

THE HERALDS OF TRUTH

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MADE TO BE SIN

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If sin is “the transgression of the law” and “the wages of sin is death”, what sin did Christ

commit to deserve death? The obvious and unmistakable response to this question is, Christ “did no sin” and “in Him is no sin”; and though He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5; Hebrews 4:15). Yet, it is worth mentioning to consider the fact that the Bible also has this to say about the Saviour with regards to this matter:

“For He (the Father) hath made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us...” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

If this verse is read and understood in the context of the popular notion that sin is nothing but wrong actions that contradict the law, it stands to reason that it is God who, at some point of time and unknown to us, caused or willed that His Son should transgress the very law that He wills for His subjects to obey. Christ on the other hand, who’s “meat is to do the will” of the Father who sent Him, would have done that which is pleasing in the Father’s eyes, even if it meant that the law should be broken. This reasoning poses a very serious problem because it does not go well with the teachings outlined in the Bible. For

instance, we find these words recorded in the book of James.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man:” (James 1:13)

God does not tempt or cause any man to sin, which also includes Christ. Besides, Peter pointed out that Christ “did no sin” or, in other words, He did not transgress any precept of the law. So how can one say that Christ committed sin with the intention to do God’s will? So then, what is Paul implying when He says that Christ was “made to be sin... who knew no sin”? (2 Corinthians 5:21).

First and foremost, it is helpful to be reminded that God Himself declares that His Son hates iniquity and loves righteousness (Hebrews 1:9); that is to say that Christ does not have any desire to violate the law of God. And God declares this fact so emphatically and so plainly that He leaves no room for doubt or uncertainty concerning this issue. That is why we do not find any indication anywhere in the Bible that suggests that Christ committed an act of sin.

Contents

<i>Made to be Sin</i>	1
<i>Sold Under Sin</i>	3

Keeping this in mind, I invite you to look again at the words of the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:21 more closely.

“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God through Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

If you observe closely the first part of the verse, (the part that is highlighted in blue), you will immediately realise that the Father DID NOT make Jesus to commit a sinful act, but rather He chose to make His Son to be sin or to be a sinner. It was in this way that Jesus took the place of the real sinners, the people who actually deserve to die. In other words, Jesus did not commit any sinful act yet at the same time He was “sinful.” This is backed by the second phrase in the verse (highlighted in yellow) which says that Christ knew no sin, which points to the fact that though He was made to be a “sinner”, He never committed any sinful action.

What this tells us is that, Jesus, as the second Adam, was put by God Himself in the place where Adam should have been. Adam willingly chose to separate himself from God and therefore was deserving of death, but Christ, who did not desire separation, was separated from the Father by the Father. Bereft of the presence of the Almighty God, the Saviour cried out in a loud and an agonizing voice saying, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.” (Matthew 27:46) It was at this moment that the Saviour of the world “was made to be sin for us” and yet “without sin”.

The Son of God came to this world to be part of this human race. Because He was sinless and loved righteousness, there

was no way that He would ever come under the curse of sin. Therefore, He had to be put under the curse with which sin had enslaved the world.

“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)

This verse not only validates that Christ was cursed or that He was kept under the curse, but it also tells us that this happened when He was crucified. The “curse” does not imply the curses uttered by the people who reviled Him at the time. It also does not point to the act of His enemies to sentence Him to death by the cross. To find out who actually did the cursing, we need to go to the verse from which Paul quoted in his letter to the Galatians.

“And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: 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 defied, which the LORD thy God giveth thee.” (Deuteronomy 21:22,23)

So, God did the cursing! Of all human beings, God cursed His own Son. By separating Himself from His Son, the Latter came under the curse of sin, the greatest of which is death.

As it has been pointed out in “*The True Nature of Sin*”, once man is no longer under the shadow of God’s will, he is naturally bent on committing sinful actions which produces bad consequences. This was expected of Christ for He too was a man. However,

Christ lifted the curse by remaining good and by choosing good outside of God. He was the first and the only human being who accomplished this feat, unaided by any supernatural power from heaven.

In keeping with this truth, I feel that it is vitally important for me to make mention of the fact that, once again the doctrine of the Trinity is inadequate in light of this evidence because if Jesus were God Himself, how can God separate Himself from Himself? And if Christ were God Himself, as the Trinity advocates, then He was always and at all times omnipotent. If so, then the Trinity portrays the struggles of Christ on the cross as a sham – something which does not deserve much time and reason to ponder upon.

On humanity's behalf, Adam separated himself from God by the choice that he made. Similarly, by one Man's victory, humanity is once again restored to its

former glory in Jesus Christ. As Paul points out:

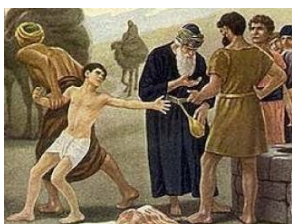
“Therefore, as by the offense of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. (Romans 5:18)

It is for this reason, therefore, that Christ had to come in the likeness of sinful flesh and after being made sin, condemned it in this flesh, so that by His victory, “we might be made the righteousness of God through Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Once again, the event on Calvary that transpired two thousand years ago is self-evident that sin is not just wrong actions but it is the state of being separated from God. The victorious life of Christ is what sinners need to overcome sinful deeds. This further adds meaning to the words of Christ when He says that He alone is the way to Father.

SOLD UNDER SIN

Reuben Warjri



One of the most notable features of the Old Testament scriptures is the vast collection of real-life accounts which, when read and properly understood, point to the greater and spiritual truths and doctrines that make up the Christian faith. For this reason, it is vitally important to address the prevailing misconception that is being floated within Christendom by some misguided people, that the Old Testament is redundant and outmoded;

and that it no longer falls under the ambit of scripture that is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” (2 Timothy 3:16). In any case, when Paul made this statement, He had the Old Testament scriptures in mind because the New Testament was yet to be compiled in the shape and form that exists today.

I also believe that God has intended that the accounts in the Old Testament serve not only as stories to be merely read, memorized and narrated to toddlers and the would-be teachers of the book, but

they also hold the key to understand the challenging questions that have puzzled and bewildered even the most learned theologians. It would be an immense help if the theologians go back to first half of the Bible in order to understand the perplexing issues that appear in the second.

As the title of the article suggests, one such challenging question that the Old Testament has the answer to, is the understanding of sin. And the account that, in my opinion, speaks volumes on this subject is the Exodus and the plight of the Jews in hands of their Egyptian masters.

To begin with, the story of the Exodus did not originate with the incident of the burning bush, in the land of Midian, when Moses was called to the ministry of God. In order to fully grasp the meaning and implications of this story, we have to go back to about five hundred years prior to this event when the brothers of Joseph, outraged at the favouritism showed by their father, Jacob, towards him, sold him to a caravan of Ishmaelite merchants who made their way to Egypt. As one thing led to another, the entire household of Jacob eventually settled in the land of Goshen which was under the realm of the Egyptian kingdom.

The otherwise insignificant assembly of Jacob's household who initially settled in Egypt, numbered about seventy individuals (read Genesis 46:27), rose to a staggering figure by the time of Moses' birth. The significant rise of Israel's population attracted unwanted attention of the Egyptian authorities, particularly that of the Pharaoh, who were apprehensive that such a significant rise of this community had the potential to

pose a threat to the sovereignty of their kingdom. Encouraged by the "need" to deal with the "problem" that "awaited" the Egyptian kingdom, the Pharaoh undertook drastic measures, one of which was the execution and the implementation of slavery in the form of forced labour.

In this story, the Pharaoh and his cohorts are an embodiment of sin and its subjugating nature which finds expression in the words of the Pharaoh, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go." (Exodus 5:2). The children of Israel in Moses's day, on the other hand, represents the condition of humanity that is subject to sin. Just as the Israelites found themselves in this predicament solely on the basis of the choices and decisions made by their forefathers, similarly, humanity is kept under the power of sin, not by its own choice but, by the choice of Adam alone. In delivering Joseph to slavery, the sons of Jacob were essentially surrendering themselves and their posterity to slavery. The Israelites who were born in Egypt, were born into slavery. Correspondingly, in yielding his will to the arch enemy of souls, Adam sold himself and the entire human race to be slaves of Satan and sin. No human being was born without sin. Sin is what characterizes and defines humanity. Paul aptly sums it up when he says, "I am carnal, sold under sin." (Romans 7:14). Indeed, Paul, like all of us, was kept under the power and influence of sin against his own will.

As slaves, the Israelites could not exercise their will freely but they were forced to function under a system or a law that was at variance to the law of their

minds. This system under which they were made subjects of, represents the carnal nature that keeps us from performing the will of God.

“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Romans 8:7)

The carnal nature also resonates with the words of the Pharaoh when he says, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice”. The carnal mind cannot and will not yield itself to the will of the Father. Even if the man who is put under its power yearns to fight against it, he will never succeed. Again, the apostle Paul expresses this fact so emphatically.

“For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent to the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” (Romans 7:15-17).

It is unmistakably clear that the sinful, carnal nature that pollutes the life of man manifests itself in the actions which, undoubtedly, contradict the law of God. And Paul says that this carnal nature is the sin that dwells inside of him. In obeying their task masters, the Israelites acknowledged that they were slaves of the Egyptians. In a similar way, our actions, whether good or bad, reveal whose servants we are.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourself servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16)

This verse testifies to the fact that our nature is revealed in our actions. The carnal nature produces sinful actions whereas, the spiritual nature produces righteous actions.

But there is yet another side to this story. Have you ever considered the possibility that there were some among the Israelites who were handicapped and, therefore, they could not be actively utilised in the slave labour that the rest of their fellow countrymen and women were subjected to? Most probably, these people would be spending most of their time at home, essentially doing nothing, and they would not have to worry about obeying any task master. It may seem impossible to class this group of individuals as slaves because their “actions” or “inactions” do not resonate with the definition of a person who is being put under forced labour. But even under such circumstances, this did not alter the fact that such individuals were also slaves of the Egyptian Empire because when Pharaoh said that he would not let Israel go, he meant every Israelite – handicapped or unhandicapped.

This analogy fits within the framework of sin not being limited only to the actions that we take. Whether we lie motionless on the bed, or isolate ourselves from evil influences, or perhaps, we even follow the law to the letter, it does not make void the fact that we are sinners. Sin is who we are and what we are because this is where Adam has put us. Because Christianity has failed to understand this vital truth about sin, it has attributed righteousness solely to good behaviour or, as some might connote, the strict observance of the law. But Paul makes it clear that this line of thought is not Biblically sound.

*“If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; **touching righteousness which is in the law, blameless.** But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be*

*found in Him, **not having my own righteousness, which is of the law,** but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:” (Philippians 3:4-9)*

There is no better person who fits the criteria of a righteous man, as per the standards of the law, other than Paul or anyone belonging to that “elite” class dubbed as the “Pharisees”. And yet he counts this righteousness nothing but dung. His statement implies that if the righteousness that comes by way of good works is not righteousness at all, then sin also cannot be limited to evil deeds.

Notes

The Heralds of Truth is one of Christ In You Ministries' endeavours to restore the truths that have been lost and trampled to the ground. We hope that by this avenue, we can motivate our readers to search for truth as for hidden treasures. This newsletter is published on a monthly basis and it is free of cost for anyone who desires to acquire it.

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