

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

December 11, 2016

GOD'S SELF-SACRIFICE

Before He uttered a word after Adam's great transgression, God knew what a mess Adam had made in this foolish act of rebellion, and how it delivered humanity into the hands of Satan, who would destroy them in life, body, and soul. He also was fully aware of the staggering price he would have to pay to redeem his fallen creation.

Over thirty years ago, an elder Pastor told me that Jesus did not have to die on the cross for our salvation. He said God could have saved us any way he wanted to, but he sent Jesus to the cross to show us how much he loved us. This troubled me for many reasons. Foremost were the words of Jesus in Gethsemane where he prayed, *"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me..."* Matthew 26:39 What did Jesus mean by *"if it be possible?"* We know it was possible for Jesus to escape the cross, because he said to his disciples, *"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"* Matthew 26:53 This being the case, it had to be that our redemption was not possible if Jesus did not suffer the death of the cross.

Recently someone asked me who required that blood be shed for our redemption. Was it God? "No," I responded, "God did not require it. Circumstance did!" Let me explain. We were lost.

Sin had become master of our heart and nature. Satan had dominion. There was only one possible way to change all this, but it would require the death of the Creator to redeem the creation. God was not the one requiring it. God was the one who was faced with paying the unspeakable price.

Calvary was not a human sacrifice. If it were, it would have availed nothing. If it had been just a sinless human offered on Calvary's cross, nothing would be changed; we would all still die in our sins. It was not because Jesus' blood was the blood of a man that it has the power to wash away sin, but because it is the blood of Christ. | Peter 1:19 The reason Christ "*was made flesh*" John 1:14 was so that he would have blood to shed and a body that could die. Hebrews 10:5 The eternal "*Word*" John 1:1 could not die, but when Christ took upon himself "*the likeness of sinful flesh,*" Romans 8:3 he became one who could lay down his life. No, Calvary was not a human sacrifice. It was God's self-sacrifice! God did not choose or require that a man die to save anyone. Christ became as man so that He, Christ, could suffer death, and thereby destroy Satan and deliver us. The scripture says, "*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the devil. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*" Hebrews 2:14-15 Only as a man could Christ partake of death, but he came forth out of the grave in absolute victory because he was not just a man, he was the eternal Christ, the Son of the living God!

The first promise of redemption is found in God's words to the Serpent shortly after Adam's transgression. God told the Serpent, *"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* Genesis 3:15 No one but God could understand its meaning at the time, but this stands as one of the most powerful promises of redemption ever given. The statement, *"...it shall bruise thy head,"* tells how Christ would destroy Satan and all his works. John says, *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."* I John 3:8 The statement, *"and thou shalt bruise his heel,"* tells us that in order to destroy Satan, Christ would also be "bruised." The phrase *"seed of the woman"* in this prophecy tells us that God already had committed himself to send Christ into the world to be *"made of a woman"* Galatians 4:4 and become a *"partaker of flesh and blood."* Hebrews 2:14 From Adam's day forward, every lamb that was slain on the altar, and every other sacrifice that was offered before God, was testifying of the great self-sacrifice God would one day make for the salvation of all. This is the love of God commended to us. Romans 5:8