



“WHY DID GOD KILL A MAN FOR PICKING UP STICKS?”

*“And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found **a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day**. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and **stoned him with stones, and he died**; as the **LORD commanded Moses**.” ([Numbers 15:32,36](#))*

That’s a bit rough isn’t it?

No. It was against God’s law ... and the penalty was death. God told them not to do any work on the Sabbath ... and picking up sticks was work.

But that makes God a control freak, a tyrant without mercy, doesn’t it?

No, God is pure, holy and sinless and demands that from everyone. God has the right to do that. God demands 100% absolute sinless perfection from everyone. The man was breaking the law. He was a sinner and worthy of death.

But the laws today aren’t like that?

Correct ... but that’s the difference between man’s laws and God’s laws. You can go before a judge today for speeding and he’ll let you off with a fine ... but you won’t go to the gas chamber.

So does God’s law still operate today? Is breaking the speeding laws worthy of death?

Yes, the Bible says we are all sinners ([Romans 3:23](#)), and furthermore, if we commit one sin, we have committed every sin in God’s eyes ... as the scripture says

*“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and **yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all**.” ([James 2:10](#))*

The man picking up sticks, and he knew it ([James 4:17](#)), and was guilty of all the worst offences against God’s law – murder, rape, stealing, lying and so on ... and so it is today ... one speeding fine and we have just proven we are murderers, rapists, thieves in God’s eyes.

So why doesn’t God instantly kill us? We should all be dead?

Correct. It’s called **grace** ... the longsuffering, mercy and tenderness of God.

So what’s going on then?

The real penalty for speeding, death, has been paid for ... and it’s not a money fine (Galatians 3:24). God saw what pathetic and helpless sinners we all are and came down to

earth and obeyed and **fulfilled his own laws on his behalf** ... and then he went back into heaven (1 Timothy 3:16).

All our sins past, present and future have been paid for ... your sin debt has been cleared ... if you are still trying to atone for past sins, you are wasting your time. If you are still trying to work your way into heaven ... you're spinning your wheels. There's no need. It's already been done. You just have to believe on the man, God himself in the flesh, who did it on your behalf. That is ... be **fully persuaded** ([Romans 4:21](#)). Because God, Jesus Christ, paid your sin debt you can ask him **to save you**. "Jesus please save me ... you died for my sins!"

But that seems too simple!

Yes ... it is ... isn't it!

But back to the 'pick-up sticks' man. He knew he was breaking the law. It seemed but a small offence but he was breaking the law and he knew it ... profaning the sabbath was a capital crime ([Exodus 31:14](#)) and gathering sticks to make a fire to cook food went against what they had occasion for the day before ([Exodus 31:15](#)).

But that's not a God of love!

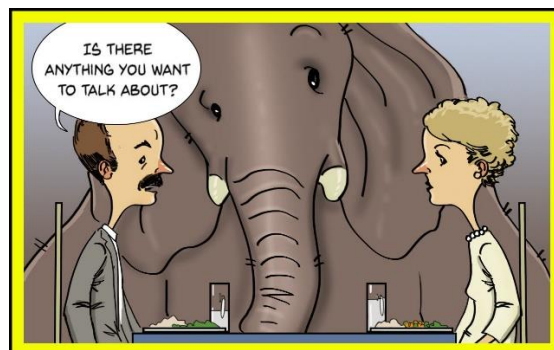
My dear fellow, **God is total love and total wrath** ... at the same time. What is sin today? For a start it's breaking your own standards ([James 2:10](#)) ... that's even apart from God's standards. **Your decision? You're a sinner and going to hell ... but your fine, your sin debt, for past and future sins, has been paid for. Ask Jesus to save you ([Acts 16:31](#)).**

Will you ask him?

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