

## The Rejected Stone

### Explanation of the Picture

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The Fifth in a Series of Eight

On several occasions I have used this picture for a Vacation Bible School project. Each day a different color was painted and discussed. Here are the simplified points for each color. Feel free to use this in a similar fashion if you want. It is a great tool.

**Black** - He was turned into sin on the cross.

**White Outline** - Jesus had no sin of His own.

**Red** - His blood: the payment for our sins.

**Orange** - Fire: the wrath of God the Father upon Him.

**Yellow** - His physical and eternal bodily resurrection on the third day.

**1. The Letters, “JESUS”** - The red color represents the blood of Jesus. For a fuller discussion on the blood of the Lamb of God, go to, *“For This Reason Alone, Explanation of the Picture, The Sixth in a Series of Eight.”* This blood He spilled to pay for our sins will prove to be the most valuable “matter” ever created. It is priceless with no challenger for all of eternity. Only the “material” that currently makes up the body of the Son of God will be on par.

**2. The Cross and Silhouetted Savior** - This event, the cross, is at the heart of Christianity. All of God’s dealings with man revolves around the event of the cross. While one may make a case that there are many watershed events all through human history, the cross is the premier one. But, how can I say this? Isn’t this just a religious assertion from *one* person in *just one* of the world’s religions? *“Muslims, Buddhists, Taoists, Jews or Atheists do not see the cross in this light, so isn’t this just your opinion?”* Well, that all depends on the validity of one book - the Bible. If the Bible is simply a human document, then the cross and everything I am about to discuss (including all my other writings, songs, commentaries, etc.) is just a fairy tale. But if the Bible is *the* document from God, accurately preserved for reliable consumption, then my assertion is absolutely correct. And here is why. The Bible makes an astounding claim about this event. It declares that the Silhouetted Savior depicted here is *actually the Creator Himself!* The God who made everything in the heavens and earth created a body for Himself and allowed the creatures He made to nail Him on that cross. If this is indeed true, then the purpose of such an event *must be* more important than anything else that could ever happen in the time line of the entire creation. And as time itself is a created thing, we may discover that the cross is also *the premier event* in the halls of eternity past and future (I realize I am speaking of eternity with time properties which may not be applicable - there may be no “eternity past” or “eternity future”).

Concerning the claim that God became a man and then allowed the very creatures He made to butcher Him, the Bible says there will be three reactions to such an assertion. Let’s look at these and see if this is an accurate claim as well.

**“... to Jews a stumbling block...”** (1Cor 1:23). The word translated “stumbling block” is *scandalon* in Greek. We get the word, “scandal” from it. It is also sometimes translated as “offense.” To the Jews, the message of “*Messiah crucified*” is loathsome. It is a scandalous proposition. Various sects in Judaism have differing views on the person and work of their expected Messiah - but crucified by heathens? This is an outrageous claim to be immediately rejected. It is blasphemous to even insinuate the Messiah could be defiled in such a manner. Such an offensive claim must be silenced!

**“... and to Gentiles foolishness...”** (1Cor 1:23). “*You mean to tell me the Being who made everything out of nothing - became a man and was then nailed to a cross by the very creatures He made? Why that is the most stupid thing I have ever heard. It is beyond ridiculous.*” To Gentiles, it is even laughable. How can anyone claim God became a man and then voluntarily went to a torturous death - and keep a straight face?

**“... but to those who are the called, Christ - the power of God and the wisdom of God”** (1Cor 1:24). For believers, the cross displays the *power* of God on several fronts. For example, when one discovers all the predictions in the Old Testament that were fulfilled at the cross - that is power! To predict His garments would be divided, and lots would be cast for them - a thousand years before the event - that is powerful! (Ps 22:18 and Mk 15:24). There are dozens of predictions about the work on the cross sprinkled all through the Hebrew Scriptures. But the primary *power* seen by believers in this event probably is more subjective in nature - *believers experience changed lives*. For example, the fact that I wrote this song, drew this picture, and am now writing this accompanying article is a personal expression of the power of God ... in changing me. I can assure you that before the event on the cross became something that applied to my life, I was as far away from any of this as one can get. And whatever ground God has gained in changing me is not enough! I want to be changed more - and faster! I want to be more active in His agenda and materials - His will and ways. I want to be much more like Him in all actions, reactions, emotions, deductions, intent, will, words and imaginations. Whatever changes I have experienced thus far have only whetted my appetite for more - much more! And I know it takes the *power of God* to effect even the slightest change in me toward the good. If left to myself, I will degenerate in each and every area. My nature is inclined toward evil, and between that and Satanic forces, only the power of God, exercised in His wisdom, can bring about the desired changes I want and need. By the way, this began for me in April of 1977 and it is currently May of 2007, so I don't think I am in some kind of passing fad.

Concerning the *wisdom* of God in Christ, and Him crucified, believers (and angels - 1Pet 1:12) are met with this challenge: How could God orchestrate such a scenario and yet have no culpability in the wrongdoing of the entire scene? When referring to Judas, Jesus said, “*For indeed the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man through whom He is betrayed!*” (Lk 22:22). Who *determined* that Jesus was to go the way of the cross? Obviously God did. Even Jesus flatly declared that no one had the authority to take His life, but He was laying down on His own initiative (Jn 10:18). Judas' birth and life, and being in the place he was to do what he did, was no accident. The same could be said of those on the

Sanhedrin and also of Pilate. Yet, in the wisdom of God, the Architect of this predetermined event is free of *any* culpability.

But another exhibition of God's wisdom lies in the answer to this inquiry. How can a holy God reach into the depths of sin and devise a method for pardoning sins *against Him* without violating His own nature of justice and righteousness? The cross is a demonstration of unparalleled wisdom on how God did this. When believers look at the cross, they see that "*lovingkindness and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other*" (Ps 85:10). None of God's unchanging attributes have been compromised or violated in even the most subtle or insignificant of ways. On the contrary! The cross, in God's wisdom, meets *the demands* of each of His attributes without compromising the integrity of any. The reality of this wisdom will be displayed more clearly on Judgment Day and it will be displayed as a trophy for all eternity. I could spend the rest of my life expounding on this point by point - and probably should.

### 3. The Colors

**A) The Black of the Silhouette** - the black represents sin. Actually, God describes sin in a different color. "*Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool*" (Isa 1:18). But, like most people, when I think of sin, I think black. Culturally, we probably do this because white is purity and innocence (thus the white wedding dress) and black is evil and darkness - Gothic. Be that as it may, the important thing is this; when on the cross, Jesus was turned into sin. "*He (the Father) made Him (the Son) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf...*" (2Cor 5:21). Most believe this transaction occurred just before He died. It was right at the ninth hour (3 PM, so He had been on the cross six hours) that He cried out, "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" (Mt 27:46). Jesus had always been in fellowship with the Father. It is sin, and only sin, that creates a separation between any creature and his/her Creator (Isa 59:1,2). At the brink of death, when the Hand of power would be needed most, that was the moment Jesus was abandoned - FOR US. Jesus' own integrity carried Him successfully through those moments when vengeance for our sins was exacted - and extracted - upon Him. Our sins cost life - and Jesus was up to the task and met the required payment.

**B) White** - If you look closely, you will see there is a white line around this entire black silhouette. The white represents the personal holiness of Jesus. Peter, quoting Isaiah, said Jesus "*committed no sin, nor was any deceit in His mouth ... and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross*" (1Pet 2:22,24). The Bible teaches that Jesus is actually God in the flesh who was born under the Law he had proclaimed through Moses and then obeyed it without flaw. In other words, God entered human history and practiced ... what He had preached.

**C) Red** - The Blood of Christ can not be talked about enough. Absent this payment, every human being - at least every one who has reached accountability - would be doomed to eternity in Hell. Most people will still end up there, but now, it will not be *everybody*. There are no votes on this issue. If the Blood of Jesus is indeed the blood of God (as the Bible maintains), then the importance of this "material" cannot be overstated. It behooves each one of us to look

exceedingly closely into the purpose of **God's blood!** According to the Bible, this blood is the only "material" that has the ability to pay for human sin. Good deeds cannot pay for sin. Confession cannot pay for sin. Feeling regretful cannot pay for sin. Repenting from a sin cannot pay for that sin. Suffering in Hell cannot pay for a single sin. In fact, if you applied all these efforts in full force in an attempt to atone for *one single sin* - one lie, one cuss word, or one slander - all those combined efforts *would not even make a dent* in pardoning that sin before God. **That sin still stands.** Each sin is exceedingly tough and will not fall before the greatest effort we can bring to bear on it. And we have hundreds - thousands - probably *millions* of these things piled up against us. God says our sins form a "*certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us which (are) hostile to us*" (Col 2:14). These sins form our **death warrant.** The Blood of the Christ is the only thing that can destroy our sins - and consequently that death warrant. That is why Jesus is the only way to God the Father. "*The gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it*" (Mt 7:14). "*No one comes to the Father, but through Me*" (Jn 14:6). If this offends you, if you just can't believe this - well, I can't even say "good luck" to you. There is no hope that you can somehow get out from under the coming eternal sentence for your violations against your Creator. If there was some other way one could successfully expunge sins, God would simply direct us to that solution. He would never have come here to die on a cross. The truth is, the Blood of the Lamb is our only hope. And into that payment I will throw myself fully. What about you? "*For you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life ... but with precious blood ... the blood of Christ*" (1Pet 1:18,19).

**D) Orange** - This is fire! It represents the wrath of the Father upon the Son of God at the moment He was made sin for us. "*My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" (Mt 27:46). "*The Lord (YHWH) was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief, if He would render Himself as a guilt offering (which He did) .... As a result of the anguish of His soul, He (YHWH) will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge, the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities*" (Isa 53:10,11). Jesus endured the Wrath of the Father - **Fire** - to pay for our sins.

**Limited Atonement vs. Unlimited Atonement.** I personally believe in *limited atonement*. This teaching asserts that Jesus only paid for the sins of *believers* when on the cross. Others (indeed the majority of Christendom) hold to *unlimited atonement* - that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world and this payment is open for everyone. Most sects then maintain this gift of pardon must be secured by each individual - or else be damned eternally. This position may sound reasonable at first glance, but, in my view, it does not hold up under a closer scrutiny - Biblically or logically. Here are some reasons why.

For starters, if Jesus died and paid for everyone's sins, *then they are paid for!* Sins that are paid for *no longer exist!* Indeed, it would be unjust to exact eternal punishment for something *that has already been paid for!* This really is not even an option for God. The honest thinker in the unlimited atonement crowd must eventually come to the conclusion that everyone will be saved. After all, "*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them*" (2Cor 5:19). And John said, "*He Himself is the propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole*

*world*” (1Jn 2:2). Origen even went so far as to assert that fallen angels will also be redeemed as “*God made peace through the blood of the cross through Him (Jesus), whether things on earth or things in heaven*” (Col 1:20). But concerning the claim that this pardon is available to everyone, but not automatic, and must be acquired, let’s examine this more closely.

Why would an individual fail to acquire this pardon? I see four possible reasons why a person might fail to acquire the pardoning blood of Christ. One way is by *rejecting* Christ, a second is by genuine, honest *unbelief* (which is a more “benign” form of rejection really), a third is by simple *neglect* of even looking into this material, and the fourth reason involves *lack of access* to the gospel claims and message. Concerning this last one, there are **billions** of people who have lived and died and never heard of Jesus Christ or any of the gospel claims - **billions**. So, is this pardon actually and really available to them? Let’s take these one by one.

While it can be dangerous to *logically* “argue” the things of God, it is not always wrong. On one hand, God is not bound by our framework of logic (i.e., miracles), but His will and ways do not always defy logical scrutiny either. So, in this case, let’s apply some logic and see where it leads. You can then take it or leave it. No believer's eternal destiny will be jeopardized by one’s ultimate position on this material.

If the application of that pardoning blood payment is contingent upon a positive response to the Gospel message demands of believing on Him (Jn 6:29), calling upon Him (Ro 10:13), turning to Him (2Cor 3:16), receiving Him (Jn 1:12), etc., then what should we label the activities that has one falling short of meeting these demands? Aren’t those things *sin*? If we *reject* Christ, is this not sin? (Lk 10:16). If we do not believe, isn’t *unbelief* a sin? (Heb 3:12). If we *neglect* this material altogether, isn’t this sin? (Heb 12:25). So, I guess the unlimited atonement adherents actually maintains that Jesus died for all a person’s sins **except** for sins of rejecting Him, not believing in Him, or neglecting His material. These **sins** keep one away from the pardon for sins - even though they have been paid for ... I guess. That already is a form of *limited* atonement don’t you think? There seems to be some limits on what sins are pardoned **by God**, and *what ones are not*. So, these particular offenses are **excluded** from the sins of “*the whole world*” that Jesus died for – right? (1Jn 2:2).

But let’s now turn our attention to the fourth group that fails to secure the life giving blood of Christ - the billions who live and die and never have the opportunity to hear the gospel message. Obviously, they are innocent of any sins of Christ rejection, unbelief, or neglect. Since their sins have been paid for, it seems reasonable to assume that at the moment of death they will automatically enter glory. After all, how can God hold them accountable for failing to acquire the pardoning blood of Christ if they never even heard such a thing exists? And they have no rejection, unbelief or neglect sins weighing against them either. So if these people automatically go to heaven (as their sins have been paid for), then it would *be best not* to have the gospel message go out to cultures where it is currently absent. If **no exposure** to the gospel means 100% of the non-hearers go to heaven, why expose **anyone** to the gospel material - thus dooming some, if not most, of them? Once the gospel message is injected into a culture, many then start committing sins of rejection, unbelief, and neglect. And once that message is available in a culture, *future generations* are also then born into a sphere of accountability. Many now are sentenced to an eternity in Hell when, if left alone, they would have all gone to heaven. Just think of the USA alone. If the Bible had been totally non-existent for our entire

history, then everyone who ever came here or were born here would have all gone, and will go, to heaven. But since it has been prevalent from the very start, masses have now perished. Missionaries are enemies to the cause of salvation. That includes Paul.

While the limited atonement position in Christendom is the minority position, that does not mean it is wrong. I believe Jesus died to “*save **His people** from their sins*” (Mt 1:21). “His people” are the believers. In the High Priestly prayer just before His death, He specifically *did not pray for the world* - but for those whom the Father had given Him (the disciples), and for those who would believe on Him through their word - future believers (Jn 17:9,20). Isn't it a bit curious that He was about to die for the sins of the whole world - every sin of every person (and maybe angels) - *and yet He deliberately stated He was only praying for believers (present and future) and not for the world?* If you were about to go through a horrible death so as to pay for everybody's sins, why refuse to pray for everybody? That would be a thwarting of the effectiveness of the sacrifice you were about to make - a self inflicted subversive act - on the eve of that act! If Jesus believed He was about to undergo the death of the cross to *pay* for everybody's sins, He surely would have *prayed* that the Father honor that. But, instead, He made it clear to the Father He was **not praying** for the world!

Bottom line, I think we will find that Jesus paid for the sins of all *believers* when on the cross. Then, as human history unfolds, at the proper time, He calls His own into the faith. No one deserves this - as everyone deserves Hell. That is why He calls it mercy. And as the Offended party, He has the right to extend, or withhold, mercy at His own discretion. “*I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion*’ ... *So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He **hardens** whom He desires*” (Ro 9:15,18). If the pardoning blood of Jesus is available to everyone, why would He harden anyone? Wouldn't that be working against His own pardoning labor? And wouldn't He be hardening someone over displeasure that they committed some *sin*? But, if He died to pay for those sins - what's the beef? But, here's the deeper question. If He is not willing to extend His pardoning blood for sins of rejection, unbelief, neglect or an uncontrollable ignorance, then isn't this already a form of **limited** atonement?

I believe when Jesus was on the cross, the sins of believers past, present and future were placed upon Him. Upon His death - *those sins* - were paid for. The efficacy of the labor on the cross was then extended backwards, to the present, and into the future from that point on the cross. Those who had died before the cross were in Paradise *provisionally*. Moses and Elijah *needed Jesus to do His work on the cross* - or they would surely be doomed. Their sins would bring them down. I feel certain this was at least part of the conversation at the Transfiguration. So, “*things in heaven*” - “things” like Daniel, David, Abraham, Moses, etc. - were brought to peace with God through that blood (Col 1:20). And John, a Jew who was called as an Apostle *to the Jews*, was writing to his *fellow* Jews that Jesus did not just die for *their* sins (Jews), but also for the sins of all ethnic groups - the whole world! If the Bible simply said; “*He died for every sin of every person*” (that would be easy to say ... as I just did), then this discussion would be over. One of John's tasks was to get the Jews to see the mystery of God revealed - the Gentiles (the whole world) was now brought into this plan. Jews needed to see this. Paul pounded this message to the Gentiles as well - that God was not only the God of the Jews but also of the Gentiles (Ro 3:29) - and was in Christ reconciling the whole world to Himself.

Barriers formally erected between Jew and Gentile by God, were now demolished. It was this mystery Paul was called to expose (Eph 2:11-22 & 3:1-12 - indeed a poorly advised chapter break). And just as Paul was set aside from his mother's womb, and then called at the appropriate time (Gal 1:15,16), so also, all believers come into Christ. Jesus paid for the sins of His people on the cross, and as they enter history, at a particular point in his/her life journey, the Son is revealed to that heart, and the positive responses to the gospel message occur - and a believer is created. Jesus' work on the cross will not be short changed. The full effect of His sin expunging work will be fully applied. What He paid for will be completely realized. There will be no wasted blood and no wasted work on the cross.

Oh well, as said earlier, a believer's position on this will not determine that one's eternal fate one way or the other. It affects other things, but not that.

**E) Yellow** - This represents what was on the other side of all the events represented by the other colors. The yellow in the background represents a coming event on the heels of this murder - the resurrection. On the third day, Jesus physically rose from the dead and walked out of His grave. I am of the conviction that this event was a necessity. *Why? Because death only has a rightful claim where sin is present.* Our imputed sins on Jesus were totally paid for at the moment of His death. He then passed through death's door, *but when on the other side, there He stood - sinless!* Death (and any accompanying acolytes) was now an *illegal* oppressor. It had **no right** to Jesus' existence and was rightly rebuked. Jesus had to rise from the dead. The body He had made for Himself could not be claimed by death. He had been separated from His body by death, but with no sin present, death could not keep His body. This actually applies to each Christian as well. Our sins *have been paid for in full*, so death cannot rightly hold us. And we are body **and** soul. God, who created death, will kill death for us, as it has no authority or rightful claim to the redeemed. On the other hand, those who die in their sins will be on the other side of death's door to enter the second death. Sin, and the authority of death that it brings, will claim its victims. It is my hope that you will be among those who find mercy and pardon so that you too will experience victory over the final enemy - death (1Cor 15:26).

At one point, this question plagued me. *"If Jesus took the punishment for my sins, then why isn't He also doomed to eternity in Hell?"* This really bothered me. In His time, He opened my understanding on this very fundamental truth. Here is the answer. Suffering in Hell does not *pay* for sin. If it did, then eventually every creature in Hell would come out of it. Even if God required a thousand years of suffering for each sin - eventually the debt would be paid. Even Satan would eventually come out. But the Bible does not say that suffering can pay for sin. Only innocent blood can pay for sin, and Jesus is the only One with that. There is no other remedy for sin - no other remedy now or in eternity. This is it.

**Resurrection: Just a note about the Easter holiday (or Christmas - or any other religious holiday).** Early in my Christian experience, I started feeling that I had a real spiritual problem. Every time the religious holidays rolled around, there was this great flurry of activity directed toward the special day. Churches were decorated, sermons for weeks prior to "the big day" were all directed toward that great day, and all kinds of activities revolved around that great cyclical coming day - particularly Easter and Christmas. Sunrise services, cantatas, candlelight services, outreach efforts - but it seemed I had a spiritual problem. I didn't seem to

be able to get that spiritual “bump” that others seemed to be getting. Try as I might, I wasn't able to get some fresh and invigorating spiritual glimpse of God becoming a baby or rising from the dead. In fact, I was finding that the reality of those events might hit me in July, or October, or May - very unpredictable. My timing was all off and I just couldn't seem to get these insights and revelations to coincide with the church calendar. I thought maybe there was something spiritually wrong with me. But then I read this verse: *“One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind”* (Ro 14:5). The next verse goes on to say that those who observe “the day” do so to the Lord, and the one who does not observe the day is okay too! In Colossians, Paul states, *“Let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day...”* (Col 2:16). These are shadows. Wow! What a relief! I naturally lean toward seeing every day alike - well, maybe Saturdays are a bit special. While I do enjoy the various holidays, it is more for the time off than for trying to get some “revival” in my soul over some particular Christian event. But if others *do* get some special high from the religious event - that's great! But now I know it is okay **not to!** God is a liberator - indeed, The Liberator!

The Rejected Stone is indeed the Cornerstone of the Eternal Order. Do you want this life - or what is coming? But even if this life is what you want ... you can't keep it. God has decided it is temporal. Get off the sinking ship.

They did all they could - to sink that old Stone,  
Killed and then buried Him, *“We're now on our own!”*  
Though the waters were deep,  
and their plan seemed complete,  
all collapsed on that fateful third morn!

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Do you like to learn? God has great depths to explore! Are you interested in ...  
the [Bible's Plan of Salvation](#), or  
[what the Bible says about death?](#)  
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[freelygive-n.com!](#)

In 1977, Robin became a Christian. BA, Bus Admin (Milligan College '90)  
M-Div (Emmanuel School of Religion '92).

Here's the song:  
<https://youtu.be/JwMZqqKItN4>

Here's my commentary/sermonette on the song:  
[https://youtu.be/\\_K-wu9Wvq-U](https://youtu.be/_K-wu9Wvq-U)

Here's a video version of the drawing's explanation:  
<https://youtu.be/cgPxD67rkUo>