

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

ARE THE FATHER AND THE SON IN CONFLICT

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If I believed some of the theories people hold about redemption, I would have to conclude that there is a conflict between the Father and the Son over the salvation of humanity. As though God was demanding a debt be paid or he would cast all of us into damnation, so Jesus stepped up and paid the debt to pacify the Father. Or, that God searches the hearts of humanity looking for reasons to judge and destroy us, but Jesus covers us with his blood to hide us from the Father's prying eyes. I know it is not exactly put that way, but consider what is presented as the gospel. They say Jesus paid our debt or penalty so we could be forgiven. OK..., if Jesus paid a debt or penalty, who was demanding a debt be paid? Is it correct to say an unforgiving God demanded that his Son suffer and die before he would considering forgiving anyone? Here is another one. If the blood of Jesus covers our sin from God's sight, then is Jesus in fact hiding us from the Father? In each of these scenarios the conclusion seems to be that Jesus Christ actually saves us from God. Of course we all know that this is ridiculous. The Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are not and never were in conflict over humanity. In fact, from the moment of Adam's transgression, everything God said or did was with our redemption in mind.

When I say that Christ did not die to forgive our sins, it confuses some people. But the truth is that Christ's death wasn't necessary for the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness is something God has graciously offered humanity for all time. The only requirement put upon God's forgiveness is that the forgiven would turn from their iniquity. When God revealed his glory to Moses, he introduced himself as *"The LORD God, merciful and*

*gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, **forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...***" Exodus 34:6-7 The Psalmist reminds us of God's forgiveness saying, "For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant. **But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away...**" Psalms 78:37-38 Most Christians know the words God spoke to Solomon at the dedication of the Temple: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, **and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.**" II Chronicles 7:14 God proved himself over and over to be "*abundant in mercy... forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...*"

There was absolutely no reason for Jesus to die in order for anyone to be forgiven of their sins. In fact, the apostle Paul lets us know that if Christ died for something we already had without his death, then his death was wasted. Paul preached that Christ died to make us righteous, Romans 5:19 so when speaking to those who thought the Law could make a person righteous, he said, "*...for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*" Galatians 2:21 In other words; "Christ's death was without purpose if you could receive that which he died for another way!" Anything you could receive from God before Christ shed his blood could not possibly be the reason Christ died for you and me. He did not die a useless or unnecessary death.

In our salvation, forgiveness is the easy part. I say easy because it has always been in the heart and nature of God to forgive. Nothing had to change about God or his ways in order for the repentant to be forgiven. The difficult part of salvation was not what was in God's heart, but what was in our heart. God was always ready to forgive, but the heart of man was

always ready to backslide. Forgiveness was a short term solution, because the heart of man was embedded with iniquity. Until the heart of man was changed, all the forgiveness that could ever issue out of the heart of our eternal God would avail nothing. It would always be as Peter spoke, *"The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."* II Peter 2:22 Something had to happen which would forever change the heart and nature of man. The message of Ezekiel chapter 18 is *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die,"* but God continued on to say *"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."* Ezekiel 18:31-32 The problem was that no one could change what worked in their own heart, and without a new heart they could never truly turn from their iniquities. God, knowing this, spoke of a day that he would give the people a new heart and a new spirit. Ezekiel 36:22-27 This is why Christ came. Peter spoke after the lame man at the gate Beautiful was healed saying, *"Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."* Acts 3:26 This turning from iniquity did not come through another law or commandment, but by receiving a new heart and a new spirit through the work of Christ.

Christ joined with the Father to solve the hard part of our redemption. The Father forgives, as he always has, but Christ's work is to cleanse the heart and nature of the people. I say this was the hard part, because it required that he shed his blood and offer his body to accomplish this. Only his body offered in death could cause our old man to be *"crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin"* Romans 6:6. And only the shedding of his precious blood could *"cleanse us from all sin."* I John 1:7 The Father and his Son, Jesus

Christ, were never in conflict over our redemption, but always in perfect harmony. Due to the fact that both have availed for the salvation of humanity, those who come to the Father through Christ Jesus find that they together as one are *“faithful and just to forgive us our sins, AND to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* 1 John 1:9

God Bless,
Pastor Keith Surface