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Forgiveness Through The Cross

By The Late C. D. Cole

After His farcical trial of many illegalities and shameful scenes, our Lord was shamefully put to death by crucifixion, the Roman method of capital punishment decreed centuries before there was any Roman empire. "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance", Deuteronomy 21:23. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" Galatians 3:13.

Who killed Jesus Christ? The bible gives what may seem to be conflicting answers, but when the word is rightly divided there is wonderful harmony. Peter charges the Jews with the crime. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:" Acts 2:23. Then Peter associates Herod, Pilate and the Gentiles with the crime. "For of a truth against the holy child Jesus, whom thou has anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together", Acts 4:27. In the same sentence he says that God delivered Him up and determined before hand all that men did. Isaiah says He was to be stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for

our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Isaiah 53:4-10.

Christ himself says, "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself", John 10:18. As we view the death of Christ in the light of these scriptures we find incomparably precious truth.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST AS THE ACT OF MEN

1. It was a wicked deed, Peter says, "with wicked hands have crucified and slain." There is no difficulty in seeing that men sinned in putting Christ to death.

2. It was an ignorant deed. I Cor. 2:8 says, "Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory". The Jews thought they were killing a blasphemer because they did not recognize Jesus as the Son of God. In John 1:10,11 we read, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not". In Acts 13:27 we find, "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him".

3. It was a providential deed. All the human actors were carrying out the purpose of God and fulfilling scriptures. We must distinguish between God's will of purpose and His will of command. God purposed the death of His Son, but gave no command to men to kill Him. God's will of command and not His will of purpose determines our responsibilities. In the Divine purpose the Son of man, "must be lifted up," but this in no wise justified men killing Him. Moreover, their motive was evil. They put the Holy One to death because they hated holiness. The heart must be evil before the hand can do evil. Matthew 15:19 says, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:" Joseph's brethren were manifesting evil hearts when they sold him into slavery and were ignorant of the Divine purpose. When they repented, Joseph comforted them with the overruling providence of God. Be sure to read Genesis 45:5-8.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST AS THE ACT OF GOD

1. An exhibition of justice. God's justice calls for punishment of sin. At Calvary, God was acting as a just judge, punishing His Son, who was in the sinner's place.

I Cor. 5:21 - "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

I Peter 3:18 - "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit".

Romans 5:8 - "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us".

At Calvary God was collecting our sin-debt from the substitute and surety of the better covenant.

Hebrews 7:22 - "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament".

2. An exhibition of love. At the cross there was justice towards sins and love towards the sinner.

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth

in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

I John 4:10 - "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins".

THE DEATH OF CRIST AS HIS OWN ACT

1. A voluntary act. God gave Christ to die, but not against His will. Men put Him to death, but not against His will. Marvel of mercies: Christ chose to die for sinners. Jesus is no reluctant Saviour.

2. An accomplishment. Christ was not defeated in death. He was no helpless victim to human hate, but was performing the greatest work of all time -- the work of human redemption. On the cross He cried, "It is finished," and dismissed His spirit. He lay down His life, it was not taken from Him. His death was the greatest of all miracles; the power to die. He was as powerful in death as when He created the universe. He is not a weak Saviour. Christ crucified is the wisdom and power of God.

Luke 9:31 - "Who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem".

I Corinthians 1:24 - "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God".

3. The act of a surety. As our Surety, Christ was meeting our obligations to God by paying our sin-debt. He was rendering satisfaction to Divine justice that it might not seek satisfaction in our punishment. He did not have to become our surety, but when He agreed to the plan, He was obligated to carry it out. He was obedient unto the death of the cross.

Hebrews 7:22 - "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament".

Philippians 2:8 - "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

4. The act of a high priest. As our High Priest Christ must offer that which will make the sinner right with God, and this was nothing short of Himself. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. He gave Himself a ransom for many.

Matthew 20:28 - "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45 - "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

I Timothy 2:6 - "Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

Christ was both the offerer and the offering. He was both Priest and Lamb. As High Priest He offered Himself without spot to God.

Hebrews 9:14 - "How much more shall the blood

of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ”

TWO QUESTIONS

Lost reader, can you see that the only way you can find acceptance with God and escape punishment for your sins is through what Christ did on the cross. Do you - will you -- trust Him and Him alone for the salvation you so desperately need? It is Christ and what He did, or Hell for what you have done! Oh sinner, bestir thyself - shake off all indifferences -- take the place of a sinner and trust Christ in this day of salvation, lest you find Him mighty to damn in the day of Judgment.

Christian, do you appreciate what has been done to keep you from the just punishment of your sins? Will you live for Him who died for you?



THIS WE BELIEVE

We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God without error as originally written. We believe in the Genesis account of creation and the fall of man. We believe in total depravity. We believe all are lost unless born again. We believe that we are saved by grace through faith and without works on the part of man. We believe that repentance and faith are inseparable graces and that all who do not repent and believe are lost. We believe in the security of the believer. We believe faith without works is dead. We believe all who have repented and believed should confess the Lord and follow Him in baptism and begin to seek to do His will. We believe that Jesus Christ organized a church while here on earth during His personal ministry (before Pentecost), and that He gave that church a commission, Matt. 28:19,20. We believe that there are two church ordinances; baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that the church is local, visible, and that she has the Bible for her one and only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. We believe that the way to finance the Lord's work is by tithes and offerings. We believe that all churches should be missionary. We believe in the premillennial second coming of Christ. We believe that Heaven is a real place and that Hell is a real place. We believe in the Trinity of God, and that the Devil is a person, and that there will be two resurrections, one of the just and one of the unjust.



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