

## Q23: Why must the Redeemer be truly God?

That because of his divine nature his obedience and suffering would be perfect and effective; and also that he would be able to bear the righteous anger of God against sin and yet overcome death.

### Acts 2:24

But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold of him.

### Commentary

Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon hath shone forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Saviour's death hath set us free. In as much as he was held captive of it, he hath annihilated it.... He made Hell captive. He angered it when it tasted of his flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was angered, when it encountered thee.... It was angered, for it was abolished. It was angered, for it was mocked. It was angered, for it was slain. It was angered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was visible, and fell upon the invisible. O Death, where is thy sting? O Hell, where is thy victory? Christ is risen, and thou art overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the Angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigneth.

John Chrysostom (347–407). Archbishop of Constantinople, John was born in Antioch. He was given the title Chrysostom which means “golden mouth” because of his eloquent preaching. He is recognized by the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church as a saint and Doctor of the Church. Chrysostom is known for his Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, and his vast homiletical works including 67 homilies on Genesis, 90 on the Gospel of Matthew, and 88 on the Gospel of John.

From “Easter Sermon by John Chrysostom” in Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic (Greco-Russian) Church translated by Isabel Florence Hapgood (New York: Riverside Press, 1906), 235–236.

### Further Reading

“Incarnation” and “Two Natures” in Concise Theology, by J. I. Packer.

### Prayer

I can do no more than pray for you.... I pray God to pity you, and take care of you, and provide for you the best means for the good of your souls; and that God himself would undertake for you, to be your heavenly Father, and the mighty Redeemer of your immortal souls. Do not neglect to pray for yourselves.... Constantly pray to God in secret; and often remember that great day when you must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ..

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758). A colonial American preacher, theologian, and philosopher, Edwards became pastor of his church in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1726. He is widely known for his famous sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” as well as his many books including The End For Which God Created the World and A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections. Edwards died from a smallpox inoculation shortly after beginning the presidency at the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University).

From “Farewell Sermon: Memoirs of Jonathan Edwards” in The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 1 (London: William Ball, 1839), ccxlviii.

## Q24: Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die?

Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By his substitutionary atoning death, he alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life.

### Colossians 1:21-22

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.

### Commentary

The righteous, loving Father humbled himself to become in and through his only Son's flesh, sin and a curse for us, in order to redeem us without compromising his own character.... The biblical gospel of atonement is of God satisfying himself by substituting himself for us.... The concept of substitution may be said, then, to lie at the heart of both sin and salvation. For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives which belong to God alone; God accepts penalties which belong to man alone.

John Stott (1921–2011). An English Anglican preacher who for many years served as rector of All Souls Church in London, Stott was one of the principal framers of the Lausanne Covenant (1974). His numerous books include *Why I Am a Christian* and *The Cross of Christ* (from which this quote is taken).

From *The Cross of Christ* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 1986), 159–160.

### Further Reading

"The Atonement" in *A Faith to Live By*, by Donald Macleod.

### Prayer

O God the Father, who canst not be thought to have made me only to destroy me, have mercy upon me. O God the Son, who, knowing thy Father's will, didst come into the world to save me, have mercy upon me. O God the Holy Ghost, who to the same end hast so often since breathed holy thoughts into me, have mercy upon me. O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, whom in three persons I adore as one God, have mercy upon me. Lord, carest thou not that I perish? thou that wouldest have all men to be saved? thou that wouldest have none to perish? And wilt thou now show thine anger against a worm, a leaf? against a vapour that vanisheth before thee? O remember how short my time is, and deliver not my soul into the power of hell.... Forget me as I have been disobedient, provoking thee to anger; and regard me as I am distressed, crying out to thee for help. Look not upon me as I am a sinner; but consider me as I am thy

creature.... How proper is it for thee to save! for it is thy name. How suitable is it to thy coming into the world! for it is thy business. And when I consider that I am the chief of sinners, may I not urge thee farther, and say, Shall the chief of thy business be left undone? Far be that from thee! Have mercy upon me!... Father, accept my imperfect repentance, compassionate my infirmities, forgive my wickedness, purify my uncleanness, strengthen my weakness, fix my unstableness, and let thy good Spirit watch over me for ever, and thy love ever rule in my heart, through the merits and sufferings and love of thy Son, in whom thou art always well pleased.

John Wesley (1703–1791). An English preacher and theologian, Wesley is largely credited, along with his brother Charles, with founding the English Methodist movement. He travelled generally on horseback, preaching two or three times each day, and is said to have preached more than 40,000 sermons. He also was a noted hymn-writer.

From “Forms of Prayer: Friday Evening” in *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley*, Volume 6 (New York: J. Emory & B. Waugh, 1831), 397–398.

Adapted by Timothy Keller and Sam Shammas from the Reformation catechisms  
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