

# “The Unavoidable Cross of Christ”



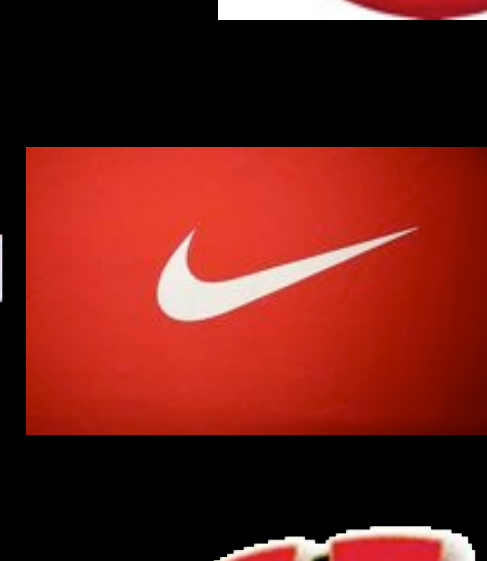
Matthew 26:36-43



# Jesus' Prayer at Gethsemane

## Matthew 26

- v. 39 - **“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet, not as I will, but as you will.”**
- v. 42 - **“My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”**
- v. 44 - **“So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.”**



**The cross was the centerpiece of the Gospel  
preached by the apostles**



- I Cor. 2:1-2 The irreducible minimum of the Gospel
- As important as the Teachings of Christ are [the Sermon on the Mount, etc.] they are not the central thing about Christ and why He came into this world.
- This also suggests that the true heart of the Christian Gospel is not about the moral example of Christ.



# Some examples from the Gospels



- Matt. 16:21-23
- Matt. 20:28
- Matt. 26:26-30;  
Mk. 14:22-25;  
Lk.22:19-20



# Examples from Acts

- **Acts 2:22-23, 32 & 38**
- **Acts 13:26-29**
- **Acts 17:2-3**

# Examples From The Epistles

- **Romans 3:20-25a**
- **I Cor. 15:1-4**



A photograph of a crucifixion scene. A wooden cross is positioned on the right side of the frame. A figure is crucified on the cross, with their body and limbs visible. The background consists of a cloudy sky with varying shades of blue and white. The overall tone is somber and religious.

## **Much Confusion About the Cross!**

- **A tragic accident**
- **A display of God's love for mankind**
- **A moral Example**



# Such Views Diminish The Importance of the Cross

- Suggest God is willing to merely overlook sin
- Suggest God could have accomplished our salvation in some other way



# Why Was The Cross Necessary?



- **Because of the nature of God**
  - **God is holy and our sin is offensive to Him**
  - **He will not simply ignore sin [Ex. 34:7]**
  - **His penalty for sin is death [Rom. 6:23]**

- Because of the character of sin

- Debt

- Enmity

- Crime



# Sin As Debt

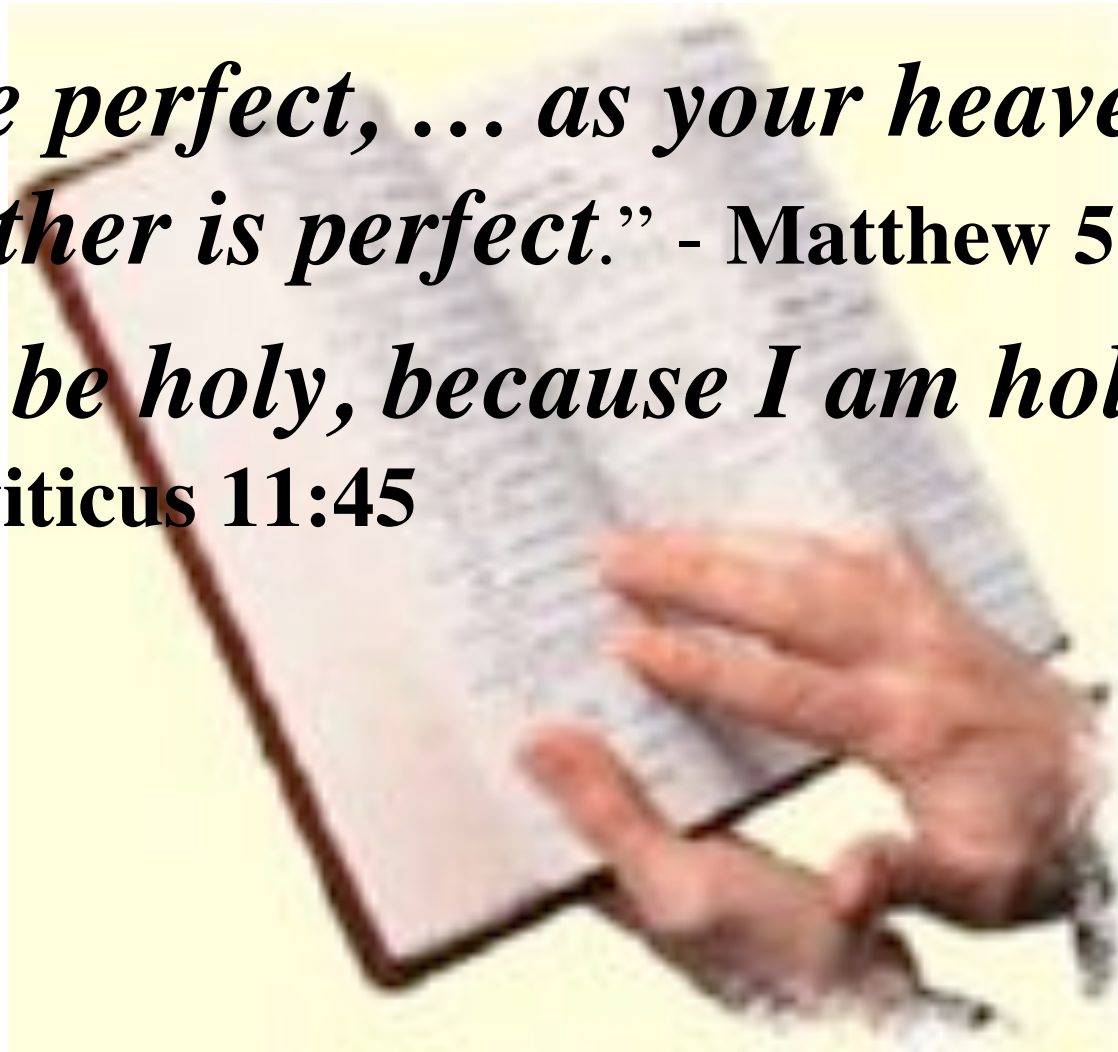
A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding and reading a document. The person is wearing a dark suit jacket and a light-colored shirt. The document is held in both hands, and the person's eyes are focused on the text. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a desk or table.

- **God is viewed as a creditor**
- **God is the author of creation**
- **He has the right to impose obligations**
- **The creature owes obedience to Him**
- **Failure to obey makes us debtors**



# What is the obligation God imposes upon us?

- ***“Be perfect, ... as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*** - Matthew 5:48
- ***“... be holy, because I am holy.”*** - Leviticus 11:45



# The Problem Is Obvious

- **None of us has carried out our obligation to God! - Rom. 3:23 & 3:10**
- **We are not even close to perfection - Jer. 17:9**
- **You can't become perfect after your imperfect - Jas. 2:10**
- **The debt we owe is so great, we could never pay it back**



# Christ is our “Surety”

- He is the one who co-signs for us
- He backs up our indebtedness
- He takes upon Himself the requirement of what must be paid
- He ‘picks up the tab’ for us!



# Sin as Enmity

- **Here, we must see God as a person who is our personal benefactor**
- **The problem is that we have violated His friendship and kindness toward us**
- **“... the sinful mind is hostile to God. ...” Rom. 8:7**







# Christ is our Mediator

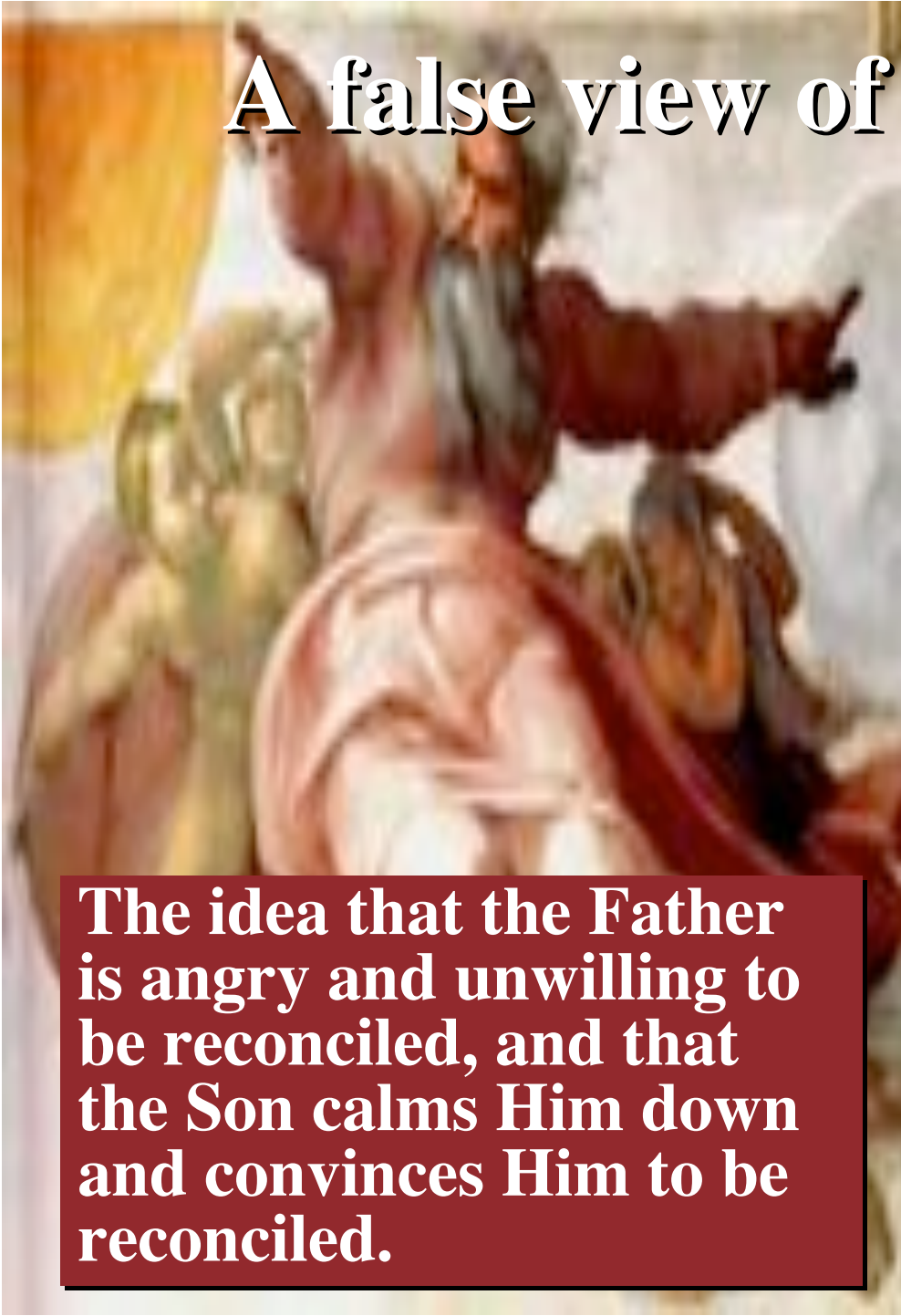
- **The problem is a ruptured relationship, an estrangement between God and man.**
- **The solution that is needed is reconciliation**

# Who's mad at who?




- **Rom. 8:7** - We are estranged from God and we are mad at Him, thus we blame Him, we assault His integrity, and rebel against Him.
- **Eph. 2:3b & Jn. 3:36** - It is also correct to say that God is angry toward us.

# A false view of the atonement



The idea that the Father is angry and unwilling to be reconciled, and that the Son calms Him down and convinces Him to be reconciled.



The truth is John 3:16!  
Christ makes reconciliation possible by resolving the issues surrounding the character of sin and the nature of God.





## **Sin as Crime**

- **Here, we see God as judge**
- **The problem is criminal debt**
  - **Pecuniary debt**
  - **Penal debt**



# Christ our Substitution

- **The truth about sin is this:**
  - **“All have sinned” - Rom. 3:23;**  
**“The wages of sin is death” -**  
**Rom. 6:23**
  - **“There is none righteous” - Rom.**  
**3:10**
  - **“No one will be saved by the law”**  
**- Rom. 3:20**
  - **“If you keep the whole law, but**  
**offend in one point, you are**  
**guilty of it all” - Jas. 2:10**



# **Sin presents an insurmountable obstacle**

- **Sin is a debt we owe which we cannot pay**
- **Sin is a rupture in our relationship with God which has brought His wrath upon us**
- **Sin is a criminal offense against God which would be unjust for God to overlook**



# The Cross Is Therefore Unavoidable!



- On the cross Christ became:
  - Our **SURETY** by taking our debt upon Himself
  - Our **MEDIATOR** by reconciling us to God
  - Our **SUBSTITUTE** by enduring God's wrath