

ATONEMENT

GOD Demonstrates His Love Anew



GARY HARGRAVE



God Did Everything—We Did Nothing

When you read the description of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, in Leviticus 16, you realize that the people did not do much. They simply stood and watched the high priest perform the sacrifices, take the blood into the Holy of Holies, return and lay his hands on the goat of removal, and then send it into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:1–28). It was not a time for the people to do anything except stand and be in awe of what God was doing for them because it was 100 percent His provision. It was 100 percent His energy that He was exerting to accomplish atonement for them.

Another passage of Scripture in the book of Romans conveys this same idea.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Romans 5:8–10)

There is nothing we did for our atonement. God did it all by Himself. The sacrifice of the Son of God that brought about salvation, as represented by the blood of the lamb that was taken into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, was done while we were sinning against God. It was done while we were His enemies. As we read in this passage, God is demonstrating His love toward us. He is saying, “I love you so much that I am driven to save you. I don’t care if you are My enemy. I don’t care if you do not want Me. I want you enough to overcome your lack of wanting Me. I love you enough to overcome your lack of loving Me.”

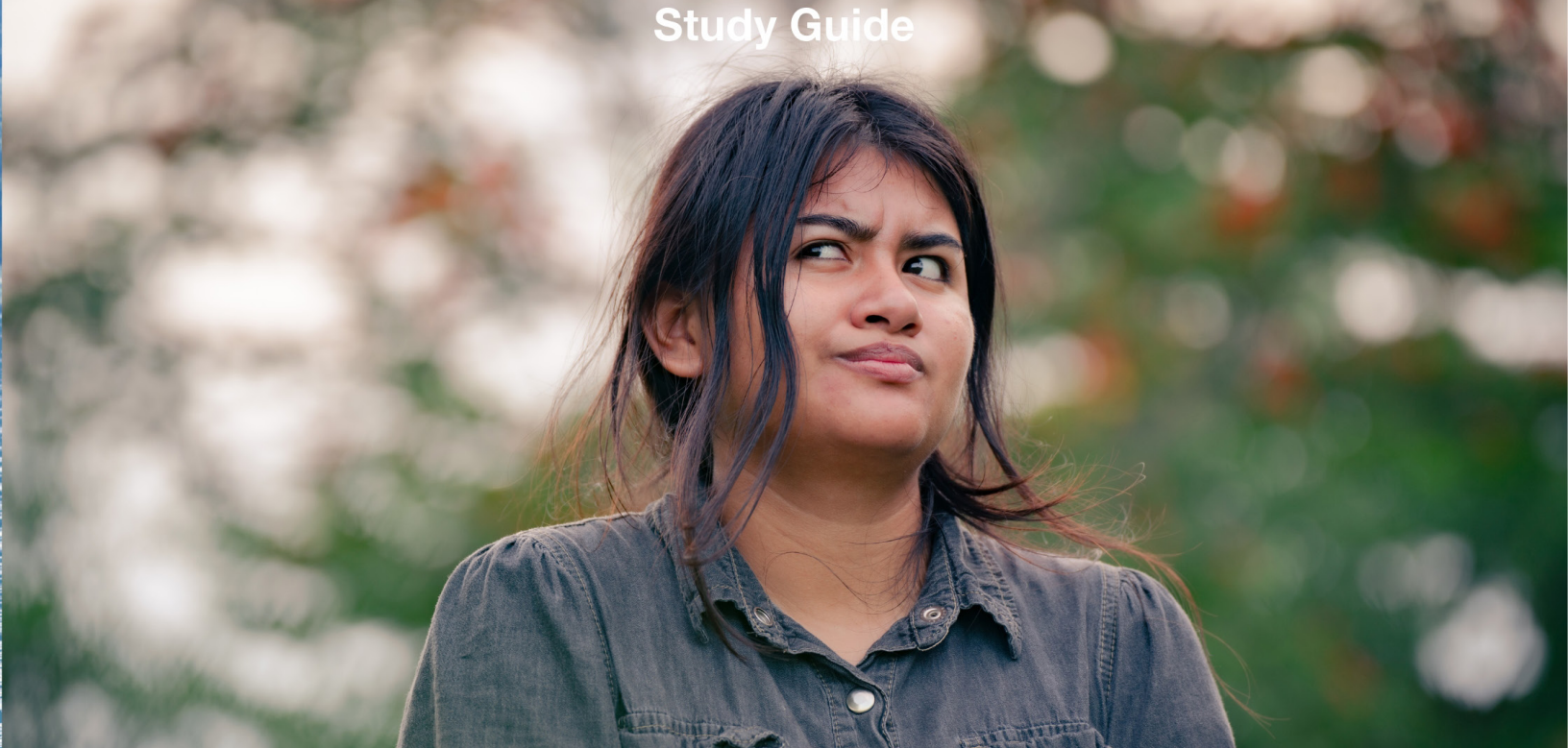
The Power of God's Love Toward Us

This love God has for us is not weak. It is not a little thing. It is the expression of His unlimited power. We are awed by the power of nature. But the force of all the hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes combined is a mere fraction of the force, the power, the energy, and the authority that God executed all by Himself when He sent His Son into this world and made atonement for us.

In Ephesians Paul urges us to be aware of this power.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. (Ephesians 1:18–21)

The resurrection of Yeshua (Jesus) was the release of more unbridled force, energy, and power than anything else that has ever happened in the world. The incomparable power of God reached down into the tomb and not only raised Yeshua from the dead but lifted Him all the way up to His right hand “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named.” And this amazing force of the Father is the same force that is focused on us as believers. This is the force of God’s love for us. Yet how many Christians have a concept about God that He does not really love them?



Perceptions of Immaturity

It is natural for us to develop wrong concepts. And as humans we tend to develop our concepts by our experiences. Paul wrote, “When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child” (1 Corinthians 13:11). While we are children it is difficult to understand what is happening in the adult world. Yet we still find ourselves forming attitudes and concepts about adults and the world around us. And because those attitudes and concepts are from a place of immaturity, we can misinterpret what we are seeing or experiencing.

Children have a difficult time understanding why their parents discipline them because they are looking through that lens of immaturity. A child might imagine, “My mom and dad don’t really like me. All they’re trying to do is hurt me. All they’re trying to do is put me down.” This can become a dilemma for parents. As a parent you know your children need discipline. Yet no matter how many times you tell them you love them or try to convince them that it is for their own good, the discipline seems to generate a negative reaction from them. It can even reach the point where you cannot talk to your child. As a loving father or mother in that situation, you would certainly want to change your children’s perception of you.

In the same way, God as a loving Father knows we need discipline. We read in the book of Hebrews,

DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES.
(Hebrews 12:5–6)

In our immaturity in Christ, however, we can relate to God’s discipline as a child would. We can see God through childish vision and interpret Him through childish understanding. In all the spiritual warfare and circumstances we go through, we can perceive God in a way that makes us not completely trust His love for us. I think this perception affects us more than we realize.



Our Wrong Perceptions of God

We can have a feeling that the Lord is not really out for our benefit, that He is not doing good toward us, or that He is not going to fulfill His Word. This mistrust goes back to the beginning when satan said to Eve, “God does not want you to eat that fruit because when you do, you will be like Him. And God doesn’t want you to be like Him” (see Genesis 3:4–5). We have been at odds with the Lord ever since. Something in the back of your mind, like satan whispering in your ear, is saying, “You have to be suspicious of what God tells you because He is hiding His true motivation. He wants to keep the blessing from you.” As Christians we can struggle with this attitude. Even though we believe in God, we still can feel, “I had better take care of myself because I’m not sure He will take care of me. I had better do it myself because it seems like He’s not going to come through for me.”

We can read the promises in the Word and say we believe them, but in the back of our minds we may still be thinking, “Well, that won’t happen.” Or we may think, “The opposite is going to happen first,” or “I’ve believed that for a long time.” There is something about our very approach to God that is affecting everything before we even start applying the Word. This attitude is demonic. And it is very subtle in the way that it works itself into our hearts and minds. It builds up a false image of who and what God is.

Just look at how much Christianity is focused on the idea of God’s judgment of the world. Is it true that God will come and judge the world for its sins? Of course, that is a possibility because He cannot countenance sin. But atonement means that He has already done something about it. Christ’s sacrifice that happened for us also applies to people in this world, many of whom are still His enemies just as we were. But they can have the same experience of salvation that we had. Do you think God would bring His Son into the world, have Him die on a cross and

open the door to salvation for everyone, and then passively stand by while the greater part of humanity goes to hell? Why would God go to so much trouble and expend so much energy to provide for us this great salvation and then back out of the picture and start doing bad things to us? Even logically that does not make sense.

Study Guide



God Wants to Change Our Wrong Image of Him

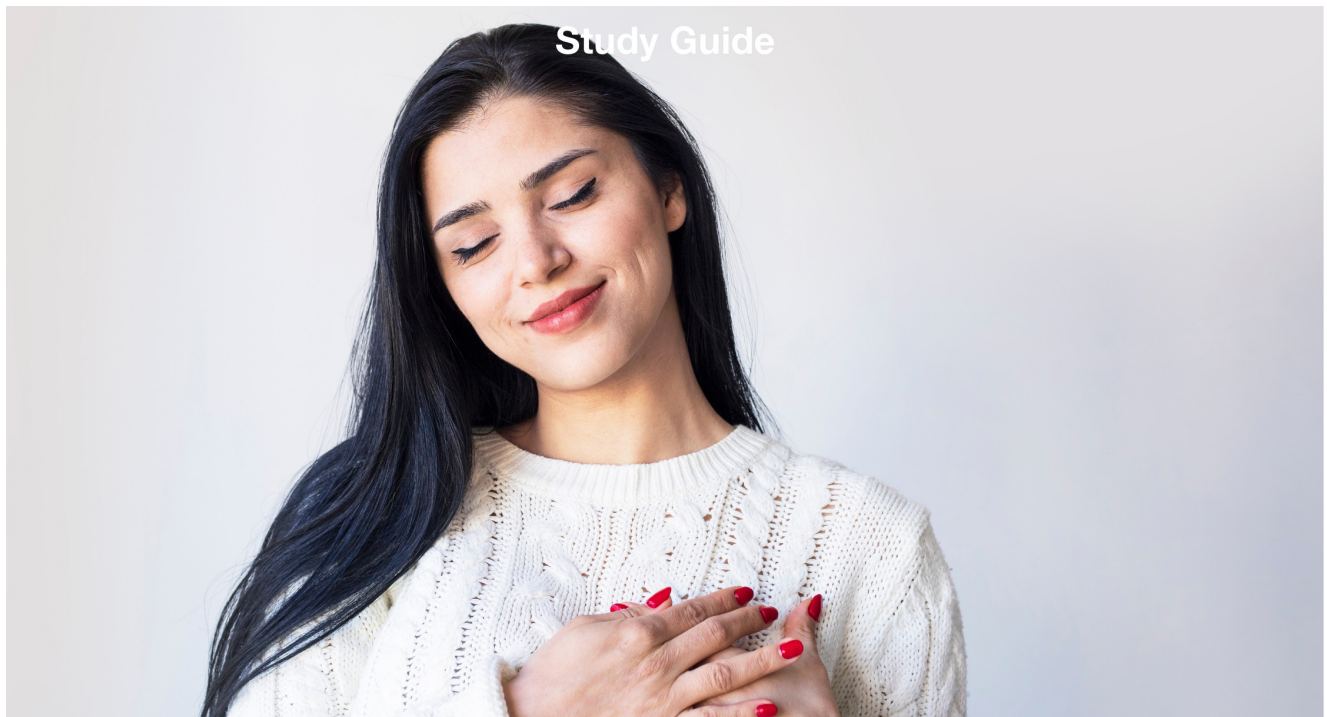
If the surpassing greatness of God's power is directed toward us who believe, why would we have a negative image of God? Somehow, we have to be able to stand, like they did on Yom Kippur, and be overwhelmed by what the Father has done through Christ in turning loose the greatest forces that have ever come into play—even from the creation of the universe—for our salvation. And salvation is for our good, as we read in Romans: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

This does not mean that everything that happens to you has been or will be easy. There is no question that there is evil in the world. There is the satanic kingdom that is a force against what God is trying to do. There are hostile people who will try to do bad things to you. But God causes everything that happens to you to work together for good. Even if something goes wrong, the power and force of who and what God is, which is beamed at you, will turn that around for your good. This is powerfully expressed in Romans 8.

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say

to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (Romans 8:29–35)

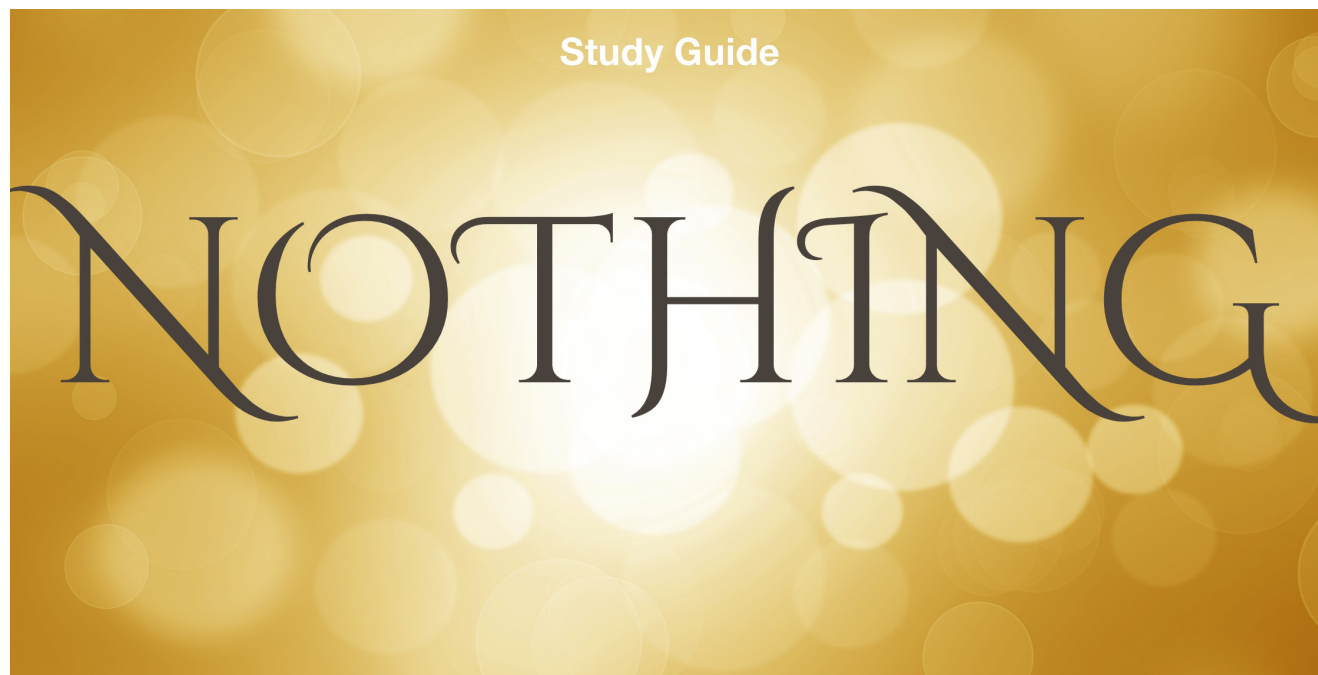
God is speaking to us in these verses, saying, “The perceptions you have of Me are not true. You do not see Me as I really am.” He wants to remove that false image we built of Him based on our lack of understanding and replace it with a new image of Himself based on the true understanding of who and what He is. Sit down with this passage from Romans 8 and exercise your imagination. Form an image of God based on these things: He predestined you. Then He called you. Then He justified you, meaning He removed all your iniquity, your failure, and your shortcoming. Then after all that He glorified you.



Accept Who God Really Is

We read, “If God is for us, who is against us?” (Romans 8:31). What can we say to that? How can we refute it? How can we stop it? If God with all His power, might, and energy brought Christ up from the dead and seated Him at His right hand, and that same energy is focused on me, should I disagree with God about that? No. I should believe it. I should accept it. I should receive it. We should realize that God, in His unbridled giving to us as His children, can give us all that He has. And we should never forget that it is from Him. We should never forget the pit from which we were dug and that we do not deserve what God did for us while we were still His enemies.

It is His intent and purpose to freely give us everything that we need. So why would we still feel that God is taking away from us rather than giving to us. Where does that come from? What experience have I had or what have I gone through to make me think, “God is not trying to give me blessings; He’s taking them away from me, and He’s pulling my blessings out of my back pocket”? No, He is not! Somehow, we are still believing the picture that the serpent painted for Eve: “Hey, you had better watch it. God is not out for your good. He does not want you to be like Him.” That is not true. The very drive of God is that we be conformed to the image of His Son. The enemy has twisted our image of God to make Him look the very opposite of the way He is. What a lie out of the heart of satan! We need to recognize it as a lie and cast it off.



Nothing Can Separate Us From God

We read, “Who will separate us from the love of Christ?” (Romans 8:35). Does anything we go through separate us from His love? We face the fact that there really is tribulation. There is distress. There is persecution. We could experience famine, nakedness, peril, or sword. There are many negative things that can happen to us, but God is great enough to overwhelm all those things. We are too willing to embrace a negative perception of God because of our experiences, rather than allowing Him to be greater than those experiences and knowing that He will give us everything we need. Determine to stop being separated from God. Determine to have a God who is so big that when something bad happens, He is right there with you.

Romans 8 continues to drive this point home.

Just as it is written,

“For Your sake we are being put to death all day long;

We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:36–39)

What can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ? Nothing! “Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing” is able. This list shows how totally His love overcomes any obstacle we could imagine. And at the beginning of this list there is a statement: “I am convinced!” I want to live my Christian life convinced that in Christ nothing separates me from God. There is not even a tiny bit of separation between me and what He is in all His power and determination to bring me into everything He has provided. I want to remove any separation that I may have developed in my own mind. I want to walk through the day seeing Him. I never want anything to separate me from that vision, that understanding, and that clarity of who He is. Our experience on this great Day of Atonement is that we will be convinced that God’s love and the power of His love are inseparable from us. Today our false image of God disappears, and we see Him as He really is.

Please let us know how you are using our Study Guides. We would love to hear from you.
Contact us by sending an email to **silvana@hargraveministries.org**

All Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible 1995 (NASB1995).

ABOUT GARY HARGRAVE



GARY HARGRAVE has a passion for leading people into spiritual maturity. Gary effectively ministers the life-changing truth of God's Word through Bible teaching and prophetic revelation that emphasizes the Lordship of Christ.

Gary embraces the teachings and insights of the Hebrew Scriptures as the essential foundation of God's Kingdom and the roots of Christian faith.

By cultivating spiritual maturity in Christians, Gary is deeply committed to teaching and inspiring unity in the Body of Christ and between Christians and the Jewish people.

Throughout decades of ministry, Gary has worked closely with leaders in the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant communities to build relationships based on commonality and understanding. He frequently leads study tours to Israel in the land of the Bible.

Gary is the host of a weekly podcast entitled *Growing In God* and is the founder of Shiloh University, an accredited online Bible college and seminary.

Gary and his family reside in Hawaii.

For other insightful resources by Gary Hargrave, including podcasts, books, articles, videos, and other educational materials, please visit: www.HargraveMinistries.org.

ABOUT HARGRAVE MINISTRIES

The calling of the Lord upon this ministry is to lead people into spiritual maturity by revealing biblical truth. **Our passion is to see the Kingdom of God manifest on earth** as the Body of Christ grows in unity, power, and love.

Everything we do flows from the revelation of the Jewish foundations of our Christian faith. It is our desire and privilege to bless the land and people of Israel. Our Israel outreach includes our ability to:

- **Feed the poor and break the cycle of poverty in Israel.**
- **Support the orphans and widows of fallen Israeli soldiers.**
- Provide physical and emotional care to **child victims of terrorism.**
- **Build bridges between Christians and Jews with biblical study and research.**
- Support archaeology and preservation of the **biblical City of David.**
- Provide 24/7 **care for Holocaust survivors.**
- **Help persecuted Jews around the world return to Israel and start new lives.**
- Plant trees to **reforest Israel** and help create **"The Gospel Trail"** between Nazareth and Capernaum.

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