

GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.34, August 20, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter**— a weekly Bible Study, plus news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church... sent forth to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide who receive the Newsletter), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

[NOTE: This newsletter is EDITED from articles saved on my computer, a number of years in the past. Authors or location of the articles were not given or no longer worked.]

JESUS CHRIST— “He is the PROPITIATION for our sins!”

There are many who act as if — "God is love" — is God's only quality. HOWEVER, THE WORD OF GOD IS PLAIN: "God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11) "God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies." (Nahum 1:2) The teaching of God's wrath is in the New Testament as well as the Old, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18).

The reason for God's holy wrath is the offensive nature of sin. God hates sin. From the beginning, God warned that disobedience, rebellion, would bring death. Thus, sin pays wages— 'the wages of sin is death!' (Romans 6:23) Thus, in holy justice God is steadfast in His wrath against sinners. The sinner ABIDES UNDER the holy wrath of God! (John 3:36) The prophet Nahum states, "The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked." (Nahum 1:3) God cannot simply overlook sin. He is holy and will not just pretend sin didn't happen.

BUT NOTE CAREFULLY: God will punish SINNERS - not sin - but SINNERS in the lake of fire and in the presence of the LAMB OF GOD! (Revelation 14:8-11; 20:11-15; 21:8) YES, GOD IS ALSO LOVE— however, His love is holy and cannot be given at the expense of His holiness or justice.

Christ's Substitutionary Work on the Cross Made JESUS the Object of God's Wrath

On the cross Christ was experiencing sin for sinners. "For He [GOD, the Father] made Him [JESUS] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a **curse** for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')" (Galatians 3:13) "Surely He has **borne our griefs** and carried our **sorrows**. . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. . . the LORD has **laid on Him the iniquity of us all**. . . **it pleased the LORD to bruise Him**; He has **put Him to grief**. When You **make His soul an offering for sin**" (Isaiah 53:6-8, 10) "And He (JESUS) is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:2). The word 'PROPITIATION' means to turn away wrath by sacrifice. JESUS came to earth to become the sinners' sacrifice. CHRISTIAN: Jesus absorbed God's holy wrath, which you deserved, in your place.

Jesus was Actually Forsaken!

In that He, in fact, experienced the wrath of God on the cross Jesus was in some way, forsaken. Jesus, as Man, had lived in continuous fellowship with the Father - "And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." (John 8:29). Yet, now, at the cross His fellowship with the Father is broken. There is a thick darkness covering the day (verse 45). It is not merely the absence of light, it is spiritual and it is thick. Jesus is experiencing the wrath of God, the wrath which we deserved, as our substitute. The word He uses for this, He takes from Psalm 22:1, *forsaken*. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

"I remember, also, that our blessed Lord had lived in unbroken fellowship with God, and to be forsaken was a new grief to him. He had never known what the dark was till then: his life had been lived in the light of God... His fellowship with the Father was of the highest, deepest, fullest order; and what must the loss of it have been? We lose but drops when we lose our joyful experience of heavenly fellowship; and yet the loss is killing: but to our Lord Jesus Christ the sea was dried up I mean his sea of fellowship with the infinite God." (Charles Spurgeon)

Notice that Jesus speaks as Man to God, not as Son to Father. His prayer addresses, "My God, My God," not "My Father." Jesus is functioning as a man functions and dies on the cross functioning as a man. As He addresses God, it is not a cry of total despair. It is a cry of submission and dependence. In Psalm 22, the context is of one who is trusting in the Lord.

"The question has been asked, 'How can God forsake God?' The answer must be that God the Father deserted the Son's human nature. . ." (William Hendriksen, New Testament Commentary on Matthew, page 971). Jesus is God incarnate, with all the qualities which make man man including a human spirit and emotions.

On the cross Jesus never ceased to be who He is— God. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). Jesus functioned as a man, really and fully man— and He died as a man, experiencing suffering and death and the unknown as a man. He was forsaken not only as our sin bearer, but as a man. He was forsaken as our substitute... He was forsaken that God might never leave nor forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5; Romans 8:31-39)

On the Cross, Jesus suffered ‘the punishment that brought us peace!’

“In God’s mysterious yet amazing action the future judgment was brought forward and experienced by Christ the sinner’s substitute in order that all who belong to him might be justified here and now and escape the wrath to come. What happened to our Lord on the cross during those three hours of uncanny darkness and dereliction was absolute hell.

‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Mark 15:34). He endured the awful judgment of God in body, mind and spirit. That figure on the cross was still a human being. Even though his appearance ‘was marred beyond human likeness’ (Isaiah 52:14), he was not in a state of ‘total non-being’. The Bible tells us that, ‘The punishment that brought us peace was upon him’ (Isaiah 53:5).

There on that central cross we have a glimpse on earth, in time and space, of what the future torment will be like. But the full horror cannot be depicted; it is veiled behind the three hours of silence and darkness.” (author unknown)

JESUS DRANK ‘THE CUP!’

God’s wrath or punishment of sinners is sometimes described as a cup. In the agony of Gethsemane Jesus prayed to the Father, ‘Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will’ (Mark 14:36). Later, when Jesus had to rebuke Peter he said, ‘Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me’ (John 18:11). This cup of the Lord’s wrath is spoken of by the prophets, in such passages as Isaiah 51:17-23 and Jeremiah 25:15-29.

When Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin for us, there on the cross he tasted the full fury of God’s wrath in the place of sinners.

The ‘Cup’... on Judgment Day! The same cup will also be poured out full strength on the day of judgment. ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image. ..he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath.. .The smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night’ (Revelation 14:9-11).

The Lord Jesus Christ who received the full force of that punishment when he became the sinner’s substitute is the very Person who has been appointed Judge on the Day of Judgment and ‘He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel

of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on that day...' (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; cf. Matthew 10:28; 25:4 1; Mark 9:43).

The Atoning Sacrifice— stated again!

The substitutionary death of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice to propitiate or satisfy the wrath of God is so essential— for by his atoning death Christ has made full, sufficient and final satisfaction for the sins of those he represents. **He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, who satisfies God's righteous wrath and who completely satisfies the demands of the law.** The liberals of the past rejected Christ's propitiatory sacrifice and many modern evangelicals seem to be embarrassed by it. Without it, however, it would be a sheer impossibility for God to justify sinners. Justification would be a legal fiction and a denial of God's righteous nature and activity.

In order for God to remain true to his character, sin must be justly dealt with. Only through Christ, the sinless one, identifying himself with sinners and receiving what sin deserves can guilty sinners who rely on Christ be immune from punishment. **God has presented Jesus Christ as the propitiatory sacrifice in order to 'demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus' (Romans 3:25-26).** Sinners need not only a representative head who is righteous, but one who will act as their substitute and endure the penalty which their sin deserves.

JESUS on the Cross is the love of God in Christ which is at work propitiating his own righteous indignation for the benefit of us sinners. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 4:10; cf. also 2:1-2 [AV]).

REDEMPTION and PROPITIATION— Romans 3:21-26

Romans 3:21 - The necessary righteousness to be provided by God was never intended to be achieved by the law. Rather, that righteousness is altogether apart from the law. As verses found later in the chapter explain (e.g., verse 28), the plan for righteousness has always been centered in the person and work of the Messiah and not in the works of the law. It was only prophesied by the law as well as the prophets. (1 Peter 1:11)

Romans 3:22, 23 - The righteousness of God is manifested in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That righteousness is placed upon the sinner the moment that faith is placed in Jesus Christ. Throughout the New Testament (even in places referring to the Old Testament period such as in Romans 4), faith is declared to be the medium through which the sinner is saved from sin.

JESUS Christ proclaims, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) Faith when placed in Jesus Christ is the channel through which sinners are declared righteous by God and are saved.

Thus, Ephesians 2:8-10 declares, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Romans 3:24 - Redemption. The price to be paid for justification far exceeded any amount that any sinner could afford. However, that price was paid by Christ on the cross. The payment was not a matter of supply and demand. Christ did not need righteousness; He already had it. Nevertheless, He purchased so that He could redeem those who could not afford it. The payment that was paid by the Lord Jesus Christ made it possible for redemption to be free for all who believe. Only the grace of God could afford the price of justification!

Romans 3:25 - Propitiation. The Lord Jesus Christ was given by God to be a propitiation for sinners. The idea conveyed by the term 'propitiation' "signifies the turning away of wrath by an offering." This idea is firmly connected with the Old Testament concept of the wrath of God upon the sin of men. The death of Christ stands as a means of turning God's divine wrath from sinners upon Christ Himself. As Dr. Leon Morris states,

"The paradox of the Old Testament is repeated in the New that God Himself provides the means of removing His own wrath." Propitiation: Christ absorbed God's wrath on the cross in the place of the believing sinner.

Romans 3:26 - God's righteousness is held to the end. God remains just in that His wrath was poured out upon sin. However, He retains His position as the Justifier in that the Lord Jesus Christ absorbed that wrath on the Cross.

The sin of man was placed on Christ (Is. 53:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:24) and He bore man's punishment accordingly. By that same process of imputation, Christ was able to achieve righteousness on our behalf. It is His righteousness that is reckoned to the account of the sinner who believes. The end result is the pronouncement of the sinner as righteous before a holy God when that sinner places his faith in Christ. That pronouncement is the very heart of justification.

It is extremely important to note that the declaration of a sinner being justified is just that - a declaration. Despite this declaration, the sinner remains sinful but is redeemed and forgiven and now indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The righteousness of Christ is placed on the account of the believing sinner. Therefore, it is by His righteousness alone that the sinner is declared righteous.

The believing sinner is declared righteous and has that standing before God as if he were righteous. Nevertheless, that righteousness is not his own. Though justified, he remains nothing more than a justified sinner.

Nothing changes in the sinner in order for him to be justified. If anything did change, it would not be the work of Christ alone, and that is simply not allowed by Scripture. Once the righteousness of Christ is placed on the sinner's account, then, and only then, is everything in the sinner changed. That is why Paul declares the following:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:17-19)

THINK ON THESE THINGS!

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