

JOHN OWEN'S FALSE PREMISE

John Owen, theologian, 1616-1668, wrote:

The Father imposed His wrath due unto, and the Son underwent punishment for, either:

1. All the sins of all men,
2. All the sins of some men, or
3. Some of the sins of all men.

In which case it may be said:

1. That if the last be true, all men have some sins to answer for, and so, none are saved.
2. That if the second be true, then Christ, in their stead suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the whole world, and this is the truth.
3. But if the first be the case, why are not all men free from the punishment due unto their sins? You answer, "Because of unbelief."

I ask, is this unbelief a sin, or is it not? If it be a sin, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or He did not. If He did, why must that sin hinder them more than their other sins for which He died? If He did not die for the sin of unbelief then He did not die for all their sins!

The false premise that John Owen fell into is the misunderstanding of the cross of Jesus.

The truth is that God the Father was not punishing Jesus for the sins of any person.

The cross of Jesus has nothing to do with punishing Jesus in place of another.

The cross of Jesus is all about the sinless death of Jesus defeating and condemning sin to removal from all creation, which gives Him the right to change believing sinners into new creations. Believers are saved by His resurrection life which indwells and regenerates. Furthermore, the Father does not impose His wrath to punish sinners. The wrath of God does not describe a ruler eager to punish or destroy. The wrath of God does not weaponize judgment to enforce an unholy fear in people. Jesus did not come to condemn people, but to set people free. God does not use fear and force to restore broken humanity. Jesus allows people to feel safe and free to respond to a God who is trustworthy. God's wrath is the consequence of man's refusal to live by God's design. God allows the unrepentant to have their own way.

God allowed sin to kill Jesus. All sin was laid on Jesus and came against Jesus on the cross. Because Jesus was innocent of any sin, His execution by sin condemns sin to expulsion from all creation. God was not punishing Jesus in our place. God made a Way for our restoration by faith in Jesus and His transforming power in our lives. Romans 8

