

THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Both the apostle John and the writer to the Hebrews said that Jesus was the Creator God who created humans and all that exists for the Sovereign God.

But what was it that was so important that this Creator God thought it necessary to divest himself of his immortality and come to earth to live among mankind and to experience life as a human being for a little over 30 years and then allow his creation to murder him?

Why did the apostle Paul make the crucifixion of Jesus Christ the central theme of his ministry? Why did he feel that the crucifixion of Jesus outweighed all of the other things that could be said about the gospel message concerning Christ? And what does the crucifixion have to do with you, your loved ones, and the rest of humanity?

The reason that Paul made the crucifixion of Jesus the central theme of his ministry was because he knew that if one understood the meaning Christ's crucifixion one could understand God's the plan for the salvation of humanity. Because it is through understanding the events and prophecies surrounding the sacrificial death of Jesus that one can truly understand the Father's grace and mercy toward humanity, the way by which we may have our sins forgiven, the way to make peace with the Father, and the way to obtain eternal and immortal life.

Through the centuries since the death and resurrection of Jesus the reason that he came to earth has been almost totally misunderstood by those who profess to follow his teachings. Today, if you continue to listen to what I have to say you will come to understand one of the best kept secrets of the Bible concerning why the Creator God came to earth and what he accomplished while he was here.

It is only through an understanding of the good news message about Jesus Christ and the salvation that comes through him that one can begin to realize the great love and concern that the Father and his Son have for humanity.

In his lengthy greeting to the elect at Rome, Paul specifically states that he is in the service of Jesus Christ and God the Father for the express purpose of proclaiming the Father's good news message concerning his Son and the meaning of his being made flesh. notice what he says to the Romans in chapter 1:

Romans 1:1-3, 8-9; 15-16 Paraphrased

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the good news message of God the Father. That he promised, by his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, that was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (vs.1-3). See also 1.Thes.3:1-2.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the good news of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers" (vs.8-9).

Paul continues to say:

"I am also ready to preach the good news to you that are at Rome. For I am not ashamed of the good news of Christ: for it is the power of God the Father to give salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (vs.15-16). See also 1.Cor.9:18; 2.Cor.9:13; 10:14; Phil.1:27.

Before the advent of the Messiah there was no method by which people could be saved from eternal death because of their violation of God's law.

An extremely important point is that Paul says that, it is through Christ's successful performance of his mission contained in the good news message that the Father now has the power (that is, the means) through which he can save those who truly believe what they are told about Christ.

WHO WAS JESUS?

Today, there is almost a total misconception about Jesus Christ, who he was, what he is now, why he came, what he taught, and what he accomplished.

History clearly shows that Jesus was not a myth or a legend, he did exist. He was a real human being who preached and taught God's word with great power and zeal; however, very few truly know the truth about this man.

The God Who Became Man

In the first chapter of John, beginning in verse 1, John says this about the God who became a man.

John 1:1-5;10-14 KJV

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shined in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (vs.1-5).

John said that in the beginning there was a God-being he described as the Word, and this God-being was with another being that was also called God. John further said:

"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (vs.10-14). See also Heb.1:1-2.

There can be no doubt that the God that John spoke of as being the Word was the God who created all things. And there can be no doubt, if one diligently searches the scriptures, that this same God was the Creator God who became Jesus Christ:

The immortal God, the Creator of all things, possessed the highest form of existence (life that springs forth from itself, never dying or decaying). This God emptied himself of his glory, power, and immortality to become a mortal man who was

subject to death.

Then, he gave his life as a ransom and sacrifice for all people. Jesus knew that he had come into this world for the express purpose of dying for the sins of humanity. He also knew that if he failed in his mission, humanity would be without hope of eternal life.

The death of the Sovereign Father's only earthly Son was such a profound and awesome event that almost a third of the four gospels are devoted to this one subject. The apostle John alone uses almost half of his entire gospel narrative to explain the details surrounding the meaning of the Passover and the sacrifice of God. Notice what the writer to the Hebrews says about the God who died:

The God Who Died

"But now in these days he [speaking of God the Father] has spoken to us through his Son [speaking of Jesus] to whom he has given everything, and through whom he made the world and everything there is. God's Son shines out with God's glory, and all that God's Son is and does marks him as God. He regulates the universe by the mighty power of his command. He is the one who died to cleanse us and clear our record of all sin, and then sat down in highest honor beside the great God of heaven" (Heb.1:2-3 LBP).

The Creator God who made all that exists voluntarily gave up his immortality to come to earth in human form, live a sinless life as an example for us to follow, and sacrifice his life in an agonizing death as payment for the sins of humanity. He did this so that each of us could be saved from eternal death, which we earned as a result of our violation of his Father's perfect law. See 1.Cor.6:20; 7:23; Ezk18:4,20; Rom.6:23.

The Agreement With National Israel

After being freed from the bondage and slavery of Egypt, the Israelites camped at the foot of Mount Sinai where they made an agreement with God to do whatever he told them. In return for this obedience, God promised to give them tremendous physical

and spiritual blessings that included eternal salvation.

Moses wrote this agreement in a book, read the agreement to the people, and the people again agreed to do whatever God required of them. Then, Moses sprinkled the book and the people with the blood of an animal that was sacrificed for the specific purpose of ratifying and sealing the agreement.

Although national Israel broke their agreement with God, he had no intention of forgetting his unconditional promise to the Patriarchs and their descendants, among whom the Israelites are only one nation. Because of these prior commitments to the Patriarchs, especially the Patriarch Abraham, God will continue to work with the nation of Israel until his purpose for humanity is accomplished.

A New Agreement Promised

The prophet Jeremiah recorded this important promise from God:

"Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the agreement that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them out of the land of Egypt; and that agreement they broke, although I was as a husband to them, says the Lord (Jer.31:31-32 Para.).

It is clear from the writings of the prophets and the things recorded in the New Testament that the first agreement with national Israel has been canceled. It is also clear that a new agreement with national Israel was initiated by Jesus Christ and will be formalized with them after his return to establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth. See Ezk.20:38; 34:12-13.

In Hebrews chapter 10, beginning in verse 5, we see the two primary reasons for the coming of the Messiah, which are the bringing of a perfect sacrifice and the establishment of a new and better agreement:

"Wherefore, when he comes into the world, he says, Sacrifice and offering you do not want, but a body have you prepared for me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do your will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offerings for sin you do not want, neither had pleasure in them; which are offered by the law. Then said he, lo, I come to do your will, O God. He takes away the first that he may establish the second." (vs.5-9).

The writer refers to the agreement that the Creator God had first made with the Patriarchs and national Israel concerning how to atone for the violation of God's law. The Creator God came in the person of Jesus Christ to remove the first agreement and establish another that had far better terms and conditions along with a far better method for the atonement of sin.

God the Father is not interested in the killing of animals just for the sake of killing. He nor Jesus Christ gain pleasure from the death of sacrificial animals. They would not have required them to be sacrificed if they were not necessary for the atonement of people's sins and to teach the lesson that the penalty for the violation of the law of God is death (Rom.6:23):

The problem with all humans, is that, by ourselves we do not have the ability to continually live in obedience to God's basic laws of behavior. Therefore, the sacrificial system was necessary in order to put people back into right-standing with God so that people could have a harmonious relationship with him.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST AND THE NEW AGREEMENT

During the Passover ceremony and just prior to his crucifixion, Jesus made some very profound statements concerning his impending death and the blood that would drain from his body. He said:

1. The New Testament

"For this is my blood of the new testament" (Matt.26:28 Para.).

Within the new agreement with national Israel is the new testament that contains the various benefits for those who have lived or will live during the different ages of salvation.

In order to bring the new agreement containing his new testament into force, Jesus had to fulfill the prophetic symbols concerning the Passover and the prophecies concerning the Messiah. He did this through his righteous life and his sacrificial death:

2. The Remission of Sins

The Bible says that all have sinned and are under a death sentence waiting to be executed. In order to escape execution, a person must have their sins forgiven and be justified (that is, made innocent) before God the Father. Prior to the new agreement, the Creator God allowed the life of an animal to be substituted for the life of the violator in order to cover the violator's sins and temporarily hide them from his sight.

In order to form a new and better covenant, the Creator God became the man Jesus Christ and sacrificed his own life as a substitute for the life of sinners (Heb.8:1-10; Isa.43:11; 45:21).

It is through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ and his intercessory authority with the Father that we can have our sins forgiven and forgotten.

Jesus Christ, the Creator God and Son of God the Father, holds the key to our salvation because he is our Savior (Isa.43:11; 45:21). It is of great importance for anyone who is seeking salvation to understand and believe who Jesus Christ was and is, and that he gave his sinless life to pay the penalty for the sins of humanity. It is only through his sacrifice and his intercessory authority with the Father that we can have our sins forgiven:

In his introduction to the Revelations given him by Jesus Christ John says: "Grace to you, and peace,

from the One who is, and who was, and who is coming; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne; Even from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us, and frees us from our sins by his blood" (Rev.1:4-5 Para.).

3. The New Agreement

Jesus also said during the last Passover that he observed:

"This cup is the new covenant [agreement] in my blood, that is being poured out for you" (Lk.22:20 Para.).

The events surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were the literal fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the cancellation of the first agreement with national Israel and the ratification of a new agreement with Israel and the rest of humanity.

The writer to the Hebrews says this about Jesus statement about the new covenant:

"By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear" (Heb.8:13 NIV).

Ratified and Sealed With Blood

Just as the first agreement with national Israel was sealed with blood, so was the second. The writer to the Hebrews says this about the new agreement.

"To the general assembly the church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel" (Heb.12:23-24 KJV). See also Isa.52:15.

The sacrificial blood of dedication under the first agreement with ancient Israel was symbolic of the purifying nature of the blood of Jesus Christ. Because the holy spirit resides within the children of

God, the purifying blood of Christ's sacrifice is applied to them before they become holy people dedicated to God's service.

A NEW AND BETTER AGREEMENT

While speaking of God's first agreement with national Israel, the writer to the Hebrews says that the ministry of Christ is more excellent than that of the priesthood who offered sacrifices and that these were only examples and shadows of what was to come from heaven. He also says that Christ has instituted a much better agreement than the first agreement (Heb.8:5):

"But now has he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better agreement, which was established upon better promises" (Heb.8:6 KJV).

The new agreement is better than the old one, because it is based upon better promises, better terms, conditions, and better benefits than those in the first agreement with national Israel.

FIVE MAJOR CHANGES

There are many differences between the first and second agreements with national Israel; however, there are five major changes that make this agreement better than the first:

- A perfect sacrifice
- A perfect high priest
- The forgiveness of sin
- The law placed within God's children
- The holy spirit dwelling within God's children

1. A Perfect Sacrifice

Hebrews chapter 10, beginning in verse 1, says this about Christ's perfect sacrifice:

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb.10:1-4 KJV).

The sacrifices had to be given year after year, yet they could never save the people from their sins. Why? Because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. The reason for this is that an inferior animal cannot pay the penalty for a superior being's violation of the law, and a human life is superior to that of an animal. Humans were created inferior to the angels, but with the potential to become a superior being. Neither angels nor animals have the potential to become literal sons of God the Father.

The inadequacy of the sacrifices is another reason for the first agreement being inferior to the new one. Animal sacrifice could only provide a temporary stay of execution for the violator of God's law. Under the sacrificial system before the advent of Messiah, the penalty for the violation of the law could only be temporarily set aside by the blood of a sacrificial animal. Therefore, there was a need for a perfect sacrifice and a new agreement.

Notice what the writer to the Hebrews says about the sacrificial blood of Christ being the ultimate and final sacrifice for the purging of physical and spiritual defilement (which is sin):

"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? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb.9:14-15 KJV).

Because of Christ's righteous and sinless life, he could not be put to death for his own sin; therefore, he was the perfect sacrifice for the sins of others. And since he was the Creator of all things, his life

was worth far more than anything he had created. Moreover, his blood, which contained his life could be substituted for the life of a sinner.

The blood of Christ is not only the blood that atones for and purges the sins of a repentant believer but also the blood by which a new agreement is ratified and sealed with the nation of Israel and the rest of humanity.

2. A Perfect High Priest

Because of the imperfection of both the sacrifices and the High Priest of Israel, no human could pass beyond the Creator God and into the presence of the Sovereign God. But why wasn't this possible?

The reason is that the Father dwells in heaven, and any human who is allowed to come into his presence must be totally sinless, holy, and righteous. No human could qualify or had the authority to go before him before the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, because before the advent of Christ, all were sinners and under the death penalty for the violation of God's law. Therefore, there was a need for a perfect High Priest.

Jesus Christ is now the High Priest who sits at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. And because of his sacrifice and the new agreement, a new and life-giving way to gain access to the very presence of God the Father has been opened up: Notice what the writer to the Hebrews says about Christ:

"But now has he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better agreement, which was established upon better promises" (Heb.8:6 KJV).

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; And having a high priest over the house of God" (Heb.10:19-21 KJV).

The writer shows a change in the conditions of the agreement with Israel; this change allows the elect of God during the gospel age of salvation to go

directly before God the Father without going to a physical priest and having him speak to God on their behalf, which was done under the first agreement with national Israel:

Our High Priest

Jesus Christ now holds an extremely important position, that is vital to our salvation. This position is that of our High Priest. It is because he lives that he is able to be our High Priest and to intercede on our behalf before the Father:

Hebrews chapter 4, beginning in verse 14 tells us that Christ is now the heavenly high priest:

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb.4:14-15 KJV). See also Heb.2:14-18; 9:7-28.

Jesus Christ is our High Priest and Mediator, he understands our weaknesses as human beings. And because he has been human, he understands our proclivity to sin (Heb.2:14-18). Therefore, when we petition the Father, Christ intercedes on our behalf.

Jesus knows how weak the flesh is and he can explain to the Father, who has never been human, how difficult it is to dwell in this flesh. Then the Father can also understand and have mercy on us and forgive us of our sins, because we all sin. We still need forgiveness on an ongoing basis, so that we can always stand before the Father as righteous individuals.

3. The Forgiveness of Sin

Paul told the church at Rome:

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant to them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom.11:26-27 KJV).

Until Jesus Christ came and offered himself as a perfect sacrifice, all of Israel along with the rest of humanity were without hope of eternal life. All faced the termination of existence at death, because there was no adequate sacrifice to pay for the sins of humanity. Therefore, if the Messiah had not come, or if he had come and failed in his mission to offer himself as the perfect sacrifice, all humanity would be doomed because there would be no way to be saved from eternal death.

The Blood of Christ

The law of God requires that a violator of the law must be put to death (Ezk.18:4,20; Rom.6:23). However, under all of the old agreements, the Creator God allowed the life of an animal to be substituted for the life of the violator in order to temporarily set sins aside.

In order to form a new and better agreement (Heb.8:1-10) and provide a way through which violations of the law could be totally forgiven, the Creator God came to earth as a human and sacrificed his own life as a substitute for the lives of those who violate his Father's law.

It is only through Jesus Christ's perfect sacrifice and intercessory authority with the Father that all who avail themselves of the new agreement can have their sins forgiven and forgotten by the Father.

As human beings, we cannot begin to comprehend or understand the enormous sacrifice the Creator made when he became a human. The price he paid was worth more than the sum total of all that exists, because he was and is the Creator of all that exists.

The perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ not only removes the sins of those under the new agreement but also because of Christ's perfect sacrifice, the Father forgets those sins forever, and his children stand before him as innocent and righteous individuals.

Once Christ made the perfect sacrifice, there was no longer a need for any other sacrifice to ever be made again for the atonement of spiritual/moral sin as was done under previous agreements with the Patriarchs

and national Israel.

4. The Law Placed Within

Because people under the old covenant did not have the law of God as a part of their mental and spiritual make-up, they found it very difficult to obey and worship God properly. Because of this innate problem with people, God decided that he would form a new agreement and include a provision to change what was wrong with people by placing his law in their minds and spirits.

The prophet Jeremiah tells us this about the new agreement:

"But this shall be the agreement that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer.31:33 Para.).

Because God has only one set of laws that show people how to behave toward each other and how they should worship him, it seems logical that the law being spoken of in Jeremiah chapter the same law that he gave to the nation of Israel as a part of his first agreement with them. This is the same law that is to be written in the hearts and minds of people under the new agreement. In other words, he will write these laws in their very beings, thereby making the law a part of the thinking process of individuals he calls to salvation.

5. The Holy Spirit

After Christ came, anyone who accepts the terms and conditions of the new agreement has no excuse for not being able to successfully obtain salvation, because under the new agreement, each person has the tools that will guarantee success, if they properly use them.

The most important tool that God gives people to help them in their effort to please him and to obtain salvation is the holy spirit.

Prior to and during the first agreement with national Israel, various attributes and functions of the holy spirit were given to a few people, but with limitations placed on the kinds of attributes, functions, qualities, and power that were given. The Bible also show that many of these individuals who had this spirit-power within them will be in the first resurrection along with those who are called to salvation during the gospel age.

Under the new agreement with national Israel, there is now a better method by which a person can secure salvation and eternal life. This new method will succeed where the old one failed because it has a perfect sacrifice, a perfect High Priest, the forgiveness of sin, the law placed within our minds and spirits and the indwelling of the holy spirit.

AN EVERLASTING AGREEMENT

The new agreement with national Israel, the elect of God, and the rest of humanity concerning how to obtain salvation will never fade away, but will continue to exist after the return of Jesus Christ until God's plan for the salvation of humanity is accomplished.

After Christ's return to establish his Father's kingdom on earth, all people will have an opportunity to receive the spirit of God; moreover, they will have spiritual strength available to successfully obey God (Jer.50:19-20).

Today, prior to Christ's return, the New Agreement brings with it an opportunity to be among the first of humanity to be made a part of the Family of God as sons of God the Father like Jesus Christ is. It offers an eternal inheritance of the earth and all that exists in this physical dimension of time and space and a spiritual inheritance so fantastic that it cannot even be comprehended by the human mind. All of this and more is offered by God the Father to those he calls and extends the new agreement to in this age of human existence.

SUMMARY

Jesus Christ was the Creator God before his human birth, he came to earth and lived a righteous life in perfect obedience to his Father's law, and he unselfishly substituted his life for our lives in payment for our sin. Because he did this there is now a new and better agreement between God the Father and humanity.

The good news message concerning Jesus Christ and the New Agreement ensures that humanity is now guaranteed an opportunity for salvation with a much simpler and easier method to maintain a harmonious relationship with God the Father and obtain eternal life in the Family and Kingdom of God.

I see that my time is up, but if you want to know more about the Sovereign God's plan for your future and many reasons that he sent the Creator God to earth as the Messiah, and why these reasons are so important to you, your loved ones, and the rest of mankind. Write to me at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell for Bible research .org.

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