

THE ATONEMENT AND FRECONCILIATION AND ITS COST TO THE HOLY LAMB OF GOD

HE WAS “MADE SIN” FOR US

“God made Him who did not to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2Corinthians 5.21)

First notice the use of “**Not knowing sin**”. It is not the absolute **οὐ** in Greek but the speculative or cognitive **μη** for our Lord knew the heart of man and was in one sense absolutely aware of sin and its consequence. He himself said that He came “Not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” Mt9.13, Mk2.17, Lk5.32. This means several things:-

- (a) Our Lord did not observe sin insofar as he did not look up observe and ever feast his eyes on sin.
 - (b) He did not think judgmentally about sin so as to be continually passing sentence like the Pharisees though His awareness was greater. He had compassion on those who sinned and were out of the way.
 - (c) He did not once have carnal knowledge of or actual involvement in sin in His person lifelong.
- Our Lord was perfect in devotion to the Father and purity, open accepting(receiving sinners) and sincere in attitude and sinlessly perfect.

Yet He “became” / “was made” sin

There is no issue if the next word **αμαρτια** is taken to mean “sin offering” But if it is demanded that the next word is actually **sin** there is a theological issue demanding refined linguistic consideration. The verb is not passive “i.e. “was made” but it is active and aorist and the expression in plain Greek if “made” is insisted upon would then as an indicative mean “He made or created sin”. This cannot be the sense so there obviously has to be another different legal or special sense if the word “sin” as generally understood is not to be a manifest mistake. Calvinism has a reserve position when it argues that God is the author of sin and maybe some would be content with the rude expression as an outworking of this idea but I submit it is wholly unsatisfactory. What then is the meaning? Let us study the words!

(a) **He made** It could mean (i) “Create” “Bring into existence” “inspire”(and in particular “represent” in the “poetic” sense so **He represented all sin” in His person** coming under the judgment of death “invent” “cause” or it might in the abstract sense mean (ii) **“to make a sacrifice”** when connected to the next word understood in a special sense it would read perfectly well “a sin offering”.

(b) **Sin** (1) Various of the meanings as “missing the mark”, “failure”, deprivation” make no sense in English without interpretation; but (2) according to Buttman who took the meaning further back than any it is linked to the cognates **αμειρω αμερδω αμβροτος (αμβροσια)** with the significance “to take away the share” to “amerce” or to “lose” (sometimes of life). This meaning enables Paul’s expression to read **“He was amerced (of the elixir of response)” or of His relationship with the Father-converse a word from the Father - hence silence.** It appears to mean also “death” itself. This was utterly outside of God’s previous experience - extraneous to the very nature of the living God. This sense balances with the apodosis for he was amerced and we were endowed. He died but we could live.

(c) **For us** In place of our becoming without the food and word of God and dying that death where there is no life word -He died. The mystery inspires awe and worship. The spirit of Christ went to the Father and He visited Hell and many bodies arose subsequently and when He arose their spirits returned. But note that bodies were given through his death and before his resurrection (Matthew 27.53). The cross amerced Him of his share as the righteous one and made Him the sinners’ representative in dying-the sin-offering- that we might have a share in divine righteousness (**δικαιοσυνη**). Notice the use of “**become**” – it means “to have life” and to have standing. Thus taking the plain statement there are three perfectly plausible ways of understanding it as underlined above that make sufficient sense to maintain the expression in translation.

THE ALTERNATIVE – “SIN OFFERING”

The rendering “sin offering” depends on assuming that Paul thinks in Hebrew and writes in Greek. It is very likely that he does but bible translators have not made that assumption so they have left us the theological dilemma that I have alluded to and I hope clarified in the first part.

As to the much simpler interpretation “sin offering” if we render the Greek word **αμαρτια** into Hebrew as in Leviticus 6 and read the text of 2 Corinthians 5.21 in Hebrew when we read it in its best

sense it renders **“He offered Him as a sin offering for us who knew no sin”**.

Universally in the Mosaic ceremonials where offering is referred to it is this word **atafj** that is used as in Leviticus 6.25. This word though referring to offerings when rendered in Greek seems categorically to be the word “sin”. The Aramaic has **ܐܬܦܝܢ**.