

therefore, God the Father *takes the blame* for *allowing* Christ to die.

Notice, God limits His sovereignty at times for a greater good. When He *could* prevent an incident from taking place, and *doesn't* prevent it, the incident does take place. Then He gets blamed. He could have prevented Satan from harming Jesus, but for the greater good of seeing you and me in heaven some day, He didn't intervene; therefore, in the modality of Biblical language, He says *He* harmed Him. Why doesn't He intervene? There is always a good reason. He *allowed* the death of Jesus, because it was the only way He could save us. He *allowed* Satan into Job's life to prove his righteousness did not depend on his blessings. Some times He *allows* us to have our own way in order to respect our free will. This scenario repeats throughout Scripture, and if we haven't trained ourselves to read the Bible with these facts in mind, we end up totally confused.

¹ John 14:8, 9.

² John 10:30.

³ John 10:38.

⁴ John 8:28, NIV.

⁵ John 5:22, NIV.

⁶ Matt. 17:5; Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22; Heb 1:1, 2.

⁷ Heb. 1:12; 13:8; Mal. 3:6 Rev. 1:4.

⁸ John 8:58; 5:39; 12:40, 41 (Isaiah 6).

⁹ Jeremiah 23:20; 30:23, 24.

¹⁰ John 10:10.

¹¹ John 12:32.

¹² Hebrews 2:14.

¹³ Matthew 27:46, NIV.

¹⁴ John 19:11, NIV.

¹⁵ 53:10.

¹⁶ Zech. 13:7.

¹⁷ Matthew 26:31, NIV.

¹⁸ (v. 4, NIV).

For More Information:

- www.The-Character-of-God.com
A Book Titled: *Light Through the Darkness: A Vindication of God*, 157 pages
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBZfdggyyXw&feature=youtu.be
(or) <http://youtu.be/hMaItpis72c>
A Video Titled: *A New Look At the Character of God*
- www.GodsCharacter.com
A Book Titled: *Servant God: The Cosmic Conflict Over God's Trustworthiness*, 418 pages

(A002)

Jesus: Perfect Reflection of His Father

Jesus came to earth two thousand years ago to do two things: 1) to give His life to ransom souls, and 2) to reveal the Father. While Christ's sacrifice on Calvary excites our heartfelt gratitude—that's for us. Studying His character and telling the world what we find is something we can do for God.

Did the Father need revealing? On the surface it does not seem so. The Father's character seems clearly spelled out in Scripture. He's the One that beats people up while they live and, when their life is through, burns them alive in a fiery conflagration. Here is where we get confused. Can we see Jesus doing this? Did His gentleness and His lovely presence convey this kind of God? Or is it possible that we have a monumental misunderstanding here, a first-order roadblock to God's ability to wind up the gospel?

What Atheists See

Atheists and others see the problem and ask:

- Why does a loving God burn humans *eternally* for the sins of one short lifetime?
- How can a "killing" God tell humans "Thou shalt not kill [or murder]" and yet to pattern their characters after His own? (Talk about confusion!)
- Why didn't God destroy human rebellion early on, before it became full blown?
- Do humans really have free will, with God planning to execute those whose choices He does not like?

These questions reveal a lack in our understanding of God and the gospel.

Jesus Revealed the Father

How many times and ways did Jesus say that *He* revealed the Father; we should look for His Father *in Him*?

- “Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto Him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”¹
- “I and my Father are one.”²
- “[T]he Father is in me and I in him.”³
- “I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.”⁴

Scripture clearly teaches that God the Father is just like Jesus; we can see His ways when Jesus healed the sick, loved His enemies, forgave sin, embraced children. Everything about Jesus was welcoming to the common folk. Is this what the Father is like?

“[T]he Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.”⁵

How does Jesus judge? He judges without blame; for example, when He allowed the leaders of the people to mistreat and murder Him. He could have stopped them in their tracks with a show of power they would remember to their dying day, but He didn't. He didn't even stop by to see them when He arose from the grave—a prospect they contemplated with dread. In fact, He had nothing further to do with them. Is the Father like that?

A couple of times He raised His voice. But He didn't kill, injure, or, in fact, touch anyone. He made a whip but no where in Scripture does it say that He used it on anyone. He may have used it to herd the cattle and sheep out of the temple. Is the Father like that?

It appears that we have seriously misunderstood God's character. The many statements that “God destroys” and “God kills” have confused us. Should we not attempt to analyze these two disparate pictures of God and bring them into harmony?

Surprising Claims

Scripture makes some surprising claims that will provide guidance here, and they are:

- We must look to Jesus, not to His human messengers, to learn what the Father is like.⁶
- Deity never changes. Period. Full stop.⁷
- Jesus speaks in the *entire* Bible; therefore, we can look to Him as the Source for the preponderance of what we read in Scripture—Old Testament and New—being mindful that in order to correctly see and understand the Father, we must make Jesus Christ our standard.⁸
- Last but not least, the book of Jeremiah tells of a wonderful surprise that we will have about God's “anger” *in the last days*. In fact, he mentions it twice. Are these the last days? Was Jeremiah talking about our seeing God in a beautiful new way?⁹

With that as our background, we can now immerse ourselves in Scripture that tells us convincingly that the Father is just like the Son. Jesus wouldn't steal, kill, or destroy¹⁰ and neither would the Father. We will now make the paradigm shift to a whole new understanding of God and the days in which we live.

The Cross

Jesus said, “I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”¹¹ He was lifted up on the cross *as* you; He was lifted up *as* me—not just on our behalf. When the Father looked at Him, He saw me hanging there. He saw you. No play acting appeared around the Cross. This was deadly serious; it was a fight to the death. Satan pulled out all the stops to defeat Him; Christ stayed with the plan He and His Father had devised in eternity past. And Jesus won. By His death He defeated the devil.¹² Amazing!

Jesus said seven things while He hung there dying on the cross, but one thing He said was particularly significant to the present discussion. “My God, my God, why have you *forsaken* me?”¹³ Before the crucifixion Jesus had said to Pilate, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.”¹⁴ Clearly, God the Father *allowed* the crucifixion of Jesus, for it could not have occurred

with God's protection in place. With God the Father guarding Him, as He had done throughout Jesus' life on earth up to now, no power on earth could have hurt Him. But now He was positioned differently than He had ever been before.

Jesus personified sin at that moment. No, He had never sinned. He had not one stain of sin upon Him. But the Father *treated Him* as a sinner weighed down with the sins of multitudes and ages upon Him. He had to experience the consequences of those sins for every person who has ever come into the world. And the Father's instructions to the angels were clear: “Stand down. Do not go to His aid. Leave Him to the consequences of the sin that is upon Him.”

God the Father—Warped?

In prophecy and parable Scripture tells the story of Christ's suffering. “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he [God the Father] hath put him to grief”¹⁵ says Isaiah. Pleased the Lord? to bruise Him? Did God the Father hurt Jesus, as Scripture seems to say? Strange!

“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite [strike] the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.”¹⁶ When we parse this prophecy, who is revealed as responsible for the sufferings of Jesus? Jesus repeats this prophecy in the New Testament, making it clear: “Then Jesus told them [his disciples], this night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’”¹⁷ Is Jesus quoting the Father? Yes. He is. Who is the Shepherd that gets struck? Jesus is the Shepherd. Who is “I” that struck Him? It can only be God the Father. So this prophecy predicts that God the Father would strike Jesus. But we would never express it as happening in this way.

The prophecy of Isaiah 53 holds a final example of this strange Biblical language. “Yet we considered him stricken by God [the Father], smitten by him, and afflicted.”¹⁸ Was God the Father responsible in any way for the sufferings and death of Jesus? No, He was not. But He *said* He was responsible. He *felt* responsible. He had the power to prevent it, but the weight of sin that Jesus bore tied His hands;