood Was Always Required for Forgiveness” Is Provably False**

Christian apologists claim:

“Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22).

But this is:

1. **A late, non-Hebrew New Testament claim,**
2. **contradicted by the Hebrew Bible, and**
3. **rejected by all known Jewish sources, ancient and modern.**

# **1. The Hebrew Bible explicitly records MANY cases of sin forgiven without any sacrifice**

Examples include:

- **Psalm 32:5** — David is forgiven by confession alone.
- **Psalm 51:17** — Broken-hearted repentance replaces sacrifice.
- **Hosea 14:2** — “Take words... and God will forgive.”
- **Ezekiel 18:21–22** — Repentance alone leads to forgiveness.
- **Daniel 4:27** — Ethical reform results in forgiveness.
- **Jonah 3:10** — Nineveh forgiven with *no sacrifices*, only repentance.

The Old Testament therefore demonstrates that **blood is not a universal divine requirement**.

Hebrews 9:22 contradicts:

- Torah,
- Prophets,
- Writings,
- Jewish practice,
- and Jewish theology.

This is why **no Jewish denomination**—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Karaite—has ever believed blood is necessary.

## **B. New Testament Contradiction: Hebrews Misquotes and Misrepresents the Torah**

The author of Hebrews states:

“Almost all things are purified with blood” (Heb 9:22).

This is inaccurate.

### 1. The Torah mandatorily prescribes **NON-BLOOD** offerings

- Grain offerings (Lev 2)
- Incense offerings (Ex 30)
- First fruits (Deut 26)
- Purification by water, ashes, fire (Num 31:21–24)
- Atonement by money (Ex 30:11–16)

Only **SOME** rituals used blood, and even then, **blood atoned for ritual impurity, NOT moral sin** (Lev 4–5).

The Hebrews author:

- collapses multiple sacrificial categories,
- misrepresents the role of blood,
- and falsely universalises a ritual limited to priestly impurity.

Modern Christian scholars (e.g., E. P. Sanders, Jacob Milgrom) confirm that **Torah atonement is not built on blood-substitution for sin**.

## C. Historical Error: Christians Import Pagan Sacrifice Logic into Judaism

### 1. Ancient Pagans Believed:

- Sin contaminates the cosmos.
- Divine anger must be appeased.
- A god demands blood to “balance” cosmic injustice.
- Sometimes human sacrifice is required.

This is the **same logic** used by:

- Anselm (11th century),
- Calvin (16th century),

- Modern evangelical penal substitution.

## 2. Judaism **REJECTED** this logic

The Hebrew Bible repeatedly condemns:

- appeasement sacrifice,
- human sacrifice,
- transferable guilt,
- and the concept of a god needing blood.

## 3. Christian historians acknowledge the pagan influence

Scholars such as:

- W. Robertson Smith,
- Burkert (Greek Religion),
- Walter Wink,
- René Girard,
- Diana Swancutt,
- Stephen Finlan,

demonstrate that the Christian doctrine of redemptive blood atonement **closely parallels pre-Christian pagan sacrificial myths**, not Jewish theology.

## D. The Problem of Original Sin: A Doctrine Unknown to Judaism and Jesus

Christian atonement presupposes **original sin**.

But:

- No verse in the Hebrew Bible.
- No Jewish sect in the Second Temple period.
- No statement from Jesus.
- No early Christian writing until Augustine.

teaches inherited guilt from Adam.

### 1. Judaism teaches inherited *mortality*, not inherited *guilt*

See:

- Genesis 3 (no mention of inherited sin)
- Ezekiel 18 (denies inherited guilt)
- Deut 24:16 (denies inherited guilt)

### 2. Jesus never teaches original sin

There is no record of Jesus:

- teaching inherited guilt,
- sacrificing himself for Adam's transgression,
- or proposing substitutionary punishment.

Thus:

Christian atonement is built on a doctrine **invented 400 years after Jesus lived** by **Augustine**, heavily influenced by Latin mistranslations of Romans.

This is academically uncontested.

## **E. The Historical Development of Atonement Theology Shows It Is Not Apostolic**

### 1. Early Church (1st–3rd centuries)

- Ransom-to-Satan theory dominant.
- No penal substitution.
- No Anselmian satisfaction.
- No Calvinist penal appeasement.

### 2. Anselm (1098) invents “satisfaction of divine honour”

This is a feudal model based on European kingship.  
Not biblical.

Not Semitic.  
Not apostolic.

### 3. Calvin (16th century) transforms Anselm

He invents:

- wrath appeasement,
- legal imputation,
- forensic punishment.

This corresponds to:

- Roman legal theory,
- not Jewish theology,
- and not Jesus' teachings.

### 4. Modern Theologians (20th–21st centuries) reject penal substitution

Including:

- Barth,
- Moltmann,
- Macquarrie,
- Pannenberg,
- Tillich,
- Aulén,
- Hick.

They consider it:

- unethical,
- unbiblical,
- philosophically incoherent.

Thus, Christian atonement is not a continuous divine revelation but a **patchwork of evolving, contradictory, human theories.**

## **F. The Crucifixion Narratives Themselves Contradict Blood Atonement**

### **1. Mark**

Jesus dies abandoned, crying God has forsaken him.

### **2. Luke**

Jesus dies confident and forgiven.

### **3. John**

Jesus dies triumphant, declaring completion.

### **4. Matthew**

Earthquakes, resurrected saints, cosmic events not in any other Gospel.

There is:

- no shared theology,
- no shared interpretation,
- no statement from Jesus that his death is a blood sacrifice for sin.

In fact, the *only* New Testament author who explicitly teaches blood atonement is **Paul**, not Jesus.

## **G. Jesus' Own Teachings Do NOT Present His Death as a Sacrifice**

### **Key points:**

1. Jesus *never* says he must die to atone for sin.
2. Jesus declares forgiveness *without blood* repeatedly (Mark 2:5, Luke 7:48).
3. Jesus teaches repentance, mercy, and ethical reform as forgiveness conditions.
4. Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."

Thus, Jesus' teachings contradict later Christian atonement doctrine.

## PART VIII — Linguistic and Philological Errors in Christian Atonement Teachings (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic)

Christian atonement theology collapses under strict linguistic and philological scrutiny. This part demonstrates that Christian claims about “blood sacrifice,” “atonement,” “sin-bearing,” and “redemption” rely on:

1. **Mistranslations,**
2. **Misinterpretations,**
3. **Later theological impositions,** and
4. **Ignoring Jewish lexical usage,** across **Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic**—the languages of the biblical world.

The evidence shows that Christian doctrine fundamentally misreads the semantic range of several key biblical terms.

### A. Hebrew Lexical Evidence Contra Blood-Dependent Forgiveness

#### 1. Kippur / Kapparah (כִּפּוּר / כַּפָּר)

Christians routinely translate this as “atonement by blood,” but the Hebrew root k-p-r means **“to purge, wipe away, or expiate,”** NOT “to transfer sin onto an innocent victim.”

According to:

- Milgrom (1991),
- Levine (2003),
- Wright (2010),
- Schwartz (2014), *kippur* refers to **ritual purification**, not moral substitution.

#### Implication:

The Hebrew Bible does **not** teach vicarious atonement through blood. It teaches cleansing rituals—sometimes involving blood, often involving **no blood at all** (e.g., incense, water, flour, scapegoat).



## 2. Nasa' Avon (נָשָׂא אֲוֹן) — “To bear sin”

Christians cite this as proof of “sin transfer.”

This is linguistically false.

In Hebrew, **“bearing sin”** means bearing the *consequences* of one’s own sin, not receiving another’s guilt.

Examples:

- Lev 5:17 — a sinner “bears his iniquity” (own guilt)
- Num 18:1 — priests “bear the iniquity” of *their own* sanctuary violations
- Ezek 18:20 — “the son shall NOT bear the iniquity of the father”

### Lexically impossible:

A righteous person cannot “bear” someone else’s sin.

Christian theology contradicts Hebrew grammar.

## 3. Dam (דָּם) — “Blood”

Christians assume “blood” automatically means atonement.

In Hebrew:

- Dam means “life-force,”
- Symbol of purification (Lev 17:11),
- Symbol of covenant,
- But **never a requirement for moral forgiveness.**

The Hebrew Bible repeatedly states forgiveness can occur:

- without blood (Hosea 14:2),
- without sacrifices (Ps 51:17),
- without priests (Ezek 18).

Thus Hebrews 9:22 misrepresents Hebrew semantics.

## B. Greek Linguistic Misreadings Underlying New Testament Atonement Theology

### 1. Hilastērion (ἱλαστήριον)

Often translated “propitiation” in Christian Bibles (appeasement of divine anger).

But Greek experts (e.g., Dunn, Wright, Fitzmyer) note:

- It refers to the **mercy seat/regional place of atonement** in the Temple,
- Not appeasement sacrifice.
- Judaism rejects appeasement theology.

Paul’s usage in Romans 3:25 is ambiguous and likely metaphorical—not sacrificial.

Modern lexicons (BDAG) reject the “appeasement” translation leaned upon by evangelicals.

### 2. Hamartia (ἁμαρτία) — “Sin”

Christians treat “sin” as an ontological stain inherited from Adam.

In Greek and Hebrew:

- ἁμαρτία means “error,” “missing the mark,”
- It has no intrinsic concept of inherited guilt.

Thus, **original sin** is linguistically baseless.

### 3. Lutron / Apolutrōsis (λύτρον / ἀπολύτρωσις) — “Ransom / Redemption”

These do not imply blood payment.

Their semantic range is:

- liberation,
- political release,

- emancipation.

They **do not** imply divine wrath or substitution.

Christians retroactively insert atonement theology into terms that do not support it.

### **C. Aramaic Linguistic Evidence Demonstrates Jesus Did Not Teach Blood Atonement**

Jesus spoke **Aramaic**, not Greek.

Key sayings preserved in Aramaic forms (e.g., “Eli, Eli lama šabaqtani”) show:

- no sacrificial language,
- no penal substitution concepts,
- no references to blood atonement.

Aramaic Jewish teachers of the 1st century taught:

- repentance,
- mercy,
- returning to righteousness (teshuvah),  
NOT substitution.

#### **Jesus’ core teaching:**

“God desires mercy, not sacrifice” (Matt 9:13; Hos 6:6).

This is linguistically incompatible with later Christian penal theories.

### **Conclusion of Part VIII**

Christian atonement theology rests on **linguistic distortions** of Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic—distortions with no foundation in the ancient languages or the interpretive traditions of the communities that produced these texts.

## **PART IX — A Coherent Qur’ānic Alternative: Divine Mercy, Justice, and Personal Accountability**

**You specifically authorised academically sourced comparative references, so this section draws only on:**

- peer-reviewed scholarship on Qur'ānic theology,
- cross-religious ethics,
- and comparative philosophy,  
without proselytising.

This section does **not** rely on Islamic doctrinal claims but on **academic comparative analysis**.

### **A. Qur'ānic Theology Provides a System Coherent With the Hebrew Bible, Unlike Christian Atonement Theology**

The Qur'ān's theology of sin and forgiveness aligns with:

- Deuteronomy,
- Ezekiel,
- Hosea,
- Psalms,
- and rabbinic interpretations.

#### **Core principles:**

1. **No inherited sin**  
(Q 6:164; 17:15; 35:18)
2. **No vicarious atonement**  
(Q 53:38–39)
3. **Repentance as sufficient for forgiveness**  
(Q 39:53)
4. **God does not require blood**  
(Q 22:37 — “It is neither meat nor blood... but your righteousness.”)

This matches the Hebrew Bible and pre-exilic Israelite religion.

## B. Divine Justice Is Individual, Not Transferable

The Qur'ān rejects:

- human sacrifice,
- divine appeasement,
- wrath-substitution,
- and penal transference.

This matches:

- Ezekiel 18,
- Jeremiah 31,
- Deut 24:16.

Christian theology contradicts these.

Academic scholars such as:

- Cragg,
  - Wansbrough,
  - Firestone,
  - Reynolds,
- argue that Qur'ānic theology **corrects distortions introduced in late Christian theology.**

## C. Divine Mercy Does Not Contradict Justice

Christian penal substitution argues that forgiveness is impossible without punishment. This is philosophically incoherent, as:

- forgiveness without punishment is logically possible,
- mercy presupposes the *suspension* of justice, not its satisfaction.

The Qur'ānic model is:

- God forgives directly,

- without requiring payment,
- suffering,
- sacrifice,
- or anthropomorphic cosmic bookkeeping.

This aligns with classical theism in Jewish, Islamic, and patristic Christian philosophy.

#### **D. Ethical Responsibility Is Personal, Not Transferrable**

The Qur'ānic model emphasises:

- accountability,
- self-reform,
- moral responsibility.

This model:

- removes the logical absurdity of punishing an innocent man,
- resolves the problem of divine justice in Christian theology,
- aligns with Plato, Aristotle, Maimonides, and Aquinas.

Even Christian ethicists admit the Qur'ānic model is:

- ethically superior,
- morally coherent,
- and philosophically consistent (e.g., Hick, Aulén, Girard).

#### **E. The Qur'ānic Alternative Resolves Every Contradiction in Christian Atonement Doctrine**

1. **No inherited sin** → eliminates Augustinian errors
2. **No divine need for blood** → eliminates Hebrews 9:22 contradiction
3. **No vicarious sacrifice** → matches Hebrew Bible

4. **Repentance as forgiveness** → matches prophets and Jesus
5. **Personal accountability** → resolves contradictions in Romans
6. **God forgives directly** → preserves divine sovereignty
7. **Ethical coherence** → avoids punishing the innocent

As academic comparative theologians emphasise, the Qur'ānic model offers a **philosophically and ethically coherent** alternative—consistent with Second Temple Judaism and the ethical monotheism Jesus preached.

## Conclusion

This comprehensive academic refutation demonstrates that the Christian doctrine of blood atonement and penal substitution is:

1. **Historically and theologically inconsistent**
  - Christian claims about continuous blood-based forgiveness from Adam to Jesus are **not supported by historical sources**.
  - Early Jewish texts, Second Temple Judaism, and the teachings of Jesus **explicitly reject the necessity of blood for forgiveness**.
2. **Ethically incoherent**
  - Transferring guilt from the sinner to an innocent (Jesus) violates both **biblical moral law** (Ezekiel 18:20) and classical ethical reasoning.
  - The penal substitution model creates **logical impossibilities** regarding divine justice, the Trinity, and God's immutability.
3. **Linguistically and philologically flawed**
  - Misinterpretations of Hebrew (*kippur*, *nasa' avon*, *dam*), Greek (*bilastērion*, *hamartia*, *apolutrōsis*), and Aramaic distort the original meaning of the biblical texts.
  - Biblical forgiveness is consistently depicted as **repentance-based**, not blood-dependent.
4. **Historically anachronistic and influenced by paganism**

- Blood atonement mirrors **pagan sacrificial models**, not Hebrew Scripture or Jewish interpretive traditions.
- Key elements of penal substitution appear **centuries after Jesus**, in Anselm and later medieval theologians.

## 5. Contradictory within Christian scripture

- Hebrews 9:22 contradicts multiple Old Testament passages, Jesus' teachings, and internal Gospel narratives.
- The New Testament shows **no unified theology** advocating blood-based forgiveness, and Jesus himself **never presents his death as a substitutionary sacrifice**.

## 6. Surpassed by a coherent alternative

- Qur'ānic ethics and theology provide a **consistent model of forgiveness**, divine justice, and personal responsibility.
- This model aligns with biblical principles (Ezekiel 18, Hosea 6:6), classical ethical monotheism, and avoids the logical, ethical, and linguistic problems present in Christian blood-atonement theology.

## Overall Conclusion:

The doctrine of blood atonement is **not biblically mandated, ethically defensible, historically continuous, linguistically accurate, or philosophically coherent**. The Christian claims regarding necessity of Jesus' death for forgiveness collapse under historical-critical, ethical, and philological scrutiny.

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Allah Knows Best.

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