

THE
CROSS

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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THE CROSS

CALVARY

Background Reading: Matthew 27:27-54; Luke 23:32-47

MARK 15:25 *And it was the third hour (9 a.m.) and they crucified Him.*

MARK 15:37 *And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the spirit.*

MARK 15:38 *And the veil of the Temple (that hid the Holy of Holies) was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*

MARK 15:39 *And when the centurion, who stood over against Him (beside Christ), saw that He so cried out, and gave up the spirit, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God."*

We find the shed Blood of Christ at the Cross, for the Cross is where the price was paid. The legal union of a Believer and Jesus can only come through the Cross.

This union, however, should progress beyond mere legality, and enter into a union based on relationship which is experienced in an ongoing way on a day-to-day basis. After salvation should come the daily experience of the Blood-bought relationship, where God and man commune together, and man comes to know his Saviour in a personal way. This takes place through holy interaction, following repentance and a commitment to the union in which the Lord is the acknowledged Head.

Jesus went through suffering in order to be tested, so that the worth of the sacrifice would be proven. Perfect justice would only be satisfied when Jesus, on behalf of man, was made ready to become the sacrifice, then to die on a rugged cross.

“ . . . Perfect justice would only be satisfied when Jesus, on behalf of man, was made ready (through testing) to become the sacrifice, then to die on a rugged cross. . . ”

Every person who wants to go to heaven must accept the Saviour, born of a virgin, and make Him Lord. Each must come to the altar of Calvary to confess their sin and acknowledge that they are a sinner needing the Blood of the Cross, Jesus' Blood, to wash them clean by the grace of God.

REVELATION 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, Who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince (Ruler) of the kings of the earth. Unto Him Who loved us, and washed (has freed) us from our sins by His blood.

In Charles Spurgeon's commentary, his explanation of Leviticus Ch.16 contains type-patterns of Christ on the cross.

As Spurgeon wrote, *“Before Adam transgressed he lived in communion with God; but after he had broken the covenant, and grieved God's Spirit, he could have no more familiar fellowship with God. Under the Mosaic dispensation, in which God was pleased in His grace to dwell among His people and walk with them in the wilderness, it was still under a reserve: there was a holy place wherein the symbol of God's presence was hidden away from mortal gaze. No man might come near to it except in one only way, and then only once in the year; “The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing” (Hebrews 9:8). This chapter shows that the way of access to God is by atonement, and by no other method. We cannot draw near unto the Most High except along the blood-sprinkled way of sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus said: “No man cometh unto the Father; but by Me;” (John 14:6), and this is true in many senses, and in this among them, that our way to God lies only through the sacrifice of His Son.*

The reason for this is that sin lieth at the door. Brethren, a pure and holy God cannot endure sin: He cannot have fellowship with it, or with those who are rendered unclean by it, for it would be inconsistent with His nature so to do. On the other hand, sinful men cannot have fellowship with God: their evil nature could not endure the fire of His holiness. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? What is that devouring fire, and what are those everlasting burnings, but the justice and holiness of God? The apostle saith, “Even our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29). A guilty soul would perish if it were possible for it to draw near to God apart from the Mediator and His atonement. The Fire of God’s nature must consume the stubble of our nature so long as there is sin in us or about us. Hence the difficulty of access, a difficulty which only a divine method can remove. God cannot commune with sinful men, for He is holy. Sinful men cannot commune with a holy God, because He must destroy them, even as He destroyed Nadab and Abihu when they intruded into His holy place. The terrible judgement is mentioned in the opening verses of the chapter before us (Leviticus 16) as the reason why the ordinances herein contained were first of all made.

“. . . We cannot draw near unto the Most High except along the blood-sprinkled way of sacrifice. A pure and holy God cannot endure sin: He cannot have fellowship with it, or with those who are rendered unclean by it. . . ”

How, then, shall men come to God? Only in God’s own way. He Himself devised the way, and He has taught it to us by a parable in this chapter. It would be very wrong to prefer any one passage of Scripture beyond another, for all Scripture is given by inspiration; but if we might do so, we should set this chapter in a very eminent and prominent place for its fullness of instruction, and its clear yet deep doctrinal teaching. It treats upon a matter which is of the very highest importance to all of us. We are here taught the way by which

the sin that blocks the door may be taken away, so that a seeking soul may be introduced into the presence of God and stand in His holy place and yet live. Here we learn how we may say, with the astonished prophet, "I have seen God, and my life is preserved." Oh, that we might today so learn the lesson that we may enter into the fullest fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, in that safe way, that only way, which God has appointed for us! Oh, for the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that we may know and use "the new and living way"! (Hebrews 10:20)"¹

(references and underlines added)

Indeed "*the new and living way*" provided for us, the only way for us to have fellowship with God, is through the Blood of Jesus Christ.

Calvary brings us to the crossroads of choice. One way leads to life with God through Jesus Christ. Any other way leads to death through rejection of truth found only in the Saviour. We are born separated from God, on the wrong road. If we do not choose Christ, we remain dead to God on the road of death, the road which leads ultimately to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15). He who does not find the crossroads of choice, and so does not hear and accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will stay separated from the love of God forever, tormented firstly in a place called hell, then later in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14). Indeed the road to heaven goes through Calvary, and there is no alternate route.

“JESUS DIED SPIRITUALLY” DOCTRINE

Background Reading: Psalm 22:1-19

There is a doctrine which teaches not only that Jesus died spiritually at the crucifixion, but that He became impregnated with Satan’s nature in His spirit at this time. Let us examine this particular doctrine, looking at it in terms of the argument against it, and the way the issues which are raised by this argument can be addressed and clarified.

Firstly, it can be ascertained that the **“Jesus died spiritually” doctrine** denigrates the Cross of Christ by placing the Cross in a subservient or lesser position. When it does this, there are

repercussions in terms of the sinner who needs salvation, the sinner who needs to be pointed to the Cross. Those who believe this doctrine to be true, teach that Jesus died spiritually on the cross and became a sinner in order to bear the sin of mankind. In other words, He yielded Himself to Satan and took on his evil nature, thus becoming one with the enemy of mankind at this time. They validate this view by quoting Jesus' cry on the cross:

MATTHEW 27:46 And about the ninth hour (3 p.m.) Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is to say, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (The question as to why God had forsaken Him was not asked in a sense of not knowing, but in a sense of acknowledging the act. God didn't deliver Him, even as He always had, because, to have done such, would have forfeited Redemption for mankind. Incidentally, Jesus spoke in Aramic, which was commonly used by the Lord.) (E.S.B.)

This cry of anguish had been prophesied hundreds of years before:

PSALM 22:1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?

They then say because Jesus' spirit had become totally impregnated with the sin nature, He descended into hell and had to be born again before He was resurrected. Thus, as an unregenerate sinner, Christ needed to be born again in hell! This means that the Church had its actual beginning in hell, with Christ, in this place, becoming "*the firstborn of many brethren*" (Romans 8:29). All this, they say, was done because He had to identify fully with man.

“ . . . They then say because Jesus’ spirit had become totally impregnated with the sin nature, He descended into hell and had to be born again before He was resurrected. . . ”

What perhaps is the greatest difficulty with this particular view or a similar view of the substitutionary death of Christ is that it seems to relegate Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, His death in which His precious Blood was shed, as being of less significance than His born again experience in hell! In other words, the natural theological repercussions extending from this particular belief will place mankind’s redemption in hell, not on the Cross. This becomes a major problem in the light of the absolute centrality of the Cross in all of human history as the pivotal point around which God’s Plan of Redemption was sealed. It also raises issues regarding the efficacy of Jesus’ Blood to cleanse from sin if Jesus became an unholy sacrifice on the Cross - for only an innocent animal, “*without blemish*” (Leviticus 4:2-35), could be used for the sin offering. In fact the Old Testament clearly teaches that at no point does the sin offering become an unholy sacrifice, either before or after its death. And so it was with Jesus Who became our substitutionary sacrifice. It will become evident to those who make a proper study of Calvary just how foolish this particular doctrine is, and how far it deviates from the true foundation of scripture.

“ . . . What perhaps is the greatest difficulty with this view of the substitutionary death of Christ is that it seems to relegate Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, as being of less significance than His born again experience in hell. . . ”

Another major scripture which is used to support the “Jesus died spiritually” doctrine is 2 Corinthians 5:21:

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 For He (God the Father) has made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Proponents of this doctrine have read the above verse (2 Corinthians 5:21) and concluded that the words “*He has made Him to be sin for us*” mean that Christ became an actual sinner at the Cross through bearing our sin which was reckoned as His own. This is a totally wrong interpretation, for He bore our punishment, not our sin. The Greek word for “*sin*” in this verse can also be translated “sin offering” or a “sacrifice for sin.” It is to be understood that the translators used the wrong word here, and that this mistranslation has given much ground for error to be widely proclaimed in regard to this issue. Another way we could say it is: “*He Who did not know sin in an experiential way, on behalf of us and instead of us, was made (the representative of) sin, in order that, as for us, we might become righteousness in Him.*” ²

(underlines and bracketed phrase added)

Speaking of the “Jesus died spiritually” doctrine, one writer comments:

“In brief, this particular doctrine teaches that Jesus became a sinner on the Cross, the same as any other sinner, died and went to Hell (the burning side), and was Born-Again in Hell, thereby being the “Firstborn of many brethren.”

This teaching is wholly fiction and contains no Scriptural substance whatsoever.

First of all, as stated, Jesus bore the sin penalty in our place, but did not become an actual sinner. While the penalty for transgression can be transferred to another, it is impossible to transfer the transgression itself to another. Besides, the Scripture plainly says, on which we are here commenting, “Who knew no sin.” How much plainer could it be? . . .

Also, that He was Born-Again in Hell, is pure fiction as well. In the first place, anyone “who knew no sin,” doesn’t need to be Born-Again.

And finally, “The Firstborn among many brethren,” does not refer to being Born-Again as a sinner, but is intended to suggest

*Jesus' supreme rank and the uniqueness of His special relationship with the Father. In the case of Jesus, it is referring to the Incarnation. As such, He is the Firstborn in the new creation by being raised first from the dead, and is thus Lord over the Church (Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5). He is thus the Firstborn in a whole family of Children of God who are destined to bear His Image (Romans 8:29)."*³

(underlines added)

So we can see that from the misunderstanding of one or two scriptures has sprung a huge doctrinal deviation from the harmony of scripture itself, and a complete invalidation of Jesus' sinless state, before, during and after the Cross. In fact the result of this doctrine is that the ultimate focus on the Cross for the Christian is distorted, the efficacy of the Cross is denied and Christ's finished work here is largely discounted. Because of these repercussions, the doctrine must be regarded as a very serious error and a real blight on the Body of Christ.

“. . .The result of this doctrine is that the ultimate focus on the Cross for the Christian is distorted, the efficacy of the Cross is denied and Christ's finished work here is largely discounted. . .”

REDEMPTION THROUGH IMPUTATION

Background Reading: Romans Chapter 4

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 For He has made Him to be sin (a sin offering) for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

We know that Jesus' Blood was sinless, and He was “*without blemish and without spot*” (1 Pete 1:19) and so a perfect offering. As we have indicated, the statement in the above verse (2 Corinthians 5:21) “*He has made Him to be sin for us*” means that Christ bore our

punishment, not our sin. The Greek word for “sin” in this verse can also be translated as “sin offering” or a “sacrifice for sin.”

One writer comments further in regard to this issue:

“The phrase, “Who knew so sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21), refers to the fact and graphically so, that He was not guilty. He was perfectly pure. This idea is thus expressed by Peter when he wrote, “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth” (1 Peter 2:22). As well, Hebrews 7:26 says, “He was ‘holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners’.” In all respects, in every way, and in all conceivable senses, the Lord Jesus was pure and holy. If He had not been, He would not have been qualified to make an Atonement. Hence, the Sacred writers are everywhere at great pains to keep this idea prominent, for on this depends the whole superstructure of the Plan of Salvation.

The phrase, “knew no sin,” is an expression of great beauty and dignity. It indicates His entire and perfect purity. He was altogether unacquainted with sin; He was a stranger to transgressions; He was conscious of no sin, He committed none. He had a mind and heart perfectly free from pollution, and His entire life was perfectly pure and holy in the Sight of God.”⁴

(underlines added)

Scripture thus attests to the fact of Christ’s sinlessness. He became eligible, through His sinlessness and His worth as the acceptable sacrifice, to become the Lamb of God, Who would pay the penalty for the sins of the whole of mankind (John 1:29). Through identification and substitution, Christ took our place, before a just and loving God, at Calvary, the altar of sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus did not redeem us by His Deity, but through the Incarnation of God becoming man. As the sin offering, Christ bore the weight of the wrath of God’s judgement upon mankind’s sin, and it was the shedding of His precious Blood which paid the price for our redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19). This was Christ’s work upon the Cross, and this is what He accomplished - the payment of the ransom price. Now the sinner need only look to the Cross for the message of salvation, finding their answer to the greatest of life’s questions in the substitutionary death of Christ on their behalf, and the shedding of His precious Blood (Romans 5:8; Colossians 1:14). This is the basis of the Gospel message, and will always be the foundation stone

of the Christian faith. There is no other means of redemption, for the price was paid at Calvary when the sinless Blood of Christ our Passover Lamb was shed for the sin of the whole world (1 Corinthians 5:7).

“ . . .Through identification and substitution, Christ took our place, before a just and loving God, at Calvary, the altar of sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus did not redeem us by His Deity, but through the Incarnation of God becoming man. . .”

Jesus became the substitute in our place by identifying with us. As a result, He, though sinless, had to be treated as though He were sin. Without this substitution, Christ taking our place, and we identifying with Him, there could be no salvation. Christ identified with mankind’s sin regarding its penalty, and man identifies with Christ’s righteousness through faith.

It has been said that “our sins were the judicial ground of the sufferings of Christ, so that those sufferings were a satisfaction of justice; and His righteousness is the judicial ground of our acceptance with God, so that our pardon is an act of justice. This is a justification, or a declaration that justice is satisfied.”⁵

(underlines added)

Greek scholar Dr Bernard Rossier also writes in regard to this important verse in Corinthians:

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 For He has made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

“The monumental privilege and responsibility of being ambassadors rests on our shoulders precisely because God “made” (epoiesen) him “sin” (hamartian) “for us” (huper hemon). People

have all kinds of ideas about what this concise but cogent statement means. In order to understand it scripturally, we must **first** look at the qualifier that begins the sentence and therefore occupies the position of most emphasis.

“The one not knowing sin” (ton me gnonta hamartion) begins the verse in the original Greek and it governs the remainder of the verse. Christ was completely conscious of His own absolute sinlessness (John 8:46). He had no personal acquaintance with sin. This applies to the fact that He was born without a sinful nature (Matthew 1:18), and to the fact that He never committed one single act of sin (Hebrews 4:15). He came as “the last Adam” (I Corinthians 15:45), and Adam was not created with a sinful nature; therefore, Christ came on the same basis that Adam did. The difference lies in the indubitable fact that Adam sinned by disobeying God, but Jesus never disobeyed God in any way whatsoever. Hence, the statement **“He made him to be sin”** must refer to the imputation of our sins to the sinless sacrifice. The one who knew no sin was treated as sin for us.

“. . . Our sins were the judicial ground of the sufferings of Christ, so that those sufferings were a satisfaction of justice; and His righteousness is the judicial ground of our acceptance with God, so that our pardon is an act of justice. . .”

In another contrast, Paul said that Christ became a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). He vicariously suffered the consequences of our sin (Isaiah 53). This extends even to the ultimate separation of a soul from the presence of God (Mark 15:34). God had to forsake Him in order for the supreme price to be paid. Without that payment, all of us would face eternal separation from God in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15).

Because Christ’s sacrifice was an infinite one, there is no way we can possibly fathom all that He suffered by having our sins

*imputed to Him. He did all this, though, “in order that we might become [the] righteousness of God in him” (hina hemeis gend-metha diakaiousune theou en auto). In other words, our sins were imputed to Him so His righteousness would be imputed to us. Thank God for His grace!”*⁶

(underlines added)

In relation to the imputation of our sins to Christ, let us also examine the use of what was termed the “scapegoat” in Old Testament ceremonial practice. Jesus became our “scapegoat,” for the physical type-pattern was borne out in Him in a spiritual sense at Calvary.

The word “scapegoat” comes from the scriptures (Leviticus 16:7-10; 20-22), where we are told of two goats which were to be used on behalf of the people and their sin on the Day of Atonement. The two goats combined constituted one sin offering. For this reason they were to be presented to the Lord together, as one offering, at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.

One goat was to be sacrificed “for the Lord,” and typified Christ’s death at Calvary. The other, the scapegoat, was to be sent away into the wilderness, being called the “goat of departure.” This took place after the High Priest laid hands on the head of the scapegoat, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, and imputing them to this goat. This was to symbolize the imputation of our sin to Christ on the cross, the scapegoat therefore typifying our sins being imputed to Christ and thus removed. Two goats were needed to provide a proper type-pattern of the great Atonement at Calvary - to which all of this pointed, and which it all symbolized. Both were needed to demonstrate what Calvary accomplished for mankind, for one goat could not typify all. “*The goat that died typified the death of Christ which addressed the root cause of sin; the scapegoat (the other goat) represented all acts of sin removed and taken away*” (Leviticus 16:9) (E.S.B.)

LEVITICUS 16:20 And when he (Aaron, the High Priest) has made an end of reconciling the Holy Place, and the Tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat:

LEVITICUS 16:21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them (signifying imputation) upon the head of the goat, and shall send him (the goat) away by the hand of a fit man (the man who had been appointed to do the job) into the wilderness:

“ . . . Two goats were needed to provide a proper type-pattern of the great Atonement at Calvary - the goat that died typified the death of Christ which addressed the root cause of sin; the scapegoat represented all acts of sin removed and taken away. . . ”

The blood of the first goat was shed, pointing to Calvary and to Jesus, the One who died on the Cross for us. The second goat being taken into the wilderness and left there represented the sin of the people being imputed to him and then cast into the sea of God’s forgetfulness. This was a visible sign to the people that their sins had been dealt with.

PSALM 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

MICAH 7:19 . . . You (oh God) will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Jesus’ sacrifice provided all this for us in a true spiritual sense as He fulfilled spiritually that which both goats typified. Firstly our sins were imputed to Him, the sinless One. Then He laid down His life as the sacrifice for these sins, shedding His Blood and paying the ultimate price of death. Now our sins, as we repent of them, are washed away by Jesus’ Blood, never to be remembered. Amen.

Jesus fulfilled in a complete sense all the type-patterns in the Old Testament which pointed to Calvary. These type-patterns were, according to God's foreknowledge, a result of Calvary, even though they were forerunners. He came, as He said, not "to destroy (the Law and the Prophets) *but to fulfill*" (Matthew 5:17-18).

Jesus was never anything other than holy and pure, even on the Cross. He never became blackened by our sin. Rather our sin was imputed (or legally attributed) to Him, and He became our representative in order that we might become "*the righteousness of God in Him.*" Jesus became, in another sense, "*a curse for us*" (Galatians 3:13). Our sin was therefore imputed to Him so that His righteousness could be imputed to us. We become justified, as though we had never sinned, because He became "a sin offering" for us, being treated as though He was a sinner. Both positions are legal positions, for Jesus never experienced sin or entered into an actual state of sin. He was "clothed" with our sin so we could be "clothed" with His righteousness. This is the basis of the great exchange which took place at Calvary.

The one difference which exists in this analogy is that when Jesus was "clothed" with our sin, He was not tainted in any way by it. We, however, received the cleansing of our spirit by His Blood when we were "clothed" with His righteousness.

“. . . Jesus was never anything other than holy and pure, even on the Cross. He never became blackened by our sin. Rather our sin was imputed (or legally attributed) to Him. . .”

In order for Christ to become our sin offering, and the sin of the world to be imputed to Him as our sinless substitute, Jesus had to be forsaken by the Father and the Holy Spirit - for God cannot associate with sin (or even, it appears, the Sin Bearer when He bore the punishment of the sin of the world). We witness the withdrawal of the Father and the Holy Spirit from Jesus in His agonized words, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" (Mark 15:34). These same Words had been prophesied centuries before, along with

other obvious references to the crucifixion, and are found in Psalm 22. At this point Jesus the man was forsaken by God the Father and God the Holy Spirit for the first time in His life. They had to abandon Him for the ultimate price to be paid.

Jesus' spirit, however, was not polluted with sin at this time, as the spirit of unregenerate man is polluted with sin. Therefore He did not need to be born again, for Jesus was righteous before the Cross, on the Cross and after the Cross.

Jesus willingly laid His life down for the purpose of death (John 10:17-18). He then died of a ruptured heart, and in this way His precious Blood was shed, causing His physical death. He died, however, not an unregenerate sinner but a righteous man, the holy Lamb of God.

In the study of Biblical theology, the doctrine of spiritual imputation shows that sin or righteousness can be imputed or charged to another's account in a legal sense. Applying this doctrine to Jesus and His sacrifice as the sin offering, we find that He did not have to become sin, but remained sinless in order to bear the punishment for our guilt which was imputed to Him. In other words, Jesus did not bear the wickedness and filth of our sinful nature, but He did bear the terrible punishment that should have been poured out upon us. Therefore, although innocent, Jesus paid the penalty for our sin, the penalty that we ourselves should have suffered, namely death. However if man does pay this penalty for his own sin, then eternal separation from the Father, ultimately in the Lake of Fire, will result - for man, of and by himself, has nothing else with which to satisfy justice.

“. . . In the study of Biblical theology, the doctrine of spiritual imputation shows that sin or righteousness can be imputed or charged to another's account in a legal sense. . . ”

Our punishment was dealt out to Him. Our sins, in regard to moral character, are our own. They are not imputed to us, and only in a legal sense could they become someone else's. However, Jesus

Christ as the substitutionary sacrifice could take upon Himself the punishment for our sins. We are speaking here of legal liabilities which Christ assumed on our behalf, not the transfer of actual transgressions.

So the transfer of our sins to Jesus Christ was not a transfer of actual transgressions. This did not occur and could not occur, even though Christ made Himself liable to endure the penalty for our sins. To have been anything other than innocent would have violated the Old Testament type (Exodus 12:5; 1 Peter 1:18-19) and would have disqualified Him, as far as God was concerned, from becoming an acceptable substitute for us. At all times Jesus was holy, and never at any time did our sin taint His being. If our sin had affected Him in any way, He would have become ineligible to pay the price.

Legally speaking, imputation of sin also allows for imputation of righteousness, that is if the sacrifice involved is righteous, without sin, and deemed worthy to meet the requirements of perfect justice. To be merely without sin would not be enough. Otherwise the Blood of baby Jesus could have paid the price. Testing the value, or verifying the worth of Jesus as a substitutionary sacrifice, was necessary. Subjected to every testing, Jesus had faith to begin with and to end with, and never deviated from trusting in God's Word, and obeying the will of the Father. Thus He proved Himself worthy to stand in the gap between God and man, and to bridge the gulf by the giving of His own life.

Therefore the work of Calvary required not only a sinless sacrifice, but a sacrifice which had been tested until its worth was determined and verified. Although Christ was always sinless, His value as the sacrifice had to meet the demands of perfect justice. As a boy, a teenager and a man, He was sinless. But the worth of the sacrifice had to be sufficient to pay the enormous debt of mankind's sin. At the age of thirty three, with around three years ministry behind Him and a lifetime of testing, Jesus confronted the ultimate test - Calvary. In the heat of battle He maintained faith in His Father's Word - in the face of injustice, torture, rejection and the Father's desertion. Here in the final furnace of affliction He was to prove that indeed He was worthy to act as the sacrifice - to become our substitute and to pay the terrible price required.

PSALM 22:1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring? (. . . Jesus cried this Word while hanging on the Cross [Matthew 27:46]. This portrayal glorifies Him as the Sin-Offering. It presents a sinless Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, forsaken by God, but only in the sense that God allowed Him to die. Such a fact is unique in history and will never need to be repeated. This sinless Man – Himself God manifest in the flesh – was made to be a Sin-Offering, in effect, the penalty of sin, which, in this case, was physical death [II Corinthians 5:21], and thereby pierced with a sword of Divine Wrath [Zechariah 13:7]. In that judgement, God dealt infinitely with sin, and in so dealing with it in the Person of His Beloved Son, showed His wrath against sin and His love for the sinner. Thus, He vindicated Himself and, as well, redeemed man. God revealed Himself at Calvary as in no other place or way. What the depth of horror was to which the sinless soul of Jesus sank under the Wrath of God as the Sin-Offering is unfathomable for men or angels; therefore, our efforts to explain these sufferings will, of necessity, fall short of that which He really experienced.) (E.S.B.)

“. . .The work of Calvary required not only a sinless sacrifice, but a sacrifice which had been tested until its worth was determined and verified. His value as the sacrifice had to meet the demands of perfect justice. . .”

In summary, as regards to the subject of identification, Christ identified with man when He was born of a virgin, becoming, as He called Himself, the Son of Man. In this way, having no original sin or incumbent sin nature, He became the second Adam. After being tested and proven as a man, and remaining sinless, Jesus was eligible to become man’s substitutionary sacrifice. Hence “*He became sin*”

(the sin offering) in that He identified, in a legal sense, with man's sin by means of that sin being imputed, or legally attributed, to Him. Then He could stand in our place and take, for all of mankind, the punishment for our sin - which was death. When "*the Word became flesh*," Christ identified with man - and this was a conditional or experiential position. However His substitutionary role in providing for mankind's salvation was a legal position. As far as the Law of God was concerned, once Jesus entered into this legal position, God's punishment was metered out to Him as a man, exactly the same as it would have been for any sinner. Such was the legal substitutionary position into which Christ entered, even though He did not sin. Hence the penalty of death was required. Such was the worth of His sacrifice, however, that through Him, and the shedding of His sinless Blood, all of mankind could be saved. Now all those who identify with Christ through repentance and acceptance of His Lordship are not just positionally saved in their spirit-man. By means of God's grace they are also conditionally saved through God, the Holy Spirit, coming to dwell in the heart of the Believer. Man is thus sanctified and all the darkness into which he was born is replaced by God's saving presence.

Christ conditionally identified with man through the Incarnation. Then He positionally identified with man as the substitutionary sacrifice, so that our sins could be imputed to Him. Because He suffered vicariously on our behalf, man can now positionally and conditionally be identified "in Christ." By this means, God can now legally impute Christ's righteousness to us, and, if we are legally righteous in Christ, then God has also made us conditionally righteous in Christ in our spirit-man. While the costly redemption price has been paid, those who remain outside of Christ remain dead to God, being sinners doomed to the second death - the Lake of Fire. The price has been paid but the individual must accept this price and its significance for them personally.

“. . . Christ conditionally identified with man through the Incarnation. Then He positionally identified with man as the substitutionary sacrifice, so that our sins could be imputed to Him. . .”

While all Believers are conditionally sanctified in their spirit-man, which is cleansed from all sin, the outward man also continues to need renewal day by day. In other words, so that ongoing transformation can take place, our minds need the grace of God's Word on a daily basis. Change then takes place by God's grace, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and human effort. This is a joint effort as man yields to God and cooperates with Him, so receiving the grace needed to change. As Christians we should be forever working towards making our experiential condition the same as our position in Christ, and so becoming more and more like Him. Again, even though our spirit-man is conditionally sanctified by the Blood of the Lamb, our minds are not sanctified until the Holy Spirit brings renewal, all by His grace which has been afforded to us through the Cross of Christ.

WHY THE PAIN AND SUFFERING ?

Background Reading: Isaiah 53:3-12

The passing of each test verified the value of the Lamb of God as the sacrifice, for He was "*made perfect*" in His faith through suffering. (Also through these tests He learned obedience, so that He could be made ready for the Priesthood and His role as the High Priest.)

HEBREWS 5:9 And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them who obey Him

In other words, Jesus maintained His faith in His Father's word through every trial, and continued to do His Father's will in the face of negative circumstances, human and Satanic opposition, and even the voice of His own human nature which on at least one occasion was contrary to the Father's will for Him:

MATTHEW 26:39 And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as You will."

ROMANS 15:3 For even Christ pleased not Himself (everything done in Jesus' life and ministry was to please the Father); but, as it is written, "The reproaches of them who reproached You fell on Me." (Psalm 69:9)

His sustenance was to do the will of the Father (John 4:34), and as He progressed through His earthly life and ministry, Jesus' faith was perfected through testing. In this way, the worth of Himself as the sacrifice for redemptive purposes was proven.

Jesus was to show through all of this that the greater the conflict or test He faced, the more complete His submission to Almighty God would be.

“. . .The passing of each test verified the value of the Lamb of God as the sacrifice, for He was “made perfect” in His faith through suffering. . .”

The pain and suffering Jesus experienced at the time of the crucifixion was to prove the worth of the sacrifice for redemptive purposes. To properly value or prove something, it or they must be tested under pressure, and we can know that the greatest pressure a man has ever endured was placed upon Jesus. Even so He had faith at the beginning of every test, and that faith remained at the end, for He was *“tempted (as a man) like as we are, yet without sin.”*

HEBREWS 4:15 For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Three different elements were included in the Atonement for the purpose of mankind's redemption.

1. The sacrifice needed to be approved as worthy for the sacred purpose (Hebrews 5:8-9). This took place as Jesus' faith was tested during the pain and suffering He endured at the time of the

crucifixion. He had to remain sinless in order to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law of sacrifice.

2. Jesus' sinless Blood had to be shed on the cross, for without the shedding of blood, there could be no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). Through the shedding of His Blood, His life was forfeited.

3. The Resurrection demonstrated God's power over sin and death, and the innocence of the Lamb. Without the Resurrection, Christ's work on behalf of man would not have been effectual. The Resurrection completed the Atonement process.

Therefore we can see that the suffering, death and Resurrection of Jesus were included in the Atonement, being necessary to pay the price for mankind's redemption.

The testing of faith builds Godly character in a man or woman when the test is passed or the temptation is refused. Just as Adam was tested, Jesus, the second Adam, was also tested. But where the first Adam failed to pass the test, that being to trust and obey God in all things, Jesus the second Adam passed each test, yielding to the will of the Father in all things, no matter how extreme the test or circumstances were.

“. . .The testing of faith builds Godly character in a man or woman when the test is passed or the temptation is refused. . .”

“Being made perfect” (Heb.5:9) does not mean that Christ was ever imperfect. Rather it means that perfect justice required that a testing take place under a sufficient degree of pressure, and that this test, or these tests, had to be passed. In Jesus' case, He had to hold His faith in the face of each trial He experienced and not sin (deviate from the Father's will in any way).

Jesus as the sacrifice needed to be stamped with the seal *“made perfect”* (or accepted) for sacrifice, and this could only take place

after testing - for only under extreme trial, pressure applied to the highest possible degree, could the integrity and worth of the sacrifice be proven. "*Being made perfect*" refers to Jesus being brought to a goal fixed by God.

God knew Jesus was worthy, but the worth of the sacrifice had to be demonstrated to the Courts of Justice. The final test occurred as an innocent man, full of the Holy Spirit, able to call on twelve legions of angels to release Him (Matt.26:53), suffered unjustly on the cross at Calvary. Knowing His destiny and purpose, Jesus held faith in His Father's word and will, despite the great travail He endured in His "man-soul." Here at this place He lived what He had prayed, "*not as I will, but as You will.*"

It is worth noting that prior to the crucifixion, God was the Creator of mankind but not his Saviour. He became man, the Lord Jesus Christ, died on a cross and rose again from the dead, so becoming the Saviour of mankind. Now as not only Creator but Saviour, He is infinitely greater.

The Cross remains the pivotal point for man's salvation, for at the Cross, man's redemption was Blood-bought and Blood-sealed, and the power of sin was broken in our lives.

As the old hymn declares:

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down
I will cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it some day for a crown.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

Background Reading: John 19:13-42

Jesus had lived a perfect sinless life in complete obedience to the Father. The presence of the Holy Spirit and the Father had given Jesus the power, comfort and direction He needed to sustain Him during all His earthly trials and temptations. Then, at the very point when Jesus needed them most, as He suffered on the cross of Calvary, we are told of Jesus' agonized cry:

***MATTHEW 27:46 And about the ninth hour (3 p.m.)
Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama
sabachthani?” that is to say, “My God, My God, why
have You forsaken Me?”***

It was “now, when He needed the help of the Holy Spirit most, in the moment of His direst need, the Holy Spirit left Him helpless, destitute. He left Him in the lurch. He let Him down in a set of circumstances that were antagonistic, frightful, terrible. He was abandoned by Heaven, spurned by earth, laden with man’s sin, suffering the excruciating anguish of crucifixion. He suffered all alone. The same sin offering that forbade the inclusion of frankincense, forbade the provision of oil. Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit. No oil in the flour; speaks of the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit’s sustaining presence at the Cross. The Holy Spirit left our Lord.”

“The fact still remains that He was abandoned and deserted by God the Father, and for the reason that God “appointed Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor.5:21). A fellowship had been broken that had always existed, a fellowship that had continued all during our Lord’s earthly life. But now the Father’s smiling face was turned away. Understand the “how” of it we cannot. Feel the awfulness of it, we may not. Believe the fact of it, we must. Our Lord said His God had abandoned Him, deserted Him.

No words come from the skies in answer to the prayer of our Lord.”⁷

(underlines added)

***“ . . .He was abandoned by Heaven,
spurned by earth, laden with man’s sin,
suffering the excruciating anguish of
crucifixion. He suffered all alone. . . ”***

The torment of this terrible abandonment in the midst of hostile circumstances would have caused Jesus more anguish than the nails. Yet with His faith in the words of His Father sustaining Him, He held on regardless.

Scripture tells us that in order for Jesus to die, He had to lay down His life freely. Therefore He was not executed in the sense of the crucifixion causing His death. He did not die of exhaustion at the crucifixion, nor did He die purely from loss of blood. Rather Jesus voluntarily surrendered His life on the cross. This was His prerogative and His alone, for no man could take His life from Him.

JOHN 10:17 Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.

JOHN 10:18 No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.

LUKE 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, "Father, into Your hands I commend My Spirit:" and having said this, He gave up the ghost (breathed out His life).

At the same time Jesus "breathed His last," His heart was ruptured and His Blood was shed. However, He had to first lay down His life before the extreme physical distress His body was subject to could cause Him to die in a physical sense.

The doctrine of Calvary includes what happened to Christ before, during and after the cross, e.g. the virgin birth of the Saviour, the proving of the sacrifice, the death and Resurrection of Christ. The Resurrection itself was a sign to the world of heaven's acceptance of the perfect sacrifice, for only a holy, righteous person could be raised from the dead in a glorified body, to enter into the presence of the Father. Indeed this amazing event had never happened before in the history of mankind.

“ . . . The doctrine of Calvary includes what happened to Christ before, during and after the cross, e.g. the virgin birth of the Saviour, the proving of the sacrifice, the death and Resurrection of Christ. . . ”

The fact is that Christ was sinless at all times. When He said “*It is finished,*” this meant that man’s sin (man’s sickness, man’s ignorance and man’s defeat) could now be “nailed to the Cross” - for all those who trust and rely on Christ’s finished work. Indeed as Believers our past can be nailed to a Christless Cross, for He is risen and our Egypt (our past) is left behind on the bloodstained Cross. Written across our ledger of sins are the words “paid in full.”

COLOSSIANS 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of Ordinances that was against us (pertains to the Law of Moses, which was God’s standard of Righteousness that man could not reach), ***which was contrary to us*** (Law is against us, simply because we are unable to keep its precepts, no matter how hard we try), ***and took it out of the way*** (refers to the penalty of the Law being removed), ***nailing it to His Cross*** (the Law with its decrees was abolished in Christ’s Death, as if Crucified with Him); (E.S.B.)

COLOSSIANS 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers (Satan and all of his henchmen were defeated at the Cross by Christ Atoning for all sin; sin was the legal right Satan had to hold man in captivity; with all sin atoned, he has no more legal right to hold anyone in bondage), ***He*** (Christ) ***made a show of them openly*** (what Jesus did at the Cross was in the face of the whole universe), ***triumphing over them in it.*** (The triumph is complete and it was all done for us, meaning we can walk in power and perpetual victory due to the Cross.) (E.S.B.)

All aspects of Christ's life and death point to the Cross, for it was here that perfect justice answered the cry of innocent Blood (Genesis 4:10). In other words, the sinless One paid the redemptive price on behalf of the guilty. Through Adam's sin, man was trapped and sentenced to death, but through Jesus' righteousness, many are now released into "abundant life" (John 10:10).

Jesus went to "*the heart of the earth*" as a perfect sinless man. Only in His human identity did He go to the heart of the earth. Here flames and devils did not touch Him, for He went there with faith in the promise given that on the third day He would be raised from the dead, and become "*the firstborn from the dead*" (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:31).

MATTHEW 12:40 *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

COLOSSIANS 1:18 *And He is the Head of the Body, the Church, Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

Scripture tells us that Jesus would spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, which is Hades - the world of departed spirits (Matthew 12:40). As we have said and will repeat here, the exact location in the heart of the earth is not given. We are not told whether Jesus, after His death, descended into the upper section or the lower section of hell i.e. Paradise or the other side of hell. If He did go to the other side of hell, Satan and his demons could not have touched or harmed Him in any way because He was perfect and sinless. It may even be that Jesus descended into a waiting place in the heart of the earth, a place attached to the burning side of hell, but devoid of flames. Scripture really gives no clear light in this regard. Perhaps this is because we need to focus on the things that matter, such things as Christ's sinlessness, His worth as the sacrifice, His love, the shed Blood at Calvary which paid the price for our freedom, Christ's glorious Resurrection, His obedience, faith and finished work on the Cross.

“ . . . Only in His human identity did Jesus go to the heart of the earth. Here flames and devils did not touch Him, for He went there with faith in the promise given that on the third day He would be raised from the dead. . . ”

He was not born again as we know it to be, for this was unnecessary. Rather, Jesus the perfect sinless man, after a time of “desertion” by the Father and the Holy Spirit, was simply reunited with them. Jesus never entered into a position where Satan owned His soul, as is the case with man. His soul, by reason of His sinlessness, was always God’s. He was never touched by Satan, even in death.

He identified with man and became the substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of all mankind. So in this sense, He identified with man in order to taste death for every man without being personally associated with sin in any form. Through the substitutionary process He was associated with sin’s penalty, and physical death followed when He voluntarily laid down His life for mankind’s sake.

It is interesting to note that time did not affect the physical body of Jesus, for His death only marked a separation of His spirit from His body. Because He was sinless, His body was in suspended animation and there could be no decay. When the spirit of the body returned, life would continue on, in Jesus’ case, life in a transformed glorified body.

ACTS 2:27 Because You will not leave My soul in hell (Hades), neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption (decay of His physical body).

It is also worth noting that before the cross, Jesus’ body was not immortal, but rather He had a perfect body. If His body had been immortal, He could not have become the substitutionary sacrifice, for He would not have been qualified or able to die physically. Only

when He rose from the dead did He receive the immortal glorified body which He still has today. Soon we too will have such a body, the same kind of glorified body Jesus received, and still has today. (Believers will inherit their glorified body at the Rapture [1 Thessalonians 4:14-17]. The wonder of this body is that it can live in both the spiritual and physical realms [Luke 24:36-43].)

“ . . . It is interesting to note that time did not affect the physical body of Jesus, for His death only marked a separation of His spirit from His body. Because He was sinless, His body was in suspended animation and there could be no decay. . . ”

In Kenneth Wuest’s “Word Studies in the Greek New Testament” he wrote; *“On the Mount of Transfiguration, our Lord’s face and clothing shone with a radiance that came from within. A radiance similar to this, was the covering of His body after the resurrection.*

It has always been God’s plan for His creatures to cover themselves with a covering produced from within. Adam and Eve covered their bodies with an enswathement of glory which was produced from within their beings. When they sinned, they lost the power to produce such a covering from within. To cover their naked bodies which now had sin and death in them, they made clothing for themselves. Birds cover themselves with beautiful plumage which is produced from within. Animals cover themselves with fur which is produced from within. Thus, in the life to come, Believers will cover their bodies with an enswathement of glory, a light covering, which will be produced from within.

Now, to gather together our information regarding the future body of the Believer. It will be a body adapted to a spiritual life in which all one’s time and activity have to do with God, His worship and service. It will be a body which will be incorruptible and immortal. It will be a body of flesh and bones, but no blood. This body will have a new life principle animating it. It will be a body, the covering of which will be produced from within.”⁸

(underlines added)

As has been said, we will receive this same kind of body at the Rapture.

THE RESURRECTION

Background Reading: Luke Chapter 24

EPHESIANS 1:19 . . . according to the working of His mighty power,

EPHESIANS 1:20 Which He (God the Father) wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead (by the power of the Holy Spirit) and set Him at His own right hand (the place of highest authority) in the heavenly places

Jesus rose from the dead with an immortal glorified body, hence becoming “*the firstborn from the dead*” (Colossians 1:18). Again we say this proved the acceptance of the Blood in the Holy of Holies in heaven (Hebrews 9:12-24). The Greek word for “firstborn” carries with it the meaning of supreme headship. Therefore Christ’s status is also denoted by this word.

If Christ had remained dead, His atoning work at Calvary would have been in vain. It was the Resurrection that made His finished work effective, so we are now able to be “*partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.*”

COLOSSIANS 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, Who has made us meet (fit) to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light (this is our standing):

COLOSSIANS 1:13 Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son:

COLOSSIANS 1:14 In Whom we have Redemption through His Blood (proclaims the price that was paid for our Salvation), even the forgiveness of sins (at the Cross,

the Lord broke the power of sin, and took away its guilt [Romans 6:6] (E.S.B.)

“ . . . If Christ had remained dead, His atoning work at Calvary would have been in vain. It was the Resurrection that made His finished work effective. . . ”

In John 20:17 Jesus said to Mary when He appeared to her, “*Touch Me not.*” It is believed that this occurred before the first ascension of Jesus in which He went into the Holy Place (the throneroom of God) by His own Blood. Henceforth His Blood is the eternal seal of our Covenant in Christ (Hebrews 9:22-26). However Jesus appeared to Mary so that she could tell the disciples what had happened. This gave them opportunity to prepare themselves, for on that same day, Jesus would come to visit them.

After this first ascension Jesus came back to earth to speak to the startled disciples, even eating fish to prove to them He was not a spirit, as they first thought, but actual “*flesh and bone*” (Luke 24:36-43). Jesus was able to be touched, and to consume food because He now lived in a glorified body.

When Jesus rose from the dead, His spirit was reunited with His body, and that body, by the power of the Holy Spirit, was transformed into a bloodless glorified body.

At this time many came out of their graves, as scripture tells us in the Gospel of Matthew:

MATTHEW 27:52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who slept arose,

MATTHEW 27:53 And came out of the graves after His Resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

However this miraculous event did not constitute the beginning of the Church. This occurred when Jesus presented Himself to the disciples, following His Resurrection, so they could believe, and be

readied for Pentecost (John 20:21-28). After this, the Church was equipped for service on the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after Passover. On this day the public display of the Church's empowerment came via the dramatic descent of the Holy Spirit. Peter then proclaimed the Gospel with Holy Spirit boldness, and 3,000 astonished hearers responded to the first public message of salvation (Acts 2:14-41).

“. . .When Jesus rose from the dead, His spirit was reunited with His body, and that body, by the power of the Holy Spirit, was transformed into a bloodless glorified body. . .”

We know that many saw Jesus before His final ascension. Scripture tells us in fact that over five hundred brethren had seen Him at one time:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:6 After that He was seen of over five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present (are still alive), but some are fallen asleep (have died).

He had faith before the cross, He had faith on the cross, He had faith after His death on the cross and He has faith today - faith unlike any other man who has ever lived, before or since. In fact Jesus now holds the keys of truth by which man can gain eternal life, and all power and authority have been given unto Him, our risen glorified Saviour. Even today Jesus has not ceased to be God-man, all God and all man (1 Timothy 2:5) while existing in His other identity as God the Word in another dimension. The ministry of the Holy Spirit then brings the real essence of Christ to each Believer's heart.

1 TIMOTHY 2:5 For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus

REVELATION 1:18 I am He Who lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have

the keys of hell and of death (the keys of truth to unlock the hearts of men from the bondage of spiritual death).

MATTHEW 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, "All power (authority) is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."

Jesus was raised from the dead by reason of His innocence. He was blameless as He descended into the heart of the earth, and remained so during the three days and three nights of His sojourn there. Jesus was still blameless when He was raised from the dead by the power of the Spirit (1 Peter 2:22; Isaiah 53:9). At all times Jesus remained pure, perfect, sinless and therefore completely innocent.

“. . .Jesus was raised from the dead by reason of His innocence. He was blameless as He descended into the heart of the earth, and remained so during the three days and three nights of His sojourn there. . .”

THE SHED BLOOD OF JESUS

Background Reading: Hebrews Chapter 9

On behalf of man and as his High Priest, Jesus entered into the heavenly Holy of Holies by His own shed Blood - for the courts of heaven accepted His Blood once and for all as the ransom price for mankind. This was only made possible because His Blood was sinless, perfect and pure. Thus a righteous God can justify a sinner (who repents and accepts Jesus as Lord) on the basis that perfect justice has been satisfied through the legal process of imputation. Indeed salvation rests on the fact that a Christian's sins have been paid for by Jesus' atoning sacrifice in which His Blood was shed on the cross for us (Romans Ch.5).

HEBREWS 10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest (Most Holy Place) by the blood of Jesus,

HEBREWS 10:20 By a new and living way (the provisions of the New Covenant), which He has consecrated for us (by the cross), through the veil (alludes to the veil in the Temple), that is to say, His flesh (the sacrifice of Himself on the cross opened up the way to God)

Jesus' shed Blood is the legal agent whereby God can, through His perfect justice and grace, release His power to redeem anyone from all sin. This power is in His saving presence. If Jesus had been tainted with sin, His Blood would not have been acceptable to pay the price. Jesus' precious Blood is the legal agent whereby all sin can be forgiven, and guilty sinners can be cleansed and redeemed. Through the Blood we are baptized into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

TITUS 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Through this process our spirit is washed clean of all the pollution of sin and we are regenerated. In this our spirit is surrounded by God's saving presence which protects it from all evil, and the Holy Spirit witnesses to our spirit that we are children of the living God (Romans 8:16).

“ . . . Jesus' shed Blood is the legal agent whereby God can, through His perfect justice and grace, release His power to redeem anyone from all sin. . . ”

Only the precious untainted Blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God Who knew no sin, could pay this ransom price.

THE REDEMPTION OF OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Background Reading: Luke 16:19-31

What happened to those who died before Calvary, those who lived under the provisions of the Old Covenant?

The Old Testament Saints (those who lived according to the Old Covenant) had to wait in a place we know as Abraham's Bosom until Jesus rose from the dead to redeem them. The blood of bulls and goats had covered their sin and had kept eternal death at bay - but the precious Blood of Jesus released them from sin's bondage and gave them the right to enter into their eternal reward. Therefore upon His Resurrection, Jesus "*led captivity captive*" as Ephesians 4:8 tells us:

***EPHESIANS 4:8** Wherefore He (God through the psalmist) said, "When He (Jesus) ascended up on high, He led captivity (people in Abraham's Bosom) captive (captivity into eternal life) . . ." (Psalm 68:18)*

Paul here quotes Psalm 68:18, where the Psalmist is speaking prophetically.

When Jesus ascended on high, He released the prisoners in Abraham's Bosom and led them into heaven.

The word "*captivity*" in this context means "those held in a prison" and the word "prison" means "a holding place" or "cage."

So "prison" does not always have to have a negative meaning. Those people who were in Abraham's Bosom were locked in this place, devoid of God's presence, until Jesus came to lead "*captivity captive*." Yes, captive into eternal life with God!

There is another view of Ephesians 4:8 which explains this verse in terms of the Conqueror (Jesus) leading the conquered enemy, bound in chains behind Him, as in Old Testament times. This view states that when Jesus rose from the dead, He led Satan and all his host captive behind Him, making an open spectacle of them in the heavenly realm.

Whatever interpretation of Ephesians 4:8 is adopted, it is clear that both views promote and illustrate the triumph of Christ's Resurrection.

However, we believe the first view to be more consistent with New Testament teaching - for Satan is still at large and roams this world “*as a roaring lion . . . seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Peter 5:8). The New Testament still refers to Satan as being “*the god of this world*” (2 Corinthians 4:4) and “*the prince of the power of the air*” (Ephesians 2:2). When scripture says that Jesus made a show of Satan openly (Colossians 2:15), we believe this refers to Jesus’ Resurrection. It was at this time that He stripped Satan of his authority over man, and took possession of the keys of death and hell (Revelation 1:18). Through the Resurrection, Jesus demonstrated His authority over Satan, sin and death, having made the way for man to enter into eternal life. This is how He made a show openly of Satan - to heaven and hell, and to the whole of the spirit realm.

“ . . . The blood of bulls and goats had covered their sin and had kept eternal death at bay - but the precious Blood of Jesus released them from sin’s bondage and gave them the right to enter into their eternal reward. . . ”

Scripture reveals that no one had entered heaven until Jesus rose from the dead (John 3:13). Therefore it was only after the acceptance of Jesus’ shed Blood by the courts of heaven that the Old Testament Saints could enter heaven itself and come face to face with God Almighty. Only after the Blood was accepted could fallen man be cleansed and restored to right relationship with God through that precious Blood. Only then could man enter heaven, because Jesus went ahead of us into the holiest place of all, the throneroom of God, as our High Priest and Saviour (Hebrews 2:17).

After Jesus was raised from the dead, the Old Testament Saints were taken from Paradise (Abraham’s Bosom) to be with the Lord forever. Jesus went into Abraham’s Bosom with glad tidings to its inmates of His finished redemptive work. In doing this, He cashed the promissory notes of atonement that had been obtained yearly by the high priest in the earthly Holy of Holies. These promissory notes

were based on the promise of the Messiah, the Lamb of God, Who would pay the price for their redemption.

HEBREWS 9:12 *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

EPHESIANS 4:8 *Wherefore He (God through the psalmist) said, “When He (Jesus) ascended up on high, He led captivity (people in Abraham’s Bosom) captive (captive into eternal life) . . .”*

This is how the Old Testament Saints were redeemed and taken out of their waiting place - for the Blood of Jesus flowed backwards from the Cross to redeem them from sin. They were only able to enter heaven through Jesus, for Jesus is the only way. This view is consistent with scriptural principles set out clearly in the New Testament. Indeed it is written:

JOHN 14:6 *Jesus said unto him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by Me.”*

ACTS 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other (except Jesus), for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

“. . .After Jesus was raised from the dead, the Old Testament Saints were taken from Paradise to be with the Lord forever . . . Jesus went into Abraham’s Bosom with glad tidings to its inmates of His finished redemptive work. . .”

SUMMARY: JESUS DID NOT DIE SPIRITUALLY

Background Reading: Romans 5:12-21

God the Word was in heaven and omnipresent in a dimension in which only God exists. He continued to inhabit this dimension while He also became a man-child - all God and all man. Thus He had two separate identities. Therefore God the Word became a man and clothed Himself with flesh, without diminishing in any way as God. As God the Word He was omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. As Jesus the man He was not, for He was limited by the constraints of His human condition.

The dimensional factor allowed Emmanuel to live in both His God-dimension and His human dimension. His first identity was of course God the Word - Who owns His Divine Nature and lives in a God-dimension that no other being can inhabit. His second identity was Jesus - Who had a human nature, was a partaker of the Divine Nature, and lived in another dimension common to man. As we have stated, the Divine Identity and the human identity never merged, even though they remained connected while yet in different dimensions.

“ . . .The Divine Identity and the human identity never merged, even though they remained connected while yet in different dimensions. . . ”

Jesus was tested as a man, and performed miracles as a man empowered by the Holy Spirit (John 3:34). Had He operated as God the Word in these areas, the testing Jesus was subject to would not have been genuine. Therefore while on earth in His human nature and identity, Christ required the Spirit's presence and empowerment to do the will of the Father - for in His earthly walk He had to identify with man, not assume Divine rights and privileges. This identification with man included a complete dependence upon the Holy Spirit Who taught Him the Word of God, and provided Him with the empowerment needed to pray and so heal the sick, deliver those in bondage, raise the dead and confront tests and trials.

In His walk on the earth our Saviour needed the Holy Spirit to energize His human nature with God's Divine Nature so that *“every prayer our Lord uttered, every word He spoke, every miracle He performed, the sinless wonderful life He lived, was in dependence upon and in the energy of the Holy Spirit, so that He was able to offer Himself at the Cross without spot to become the sacrifice that God would accept as the atonement for sin (Hebrews 9:14, ‘Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.’)”*⁹
(underline added)

However, though operating in His human nature during the course of His earthly walk, Jesus the God-man differed from natural fallen man in that He had not come into this world in a state of spiritual death. From birth He had the Light and life of God inside Him, and had never known life without the Father's comforting presence. Even in death, Jesus did not enter into a state of spiritual death. What a difficult thing to understand! In fact only faith (God-given at that) can accept fully that Jesus was all man and all God in one being, and that the fullness of the Godhead dwelled bodily in Him (Colossians 2:9). In fact Jesus the man was always connected to His other identity - God the Word. Therefore spiritual death, separation from His Divine Identity as God, was an impossibility.

“. . . In fact Jesus the man was always connected to His other identity - God the Word. Therefore spiritual death, separation from His Divine Identity as God, was an impossibility. . . ”

Some say that Jesus suffered spiritual death when He was abandoned by the Father at Calvary, the reason being so that He could identify with man and suffer the punishment due to man. But as we have said, Jesus was never separated from His other identity, God the Word, and therefore spiritual death as such could not have occurred. Rather, Jesus was abandoned for a period of time by the Father and the Spirit, this desertion attested by His cry from the cross. He then descended to the heart of the earth. Some believe the

abandonment only lasted for the few hours Jesus was on the cross, during which time He said, *“My God My God, why have You forsaken Me?”* Others believe that this abandonment continued for the three days and three nights He was entombed in the earth prior to the Resurrection. Whatever your view in this, we believe the Father and the Spirit abandoned, in some way, for a period of time, the man Jesus. Some call this spiritual death, but it could not be the same spiritual death that fallen man experiences because Jesus the man (His human identity) could not be separated from God the Word (His Divine Identity). However for Jesus the man to be deserted or forsaken by God the Father and God the Holy Spirit (yet remaining connected to His Divine Self), His human identity must have existed on earth in a different dimension to that of His Divine Identity (which dwells in the God-dimension). So we can conclude that Jesus, although dying physically, did not die spiritually, the reason being that He was always connected to His Divine Self. Also by reason of His innocence, being sinless always, He could not spiritually die. The Light of God in Him could not be extinguished because He always remained sinless. Amen.

The message of the Cross includes what and who Jesus was before His death - the High Priest, Prophet, and sinless Lamb - and what and who He was after His death - the sinless slain Lamb of God, the glorified King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Let us always interpret everything within the context of Jesus being sinless - before the Cross, on the Cross and after the Cross. In this we state from the beginning that man’s sin did not touch Him or affect Him in any way or at any time, as He took on the penalty of our sin which meant physical death. Again we say that the Atonement was made by the suffering Saviour Who was abandoned by the Father for the purpose of man’s redemption, died for us, and was then raised on the third day for us. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son”* to die in our place, so that, in Him, we may be raised with newness of life. Amen.

***“ . . . Also by reason of His innocence,
being sinless always, He could not
spiritually die. The Light of
God in Him could not be extinguished
because He always remained sinless. . . ”***

Therefore we can know that the narrow road of life which leads to heaven goes through Calvary, and only the Blood of the sinless Lamb provides forgiveness of sin and then entrance unto eternal life. Indeed the door to heaven is the Cross - there is no other door, no other way. For this reason let us always focus our faith on the finished work of the Cross where the debt of sin was paid for all time. Abel's lamb redeemed one man; the Paschal lamb, one family; the Day of Atonement lamb, one nation; the Lamb of Calvary, the whole world!

As the words of the old hymn state so well:

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the Blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the Blood of Jesus.
Oh precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow
No other fount I know
Nothing but the Blood of Jesus.

Amen and Amen.

May you have the victory in Christ. Amen!

For further information or teaching material to help you grow in the Christian faith, please visit:

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NOTES

- 1 Spurgeon, Charles H., The Treasury of the Old Testament; Leviticus Chapter 16.
- 2 Wuest, K.S.,
- 3 S.B.C. II Corinthians, Vol.14, pg. 223.
- 4 S.B.C. II Corinthians, Vol.14, pg.223.
- 5 Charles Hodge, The Crossway Classic Commentaries, 2 Corinthians.
- 6 Rossier, Dr. B.R., A Study Through The Book of II Corinthians, Believer's Home Study Institute, Vol.6, pgs 74-75.
- 7 Wuest, Kenneth S., Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, Bypaths In The Greek New Testament, pg.88.
- 8 Wuest, Kenneth S., Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, Great Truths To Live By, pg.152.
- 9 Wuest, Kenneth S., Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, 1 Peter 3:18.

*"We have a vision
to see people living
in abundant life
by the power of God
through Jesus Christ"*



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