

In Defense of Biblical Christianity

Article 1

2 Corinthians 5:21 - Did Jesus become Sin?

The Atonement Heresy

A Paper

By Bill Seney/Break Free Apologetics

www.breakfreeapologetics.com

This apologetic paper is the first of a series of articles I am writing called 'In Defense of Biblical Christianity.' I will be challenging false doctrines that have infiltrated, subverted, and perverted the truth of Biblical Christianity.

Apologetic Preface

The mistranslation of a single verse is one of the most significant lies ever perpetrated by the Devil on the Christian Church. His deception is ingenious; the deceit is so subtle that it is not technically incorrect. It is theologically heresy and slander against our Lord, Savior, King, and Great High Priest Jesus Christ.

This heresy must be defeated because it is a slanderous accusation against our Lord.

Do I have your attention?

First, I am presenting this apologetic against Satan, aka the Devil. His LIES are the target of my attack, not the people who have been outwitted by Satanic deception.

Keep in mind Satan is the father of lies **John 8:44**. Most of the evillest people in history have used his tactics. Vladimir Lenin, the Russian communist, said, *"A lie told often enough becomes the truth,"* his cohort, Joseph Stalin, said, *"Education is a weapon whose effects depend on who holds it in his hand and at whom it is aimed."*¹

These two tactics are exactly what Satan has used to deceive millions. Satan has penetrated Christian universities and deceived the translators and educators in these universities to perpetuate his deception, misleading the vast majority of Christians but not all.

I am going on the offensive to counterattack his deceit.

Satan's greatest and most potent deception, without question, is the creation of false religions, currently leading seven (7) plus billion to hell in Hinduism, Buddhism, Atheism, Islam, Apostate Christianity, and countless others. His next greatest deception is the infiltration, subversion, and perversion of Biblical Christianity.

Satan means "the accuser," but for this paper, I will be focusing on his other main title, "The Devil," which means "the slanderer." According to Webster's dictionary, slander means- the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation. This is precisely what Satan is doing to Jesus in **2 Cor 5:21**.

¹ https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/joseph_stalin_113988

The Devil's most incredible slander in the history of the Universe is what I am targeting in this paper.

Hundreds of millions of Christians worldwide are unknowingly participating in this slander, and this must stop. 2 Corinthians 5:21 must be translated correctly to honour Christ and reflect Biblical theology.

First, let me say it is scientifically, philosophically, and theologically impossible for a person or Jesus to become sin. Sin violates God's law; if a person violates it, they become guilty of sin, not sin itself. In other words, it is logically inconsistent and empirically impossible for anyone or anything to become a sin. The argument should be over already, but I will move beyond the purely intellectual arguments and show from the Bible that Jesus became a sin offering for sin, not sin itself.

Suppose I convince you that 2 Corinthians 5:21 is slanderous, as most English translations state. In that case, you play a pivotal role in silencing the Devil's slanderous accusation and restoring the complete honour and glory due to our King by forwarding this paper to your Christian leaders and every Christian you know.

The argument begins by examining the text.

Introduction

In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) and the Greek New Testament, the word Harmatia can be translated as a sin offering or sin.

Most English translations of **2 Cor 5:21** translate it as sin and read similarly to the ESV, which says, *"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*

The NIV says- *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

THE KJ says- *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*

Below is the original Greek and ESV English translation showing sin as the choice of translation.

3588 [e]	3361 [e]	1097 [e]	266 [e]	5228 [e]	1473 [e]	266 [e]	4160 [e]	2443 [e]	1473 [e]
ton	mē	gnonta	hamartian	hyper	hēmōn	hamartian	epoiēsen	hina	hēmeis
21 τὸν	μὴ	γνόντα	ἁμαρτίαν	, ὑπὲρ	ἡμῶν	ἁμαρτίαν	ἐποίησεν	, ἵνα	ἡμεῖς
The [One]	not	having known	sin	for	us	sin	He made	so that	we
Art-AMS	Adv	V-APA-AMS	N-AFS	Prep	Pro-G1P	N-AFS	V-AIA-3S	Conj	Pro-N1P
1096 [e]	1343 [e]	2316 [e]	1722 [e]	846 [e]					
genōmetha	dikaioσynē	Theou	en	autō					
γενώμεθα	δικαιοσύνη	Θεοῦ	ἐν	αὐτῷ					
might become	[the] righteousness	of God	in	Him					
V-ASM-1P	N-NFS	N-GMS	Prep	Pro-DM3S					

2

There is no doubt that Paul meant the word to mean sin offering. I will prove this from Paul's theology when we examine the theology of the Bible in detail.

“F. F. Bruce writes about the phrase *hamartian epoiēsen* (“made him to be a sin offering”): “...this remarkable expression...can best be understood on the assumption that Paul had in mind the Hebrew idiom in which certain words for sin can mean not only sin, but ‘sin offering.’” We must keep in mind that Corinth was a large Greek city. Acts (primarily 18) and the Epistles to the Corinthians indicate that the congregation in Corinth had many Gentiles. They, as well as many Jews, used the Septuagint as their Bible and so would have been very familiar with the use of *hamartia* as “sin offering.”³

The Matthew Henry commentary was written over 200 years ago, and he clearly understood that *Harmatia* in 2 Cor 5:21 meant sin offering. Here is a quote from his commentary on 2 Cor 5:21- “The sacrifice he offered: He was made sin; not a sinner, but sin, that is, a sin-offering, a sacrifice for sin.”⁴

From a technical perspective, the ESV and other translations are not incorrect; the text can be translated as sin, or it can be translated as sin offering; the theology of the Bible must decide the correct translation. Jesus becoming sin is theologically inconsistent with the whole of scripture. It is slanderous and heretical to say Jesus became sin.

I intend to prove this from the scriptures.

Just so you do not think I have taken leave of my senses, some Bible translations translate the verse sin offering. Then, beyond that, I will provide some scholarly validations from accredited scholars, beyond FF Bruce, Matthew Henry, and theological dictionaries who support sin

² Bible Hub Software, Lexicon Greek, English 2 Cor 5:21

³ REV 2 Corinthians 5:21 Commentary, FF Bruce, 1 & 2 Corinthians Bible Commentary.

⁴ Bible Letter Bible, Commentary, Matthew Henry, Chapter 5, Verses 16-21.

offering as the correct translation. But most important is the testimony of scripture that will be the basis of evidence for this apologetic.

English Translations That Say Sin Offering

The following translations have considered the testimony of scripture and, therefore, have provided the correct interpretation, which I intend to prove from the scriptures.

The REV says, *21He made him who did not know sin to be a **sin offering** on our behalf, so that, through union with him, we would become the righteousness of God.*

The CJB says, *“God made this sinless man be a **sin offering** on our behalf, so that **union with him** we might fully **share in God’s righteousness**.*

The NLT says, *“For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be an **offering for our sin** so that we could **be made right** with God Through Christ.”*

As you can see, there are English translations that translate the verse sin offering, not sin, and when you study the theology of the Bible, it becomes overwhelmingly clear that it should read sin offering.

Scholarly Validation

Many scholars say this word should be translated as a sin offering in **2 Cor 5:21**.

Albert Barnes *explains that Jesus had to be a sin offering, saying he could not become “sin,” nor “a sinner,” nor guilty.” First, Jesus could not become “sin.” Sin is breaking the commandments of God. No person can become “sin.” We are not “sin,” and Jesus did not become “sin” for us. Nor could Jesus have become “a sinner.”*⁵

Barnes makes an irrefutable argument that no one, including Jesus, can become sin, so the translation can’t be correct.

“BDAG and Thayer *see this verse as saying Christ becomes “a sinner” for us, but that cannot be correct. For one thing, the whole Bible testifies to the holiness and sinlessness of Christ. More*

⁵ REV 2 Corinthians 5:21 Commentary, Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes*.

*to the point, however, is that if Jesus did become “a sinner,” then he could not have been our savior,”*⁶

These scholars make an excellent point: how can you be holy and sinless SIN?

Dictionary Validations Of the Greek

Several dictionaries also state that Harmatia can be translated as sin or sin offering. Newman’s Greek-English Dictionary⁷ says hamartia means “sin” and “sin offering,” and the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible⁸ lists both “sin” and “sin offering” under “sin” as a translation of hamartia.

If you are thinking, “So what?” A few translations, scholars’ opinions, dictionaries, and a few plausible arguments mean nothing, especially when most evangelical denominations and their translations disagree, then I agree with you. However, the bible certainly agrees with them.

I intend to prove this from the scriptures.

All the critical points of each verse I present for evidence will be bolded and underlined to ensure that the core theology does not go unnoticed. I am asking you to pay attention to the scriptures and their words. I am limiting my commentary to the obvious because my main goal is for you to see that the Bible certainly does not teach that Jesus became sin. If you have access to good bible software, cross reference **2 Cor 5:21** and see if you can find any scripture that supports Jesus being sinful. I could not find one, so the rest of the argument in this paper will present the opposite, that Jesus is not sin, and **2 Cor 5:21** must be amended to reflect biblical theology.

The Theology of the Bible

Before we review the scriptures, I believe the following will help set the stage for better comprehension. Animal sacrifice was a critical component in the Mosaic Sacrificial system. As you will soon read in **Lev 4:1-35**, the purpose of the sacrifice was to transfer the guilt of the unintentional sin to the innocent animal, which is symbolic of Jesus, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World (**Jn 1:29**).

Animals are not capable of sinning; they are entirely innocent of sin. The picture is clear: the innocent die for the guilty. The penalty for sin is stated in **Romans 6:23a** “*For the wages of sin*

⁶ REV 2 Corinthians 5:21 Commentary BDAG, s.v. “ἁμαρτία.”, Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “ἁμαρτία.”

⁷ REV 2 Corinthians 5:21 Commentary, Newman’s Greek English Dictionary

⁸ REV 2 Corinthians 5:21 Commentary, *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*

is **death.**” Adam was told in **Gen 2:16-17**- “*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you **shall surely die.**”*

Adam died for violating God’s command; Adam did not become sin; he became guilty of sin, resulting in death. As the story continues, God moves on Adam’s behalf and kills an animal to cover Adam’s guilt. The testimony from the entire bible has always been that the innocent would bear the sin of the guilty, from the opening chapters in Genesis to the last word in Revelations.

This is the biblical theology: the innocent die for the guilty, the animal did not become sin, and the person sacrificing was not sin. The animal was innocent, and the worshipper was guilty of violating God’s law, which meant he/she was under the penalty of death; the worshipper who sinned had their guilt transferred to the animal. Critical in theology is that the person who sinned placed their hands on the head of the animal and then personally killed it. An obvious picture is that the guilty sinner kills the innocent animal, and then the transfer of guilt takes place. It is the same picture for us: Christ died to take our guilt. Yes, I know the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins; this I will deal with shortly, but the sacrificial system foreshadows Christ, the innocent, reconciling us to the Father by **his blood of the cross** and by **his body of flesh by his death**, as it says in Colossians below.

Col 1:19-21 Reconciliation by the Blood of the Cross and the Death of His Flesh.

*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to **reconcile to himself** all things, whether on earth or in heaven, **making peace**, by the **blood of his cross**. And you who were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in **his body of flesh by his death**, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.*

Please notice in these verses again it is the **blood of his cross** that reconciles the sinner, making peace. Notice the words, **reconciled in his body of flesh by his death.** (Lev 1:4, 17:11)

Now, the details regarding Sin Offerings in the Mosaic Covenant.

The Sacrifice For Sin in the Mosaic Covenant

Chatta’ah- In Salvation Theology Means Sin Offering.

The word for Sin or Sin Offering (Chatta’ah) is translated in Lev 4 as a sin offering in verses 3, 8, 14, 20, 21, 25, 34, and twice in 29, 32, and 33. Verses 4:3 and 14 translate sin and sin offering. The ESV used the Masoretic text to translate the Hebrew into English.

The context and theology of the Bible determine the correct translation. Chatta’ah is translated 16 times sin offering in Lev 4.

Below is the Septuagint⁹- the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible showing the root word Harmatia, translated sin offering in Lev 4. The ESV also translated this verse sin offering.

Greek left English right.

Greek

English

8 καὶ πᾶν τὸ στέαρ τοῦ μόσχου τοῦ τῆς
ἀμαρτίας περιελεῖ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, τὸ στέαρ τὸ
κατακαλύπτον τὰ ἐνδόσθια καὶ πᾶν τὸ στέαρ
τὸ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐνδοσθίων

8 and all the fat of the calf of the **sin-offering** shall he take off from it; the fat that covers the inwards, and all the fat that is on the inwards

So we are clear, Lev 4 in Hebrew (Chatta’ah) and the Greek (Harmatia) in the Septuagint are translated “Sin Offering”.

The lexicon below shows the details of the usage of the Hebrew word Chatta’ah.¹⁰

Lexicon :: Strong's H2403 - ḥattā'āt	
חַטָּאת	
Transliteration	Pronunciation
ḥattā'āt	khat-taw-aw' 
Part of Speech	Root Word (Etymology)
feminine noun	From חָטָא (H2398)
Dictionary Aids	
TWOT Reference: 638e	
Variant Spellings	
Variant spellings for this word: חַטָּאת (Strongs and Gesenius) חַטָּאת (Strongs)	
KJV Translation Count — Total: 296x	
The KJV translates Strong's H2403 in the following manner: sin (182x), sin offering (116x), punishment (3x), purification for sin (2x), purifying (1x), sinful (1x), sinner (1x).	

Notice the various uses of the word that are context-dependent. Specifically, I draw your attention to the 116 times it is translated sin offering, directly above.

⁹ Septuagint- Lev 4- <https://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/chapter.asp?book=3&page=4>

¹⁰ Bible Hub Software, Lexicon: Strong's N2403, Shatta'at

Please read **Levi 1:4** and **4:1-35** and then consider writing your description of God's plan for atonement.

Lev 1:4 God's Mandate For Atonement Given by God to Moses

*He (the worshipper) **shall lay his hand on the head** of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to **make atonement for him**. Then **he shall kill the bull** before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the **blood** (**Lev 17:11**) against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting.*

Here is what the text says: the worshipper lays their hands on the head of the innocent animal and then personally kills the animal, shedding its blood. Is God not saying to the worshipper you must recognize that your guilt caused the death of this innocent animal? An obvious picture of our sin causing the death of Christ, the innocent lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (**John 1:29**).

This is God's mandate for atonement, carried throughout the book Leviticus.

Let's look at Leviticus chapter **4:1-35** God's Laws for Sin Offerings. Please look for the following phases or words: sin, unintentional, guilt, sin offering, hands on the head, kill, without blemish, blood, sacrifice, forgiven, and atonement. I have bolded and underlined these words that validate God's mandate for atonement. These words combine to reveal how God deals with sin. All a picture of Christ as fully revealed in the New Testament.

Lev 4:1-35 The Sin Offering

*And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2“Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If anyone **sins unintentionally** in any of the LORD's commandments about things not to be done, and does any one of them, 3**if it is the anointed priest who sins**, thus bringing **guilt** on the people, then he **shall offer** for the sin that he has committed a bull from the herd **without blemish** to the LORD for **a sin offering**. 4 He shall bring the bull to the entrance of the tent of meeting before the LORD and **lay his hand on the head** of the bull **and kill** the bull before the LORD. 5 And the anointed priest shall take some of the blood of the bull and bring it into the tent of meeting, 6 and the priest shall dip his finger in the **blood** and sprinkle part of the **blood** seven times before the LORD in front of the veil of the sanctuary. 7And the priest shall put some of the **blood** on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense before the LORD that is in the tent of meeting, and all the rest of the **blood** of the bull he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. 8and all the fat of the bull of **the sin offering** he shall remove from it, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails 9and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys 10(just as these are taken from the ox of the **sacrifice** of the peace offerings); and the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering. 11But the skin of the bull and all its flesh, with its head, its legs, its entrails, and its dung— 12all the rest of the bull—he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, to the ash heap, and shall burn it up on a fire of wood. On the ash heap, it shall be burned up.*

13 “If the whole **congregation of Israel sins unintentionally** and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do any one of the things that by the LORD’s commandments ought not to be done, and they realize **their guilt**, 14 when the sin which they have committed becomes known, **the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd for a sin offering** and bring it in front of the tent of meeting. 15 And **the elders** of the congregation shall **lay their hands on the head** of the bull before the LORD, and the bull shall be **killed** before the LORD. 16 Then the anointed priest shall bring some of the **blood** of the bull into the tent of meeting, 17 and the priest shall dip his finger in the **blood** and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD in front of the veil. 18 And he shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar that is in the tent of meeting before the LORD, and the rest of the **blood** he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. 19 And all its fat he shall take from it and burn on the altar. 20 Thus shall he do with the bull. As he did with the bull of the **sin offering**, so shall he do with this. And the **priest shall make atonement** for them, and they shall **be forgiven**. 21 And he shall carry the bull outside the camp and burn it up as he burned the first bull; it is a **sin offering for the assembly**.

22 “When **a leader sins**, doing **unintentionally** any one of all the things that by the commandments of the LORD his God ought not to be done, and **realizes his guilt**, 23 or the **sin** which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring as **his offering** a goat, a male without blemish, 24 and shall **lay his hand on the head** of the goat and kill it in the place where they **kill** the burnt offering before the LORD; it is a **sin offering**. 25 Then the priest shall take some of the **blood** of the **sin offering** with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of its **blood** at the base of the altar of burnt offering. 26 And all its fat he shall burn on the altar, like the fat of the **sacrifice** of peace offerings. So the priest shall **make atonement for him for his sin, and he shall be forgiven**.

27 “If **anyone** of the **common people sins unintentionally** in doing any one of the things that by the LORD’s commandments ought not to be done, and **realizes his guilt**, 28 or the **sin** which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for **his offering** a goat, a female **without blemish**, for his **sin** which he has committed. 29 And he **shall lay his hand on the head** of the **sin offering** and **kill** the **sin offering** in the place of burnt offering. 30 And the priest shall take some of its **blood** with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out all the rest of **its blood** at the base of the altar. 31 And all its fat he shall remove, as the fat is removed from the peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a pleasing aroma to the LORD. **And the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven**.

32 “If he brings a lamb as his offering for a **sin offering**, he shall bring a female **without blemish** 33 and **lay his hand on the head** of the **sin offering** and **kill** it for a **sin offering** in the place where they **kill** the burnt offering. 34 Then the priest shall take some of the **blood** of the **sin offering** with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out all the rest of **its blood** at the base of the altar. 35 And all its fat he shall remove as the fat of the lamb is removed from the **sacrifice** of peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on top of the LORD’s food offerings. **And the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven**.

I hope that you can see the purpose of the sin offering through the eyes of God. He has revealed his method of dealing with sin in **Lev 1:4** and **4:1-35** above, and nothing becomes sin. I hope it is evident to you that the sinner recognizes their guilt and then kills an innocent animal. Then, the anointed priest makes atonement for him, transferring the guilt of the guilty to the innocent.

Several key points must be made from the text above.

Leviticus 4 Is a Picture of Christ as the Perfect, Sinless Sacrifice for Sin

The text above shows that the sin offering had to be perfect in every way without blemish. This is a picture of Jesus, the anointed priest and the perfect and innocent sacrifice. He is both; this is confirmed in the New Testament; see Heb 7:26-27 and Heb 9:11-14 below.

Heb 7:26 Jesus Enters Heaven Unstained From Sin

*For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, **holy, innocent, unstained, separated** from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.*

Heb 9:11-14 Jesus Enters Heaven as an Offering without Blemish

*But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12he entered once for all into the **holy places**, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of **his own blood**, thus securing an **eternal redemption**. 13For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14how much more will the **blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit **offered himself without blemish to God**, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*

Please notice Jesus entered the true tent in heaven without **blemish**; sinless perfection is the mandate. I ask you, could Jesus enter heaven if he was sin or had sinned? This settles the case beyond all doubt, but let's continue. Notice it is the **blood of Christ** shed through the eternal Spirit, **who offered himself without blemish to God**, that provides eternal redemption. An exact picture of the sin offering in **Lev 4**, the innocent sinless animal, perfect in every way, without blemish, is the offering for sin. The animal never became sin, and neither did Jesus.

Unintentional Sins

The theology of the Bible is clear: intentional sins cannot be atoned for under the Mosaic Law, and unintentional sins must be atoned for. So theologically, Jesus can't become sin because even unintentional sins demand the death penalty; Jesus is not sin; he is sinless, holy, innocent, and the perfect sacrifice without blemish so that he can be the perfect sacrifice, our sin offering. His blood cleanses us from all intentional pre-Christian sins and cleanses all confessed sins once a person becomes a Christian. (**1 Jn 1:7-8**) More about this later.

As the text above says, atonement could be made for unintentional sins in the Old Covenant.

A key phrase associated with unintentional sins is (recognizes his guilt) because atonement is designed to deal with the guilt of the offence. Atonement requires that the innocent die for the guilty; this will be expounded numerous times as the argument progresses.

Look at the Book of Numbers for further clarification beyond Leviticus 4.

Numbers 15:30 Banishment for Intentional Sins

*“But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is naïve or a sojourner, reviles the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from among the people. Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken his commandments, that person shall be **utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.**”*

The only path for the wayward was repentance. See the following two scriptures.

Ps 51:17 Repentance of the Heart

The sacrifices of God are **a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

This is a significant part of the salvation equation. Remember, Jesus started his ministry with a call to repent. Matt 4:17 says-*From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

Repentance is always necessary and a prerequisite for the wayward. God further clarifies this for us in Ezekiel chapter 18th. Perhaps read the whole chapter, and the key verses follow.

Eze 18: 20b- 22 Repentance Through Action

The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. 21*“But **IF a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die.** 22None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done, he shall live.*

King David is an example of this; he committed horrible sins and was forgiven by God. This is why he could write **Psalms 51:17** above. If you don't know the story of David's fall, please go to **2 Samuel**.

Repentance with contrition meant a change in heart and strict adherence to the law of Moses. It is the same for Christians; once we have been reconciled to God through Christ, we must abide in Christ. **John 15:10** reads: *If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.*

Ok, back to Jesus being sin or a sin offering.

The Significance of Blood

In **Lev 4**, the blood is mentioned 15 times, and with good reason, because it is the animal's death through the shedding of blood that atones for sin. **Lev 17:11 says-** 11For **the life** of the flesh is in the **blood**, and I have given it for you on the altar to **make atonement** for your souls, **for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.**

Notice life is in the blood; therefore, blood is required to make atonement. In other words, a life for a life is the price of atonement. It is the death of the innocent animal's blood that is shed, ultimately pointing to Christ, who would die, giving his life for our lives. The animal did not become sin; the theology says the innocent die for the guilty.

It cannot be more explicit; the worshipper acknowledges they have sinned unintentionally and offers an animal to take their guilt. Never does the animal become sin. Isaiah confirms this in **Isaiah 53:10a**: "*Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him, he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering of guilt.*"

Think about this for a minute: Did your recognition of guilt before God not lead you to Christ?

Christ's offering on the cross fulfills **Isa 53**; it does not say he became sin but was a **guilt offering**. Can it be any clearer that Jesus is a guilt offering? He does not become a sin. Once people are reconciled to God, they are obligated to become disciples of Christ, be baptized, and live a holy, sanctified life, as **Heb 12** says.

Heb 12:14 Peace and Holiness are Mandatory

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Beyond the testimony of the Sacrificial System of the Mosaic Covenant and the prophetic promise of **Isaiah 53**, all of the scripture proves that 2 Cor 5:21 should be translated as a sin offering.

I must emphasize, again, that people are not sin, we are guilty of sin, so Jesus did not become sin he took the guilt of our sin, a life for a life, for life is in the blood (**Lev 17:11**), and it is the blood that makes atonement. Remember, God said he gives us blood to make atonement. If this is not true, then evangelical Christians better stop bleeding the blood of Christ and should start saying, Jesus, you became sin for me.

We know the blood of a bull or goat foreshadowed the coming of Christ; please read the following verses. **Heb 10:4** "*For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins*: then Hebrews goes on to say in **10:10** *And by that will we have been **sanctified** through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

Notice the key phrase here is the **offering of the body of Jesus**, yes, a life for a life, the innocent for the guilty, **Lev 17:11**, life is in the blood, and as **Heb 9:22** says, "*Indeed, under the law,*

almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”

The theology is implicit: a life for a life, Jesus paid the redemption price, his life for our life. Under no circumstance could he become sin! Again, we were not sin, so his becoming sin would not solve our problem but worsen it.

Jesus confirms this theology as recorded in **Matt 20:28** and **Mark 10:45**.

Matt 20:28 *even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*

Mark 10:45 *45For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Jesus himself says he gave his life as a ransom, which is precisely what I would expect him to say. He is confirming **Lev 17:11**.

There is no place in the Bible where Jesus is presented as sin (save the theologically incorrect translation of **2 Cor 5:21**). All the New Testament, including Jesus’ own words, say the exact opposite, just as BDAG and Thayer noted above, Jesus is everywhere presented as holy and sinless.

The following verses from the book of Hebrews prove that Jesus is our sin offering. From the text below, you will see that Jesus’s offering includes the offering of his body and the shedding of his blood. Each scripture below builds on each other adding irrefutable evidence that Jesus did not become sin.

The Book of Hebrews Text

The following verses attest to Jesus being our sin offering, purifier, sanctifier, and redeemer through his incarnation, sinless life, death, resurrection, and ascension into the throne room of Heaven, where he sits at the right hand of the Majesty in Heaven.

Let’s examine the overwhelming evidence. After selecting texts from Hebrews, I will also present some Paulene theology that confirms the book of Hebrews, the testimony of the ceremonial law from the Mosaic Covenant, and what he meant when he wrote **2 Cor 5:21**.

Heb 2:9 *The Suffering of Death Brings God’s Grace*

9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

This verse speaks to his incarnation and ultimate exaltation by his suffering of death that dispenses God's grace. Again, his perfect life and death bestow God's grace, not his becoming sin.

Heb 2:14 *Jesus Death Defeats Satan Power Over Death*

*14 Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through **death** he might destroy the **one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,***

This verse also speaks of the incarnation and his victory over every temptation. Please notice the verse says his death destroys Satan's power over death. How you ask, his life for our life, the price of redemptions. Paul expresses it this way in Galatians.

Gal 3:13 *The Curse of the Law*

*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a **curse for us**- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree- so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.*

This, of course, is tied to the Abrahamic Covenant (**Gen 12:1-3**, when all nations of the earth will be blessed through Abraham's seed (Christ), just as Gal 3:16 says, "*Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say "And to offsprings," Referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.*

We Gentiles are brought into the covenant through Christ.

The curse was enacted when Adam sinned, and death entered the world. Christ takes the curse, our guilt for violating God's holy law, redeeming us from the curse of the law because God planned to save us through his covenant promise to Abraham.

Gal 4:4-5 *Born to Redeem Those Under the Law and Adopt as Sons*

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoptions as sons.

Christ being born under the law to redeem those under the law is further explained in Hebrews as follows.

Heb 9:15 *Death Redeems From Old Testament Sins*

*"Therefore he (Jesus) is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance **since a death** has occurred **that redeems** them from the transgressions **committed under the first covenant.**"*

Please recognize that Jesus' death redeems, not him becoming sin.

The argument continues.

Heb 2:17 Jesus Incarnation and Perfect Life

17 Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Jesus came in human form, and after living a perfect life, he was qualified by God to be our great high priest, and as our high priest, he has the authority to propitiate for sin. If Jesus became sin, he could not enter the temple in heaven, and if his blood was tainted with sin, he would need atonement for himself. The argument that Jesus became sin is absurd. The argument continues.

Heb 7:15-16 Jesus the Indestructible life, perfect, holy, sinless

15 This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, 16, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.

Jesus is a priest in the order of Melchizedek because he lived a perfect, sinless life. Again, there is no mention of him becoming a sin. He could not make the following statement if he sinned or became sin!

John 10:17-18 Can Take Up His Own Life

*17 For this reason the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. **No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.** This charge I have received from my Father.*

Is not sin the cause of death, so if Jesus became sin, does that not make him the cause?

Jesus said he has the power to resurrect himself from the dead; Jesus is the source of life, not death. So, beyond a shadow of a doubt, Jesus' indestructible life allowed him to rise from the dead, not be the cause of death.

How can he be holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens if he became sin? Keep the context in mind- Jesus became a priest in heaven; he was not a priest until he went to heaven, as stated in Hebrews.

Hebrews 8:4 Jesus Become a Priest in Heaven

“Now if he (Jesus) were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. (God declared Jesus to be a Priest. See Psalm 110:1-4 and Hebrews 5:6, 8-10, 6:19-20, 7:11-12)

Let's discuss the word unstained; if Jesus became sin, what percentage of stain would he be? That is correct, 100%. But the text says Jesus was unstained, which means he had no sin. Can he be holy, innocent, unstained, and separated from sinners and become sin? If he became sin, how could he be exalted above the heavens? And when and where did he shed this sin? For the wages of sin is death. If he was sin, he certainly could not take up his own life and would be under the penalty of death, so he could not save anyone. The argument continues.

Heb 4:15 Jesus Was Without Sin

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, **yet without sin.**”

Jesus could not be sin or have sinned, or he could not enter the temple of God; a Priest could not enter the earthly Tabernacle unless he was cleansed from his sins, how could Jesus enter the holy places in heaven if he had become sin? Jesus, after his resurrection, went to the true tent, the Tabernacle in heaven; as the sinless and perfect lamb, he did not have to offer a sin offering for himself; on the contrary, he brought his own sinless and perfect blood into the holy places inaugurating the New Covenant.

Please pay special attention to verse **Heb 9:14**; this alone disqualifies that Christ became sin. Note it says that Christ, through the eternal Spirit, **offered himself without blemish to God.** This verse does two things: it proves beyond all doubt that Jesus was an offering for sin and that he was without blemish when he entered the true Tabernacle in heaven. The scripture implicitly says Jesus offered himself, he did not become sin. Let's look at verse 15.

Heb 9:15 Christ's Death Redeems Old Covenant Sins

Therefore he (Jesus) is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

This is a critical theological passage regarding the work that Jesus completed on the cross. This scripture says Jesus' death redeems the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

Heb 9:11-14 and **15** emphatically prove that **2 Cor 5:21** should be translated like the REV, CJB, and NLT. The ESV, NIV, KJ, and others are theologically incorrect. The ESV should be revised to read, *“For our sake he made him to be sin offering who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

The argument continues in **Heb 9:25-28**; please read.

Heb 9:25-28 Christ is the Sacrifice and the Offering.

25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the

world. But as it is, he has **appeared once for all** at the end of the ages **to put away sin** by the **sacrifice of himself**.²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,²⁸ So **Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many**, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

The text here is not iffy; Jesus **sacrificed himself**, having been **offered** once to bear the sins of many. Add this together with **9:11-14** and you have a tsunami of overwhelming evidence that Jesus was a not sin, but a sin offering.

So there is no confusion regarding the word bear; here is what the word means in the Strongs Concordance.¹¹

Strong's Concordance from Hebrews 9:28 (399. Anaphero)

anapheró: to carry up, lead up

Original Word: ἀναφέρω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: anapheró

Phonetic Spelling: (an-af-er'-o)

Definition: to carry up, lead up

Usage: (a) I carry up, lead up, (b) I offer up (on a high altar) as a sacrifice, offer up to God on high.

Note it does not mean becoming sin. It is a theological word that means to offer up a sacrifice to God.

But let's continue in Hebrews.

Heb 10:8-10 Sanctified By the Offering of Jesus Body

*8When he (Jesus) said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), 9then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. 10And by that will we have been sanctified through the **offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.***

Please notice that Jesus himself says that sin offerings were made according to the law. Then the author says we are sanctified by the **offering of the body** of Jesus Christ once for all (a life for a

¹¹ Bible Hub Software, Strong's Concordance from Hebrews 9:28 (399. Anaphero)

life). Every passage we have reviewed so far says Jesus is the sacrifice and offering, and none even implies that Jesus became sin. But let's keep going.

Heb 10:11-14 Christ Offered a Single Sacrifice For Sins

11 And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But **when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of God, **13** waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. 14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are **being sanctified**.

Again, it says Christ offered a single sacrifice for sin (**HIMSELF**) and made a single offering (**HIMSELF**). It certainly does not say he becomes sin. Also, notice the priest in the Mosaic Covenant had to make sacrifices constantly. **Heb 10:11-14** and **Heb 9:12-15** destroy any argument that Jesus could become sin. Let's keep going.

Heb 10:19-20 The Death of Christ's Body Opens the Holy Places

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places **by the blood of Jesus**, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us **through the curtain**, that is, through his flesh.

First, notice we enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, not by Jesus becoming sin (**Lev 1:1-4, 17:11**). I would like to make some theological connection to this verse, tying Jesus' death on the cross to the curtain in the earthly temple. **Matt 27:50-51** says - *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. 51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.*

At Jesus' death, the temple curtain was torn in two, revealing the way into the holy place had been opened.

Now let's read **Heb 6:19-20**, which says *We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.*

Christ entered the holiest place after his resurrection and became a priest forever; he had to die, rise from the dead, and have his sacrifice accepted by the Father, and in so doing, he can intercede for us as our great high priest of the New Covenant. Please notice that the death of his flesh splits the curtain, back to Hebrews 9.

Heb 9:23-26 Christ's Blood Cleanses the Temple, and He Puts Away Sin

Thus it was necessary for copies of the heavenly things, to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to

*appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to **offer himself repeatedly**, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he appeared **once** at the end of the ages **to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself**.*

Here, observe that Jesus' blood cleanses the heavenly temple, and his death on the cross splits the curtain. He then becomes a great high priest forever, and then the sacrifice of the body of Jesus puts away sin. Not a single word about Jesus becoming sin for us. In the Levitical sacrifices, everything, including the holy places, had to be cleansed with blood. Please read Leviticus 16 to see all the sin offerings that had to be made, which included offerings for the Priest, the holy places, and so on, on the Day of Atonement. This is the only time the priest kills the animal on behalf of the people.

All of the above verses refute that Jesus became sin. They all confirm that it is the death of Christ that redeems transgression in the Old Covenant (**Heb 9:15**). It is his spilled blood taken into the temple that purifies us, providing eternal redemptions for those who are being sanctified (**Heb 9:12**). In other words we can receive ongoing cleansing by abiding in Christ, per the New Covenant regulations.

Let's see what the Apostle Paul has to say.

Paulene Theology

After reading the following verses written by Paul, it will be evident that Paul wanted Harmatia in 2 Cor 5:21 to be translated sin offering.

Roman's 5:6-11 Paul Preaches Christ's Death and Blood

*6 For while we were still weak, at the right time **Christ died for the ungodly**. 7 For one will scarcely **die** for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to **die**— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us**. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been **justified by his blood**, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were **reconciled to God by the death of his Son**, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be **saved by his life**. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have **now received reconciliation**.*

Paul's theology confirms the rest of the testimony of all of Scripture that Christ's **death** delivers us from past sins and reconciles us to God. Paul implicitly says that Christ **died** for the ungodly, Christ **died** for us, we are **justified by his blood**, and God **reconciled us by the death of his son**. Christ's blood also cleanses New Covenant believers from sin.

Our ongoing cleansing by Christ is articulated very well by John.

1 John 1:7-9 Light, Fellowship and Cleansing, The Work of the New Covenant

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the **blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.** If we say we have not sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess, our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Once reconciled, there are requirements for us to stay reconciled, just as **1 Jn 1:7-9** says above. Notice again, in the New Covenant, it is the blood of Christ that is still doing the cleansing from sin.

The teaching of Paul says that Christ's death on the cross reconciles the Gentiles to God and brings us into the covenants of promise by the blood of Jesus, just as Ephesians 2 says below.

Eph 2:12-13 Christ Brings Us into the Covenant of Abraham.

*Remember that you were at that time **separated** from Christ, **alienated** from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the **covenants** of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now **in Christ Jesus**, you who were once far off have been brought near by the **blood of Christ.***

It is **Christ's blood** that connects the Gentiles to the covenants, not Jesus becoming sin.

Col 2:13-15 Record of Sin Debt Cancelled

*And you, who were dead in your trespasses and uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having **forgiven** us all our trespasses, **by canceling the record of debt that stood against us** with its **legal demands**. This he set aside, **nailing it to the cross**. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to **open shame, by triumphing over them in him.***

A careful reading of the text clearly states several things. Notice that the text says we are forgiven because God, through Christ, cancelled the record that stood against us with its legal demands. The legal demands are the law of Moses. It says the record of debt (or guilt for offences) was nailed to the cross- the innocent dying for the guilty. Notice there is no emphasis on Jesus rising from the dead or going to the throne room with his shed blood. The point I am making is that the cross resulted in the death of Jesus; his death, together with his spilled blood, fulfilled the Old Covenant law. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins (**Heb 9:22**).

The New Covenant starts fifty days later on Pentecost with the giving of the Holy Spirit. But first, Jesus spends three days in the grave, then resurrects and goes into heaven, where he purifies the true Tabernacle (**Heb 9:23**) with his blood. The full explanation of the New Covenant is coming in a future article; for now, I emphasize that Jesus' death and blood, the innocent dying for the guilty, a sin offering, completes the Old Covenant.

Conclusion

I trust the overwhelming evidence as presented from Leviticus, Numbers, Isaiah, Hebrews, Romans, Ephesian, Colossians, 1 John, Matthew, and Mark have convinced you that Jesus was not sin, and if he was not sin, it is heresy, and slander to say he is.

We, collectively, as the church, have underestimated the Devil's ability to lie, deceive and slander. We constantly say he is a liar, but I am afraid it has become a cliché. Paul said in **2 Cor 2:11** in the context of unforgiveness, but the scripture applies beyond forgiveness, he says- *so that Satan would not outwit us: for we are not ignorant of his designs.*

The Devil has outwitted many, but not all, of the translators. As I said in the beginning, these translations that call Jesus' sin are not technically incorrect; they are theologically incorrect.

The Devil uses misinterpretation, misrepresentation, misconceptualization, misappropriation, and misidentification as his primary tactics to try to outwit the church.

This apologetic defence is my attempt to target his tactics and defeat his designs.

No one, including Jesus, can become Sin!

In conclusion, the Bible teaches that **2 Cor 5:21** should be translated as "sin offering," not sin. There can be no doubt how Paul wanted Harmatia translated. Sin contradicts his theology in all thirteen of his books.

Jesus took our guilt, cleansed us from our sins, and reconciled us to God through the death of his body of flesh and blood shed on the cross. He continues to cleanse us today by the blood he took into the tabernacle in heaven. He is our Great High Priest seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in Heaven, ready to forgive us.

Please share this truth with everyone.

Bibliography

The following Bibles were all referenced from Bible Hub Software, www.biblehub.com.

ESV- English Standard Version -Bible Hub Software
 NIV-New International Version, Bible Hub Software
 KJ-The Holy Bible: King James Version. Dallas, TX: Brown Books Publishing, 2004.
 CJB- Complete Jewish Bible, Bible Hub Software
 NLT- New Living Translation, Bible Hub Software

Brainy Quotes, https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/joseph_stalin_113988

REV- Revised English Version Bible Text and Commentary
<https://www.revisedenglishversion.com/srch>

Bible Letter Bible, Commentary, Matthew Henry, Chapter 5, Verses 16-21,
https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/2Cr/2Cr_005.cfm?a=1083021

Septuagint- Lev 4- <https://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/chapter.asp?book=3&page=4>

Hebrews- The Supremacy of Christ, The Way of Worship, Nov 2022, Bill Seney, Break Free Apologetics. <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/b75adebb-e07c-499f-b850-aca6b0c981ef/downloads/Hebrews%20The%20Supremacy%20of%20Christ.pdf?ver=1676732921901>

REV Bible Commentary 2 Cor 5:21 <https://www.revisedenglishversion.com/2-Corinthians/chapter5/21> Reference Sources Provided by REV Commentary on 2 Cor 5:21

Barclay Newman, *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. “ἁμαρτία.”

Merrill C. Tenney, *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*.

Cp. HALOT *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*; Brown, Driver, and Briggs *Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Holladay *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon; Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*.

F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, New Century Bible Commentary.

Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*.

BDAG, s.v. “ἁμαρτία.”

Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “ἁμαρτία.”