



LADS IN THE ALLEYWAY

Protection: We had a nicely kept alleyway running along the backs of our row of terraced houses through which no cars could pass. At each end of the alleyway there was a pavement and a quiet cul-de-sac. Our lads were allowed to ride in the alleyway on their little tricycles, but I set a limit as to how far they could go and they were told that they could not go onto the pavement. This meant that they were well away from the road.

Punishment: One day one of the boys came running in and said that his brother had gone onto the pavement. Knowing what a little tinker he was I guessed that he would have been laughing and showing off and had probably just put one foot onto the pavement so I pretended to be busy and not hear. I knew that it would only be a matter of minutes before he became a little braver and sure enough, about ten minutes later, his brother ran in and was most upset. He said that his brother was walking up and down on the pavement and he did not want him to go on the road and get run over by a car. Obviously, time for action!



Penitence: I thought that whilst he was limited to the back yard for an hour he would ride up and down the yard, but no, he stood at the gate for the whole of the hour watching the other two play freely in the alleyway. Was he sorry? I would say so as I could have cried as I saw his sad little face as he stood at the gate, but I knew that I had to stand firm as the next stage would see him pedalling down the middle of the road pretending that he was driving a car!

Prevention: Did the punishment act as a prevention? Yes definitely. It also acted as a warning to the other two not to repeat the same performance.

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LAWS AND SACRIFICES

Protection: When the Israelites were about to be released from slavery in Egypt, God was going to send a tenth and final plague when the first-born of each family would die. The Israelites were told to kill a lamb and sprinkle some of the blood on the lintel and doorposts of their houses and the angel of death would pass over their houses and they would be saved from certain death. They were to keep the Passover each year afterwards as a reminder of God's protection. God then laid down lots of rules and laws for the people to keep. The rules were all for their protection. For their spiritual protection God told them to worship Him only and not to go worshipping other gods and idols – often that involved promiscuity. Other laws involved things such as murder and theft so God was trying to protect the people and their possessions. He said that He would be their God and protect them as long as they obeyed the rules.



Punishment: Human nature being what it is, sadly the people did not always keep to the rules laid down. As a punishment they were to make various sacrifices. One such sacrifice was to offer a lamb. Now this would obviously be a financial loss to them so they may have been tempted to offer a scaggy lamb that maybe had not long to live, but they were not allowed to do that. The lamb had to be the very best with no mark or blemish, so the financial loss would be considerable regardless of whether it was from their own flock or purchased on the day of the sacrifice.



Penitence: Were the people sorry when they offered their sacrifices? The sacrifice was not just about punishment. The main aim of the sacrifice was for people to be penitent so that

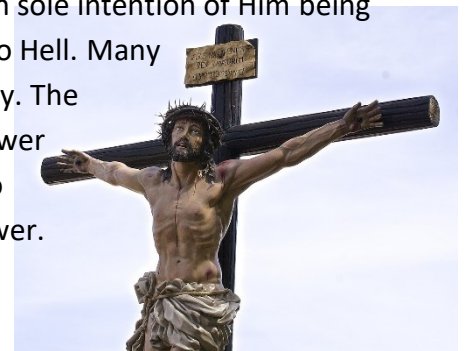
God would forgive their wrongdoing and the relationship between them would be restored.

Prevention: This did not stop the breaking of the rules. There would always be some fault or other on the part of everyone so the sacrifices had to keep on being repeated.

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A CHANGE TO THE SYSTEM

Protection: After about 2,000 years God changed the system. The old system of offering sacrifices was replaced in an astonishing way. God sent His Son, Jesus, to the earth with sole intention of Him being the sacrifice. At the death of Jesus people were to be saved from going to Hell. Many of the laws still stand, some of which form part of our penal system today. The courts can enforce fines and imprisonment, but they do not have the power to forgive and restore relationships between people and God, neither do they have any power at all over Heaven and Hell – only God has that power.



Punishment: At His death Jesus became the sacrifice; a once and for all sacrifice that does not have to be repeated. He allowed Himself to be punished on our behalf by being totally spiritually cut off from God the Father. He became the 'Passover Lamb'. He was the perfect sacrifice; the 'Lamb of God.' His sacrifice was for all people of all nations.

Penitence: Forgiveness and a restoration of a relationship with God for each one of us was the aim of the death of Jesus. His death gives the opening for an eternity in Heaven with a holy God. This is not an automatic result but is based on our penitence and desire to accept what is freely offered to us.

Prevention: Does the death of Jesus prevent all crime? Sadly, certainly not as God still leaves each one of us with a free will as to how we behave. Total forgiveness from God in His amazing love is shown to each one of us by the change that He made to the system when Jesus became the 'Passover Lamb.'

'Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.' (John 1: 29)