

H O U S E o f W I S D O M

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Email: woody@dtgministries.org; Website: http://www.dtgministries.org

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Why The Cross?

Did Jesus have to die in order for humanity to be saved? Did God know ahead of time that he would be killed? I think both of these are true, as the Son was slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

Is God keeping a record of each person's sins so that we can all be judged? Was Jesus' death on the cross considered by God as a propitiation (appeasement) for all mankind's sins so that we could go to heaven?

Did God require His Son to die because the penalty of sin had to be paid? Was Jesus mankind's substitute, so that when we accept him as our Savior, God then looks at Jesus instead of us? Were all our sins are put on Jesus at the cross? The last five questions suggest that our sins cannot be removed without someone dying.

The concepts contained in the questions above I was either taught, or have heard at one time or another from other Christians. Do these ideas leave a picture in your mind of the same God described in the following verses?

John 3:16-17: 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him (Revised Standard). God so loved and desired that the people of the world be saved, that He sent His Son knowing he would die. What is it that we have to believe to be saved? Abraham believed what the Lord told him, and it (his faith) was counted to him for righteousness (Gen 15:4-6).

1John 4:16: *we have known and believed the love, that God hath in us; God is love, and he who is remaining in the love, in God he doth remain, and God in him* (Young's Literal Translation).

1Corinthians 13:5: (Love) *Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks* ^(g3049) no evil (KJV).

It (love) does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record ^(g3049) of wrongs (NIV).

The NIV correctly inserts the proper meaning of the Greek word *logizomai* ^(g3049) as *keeps no record*. Strong defines it as *does not take an inventory*. In other words, God is love and love does not keep a record of our sins. This same concept is also expressed in **2Corinthians 5:19:** *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing* ^(g3049) (not keeping a record of) *their trespasses ...* (KJV).

God DOES NOT keep a record of anyone's sins. We are keeping the record of everything done by us and against us, which is stored in the mind. Scientists say that we can only recall about 10% of our total memory. Yet, the other 90%, buried in the subconscious, influences how we think and act. The fact that God is not keeping a record negates the ideas that Jesus died to pay a penalty for sin, that our personal sins were laid on him at the cross, or that the act was to appease God. So, there has to be an explanation for verses that seem to teach these concepts.

Right after saying that God does not keep a record of our sins, Paul said, **2Corinthians 5:20-21:** 20. Now then we are ambassadors for ^(g5228) Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in ^(g5228) Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21. For ^(g1063) he hath made him to be sin for ^(g5228) us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. The word for is used for two Greek words, and one of the Greek words is also rendered as in. *Gar* ^(g1063) properly assigns a reason, while *hyper* ^(g5228) in the Genitive case means *in behalf of, for the benefit of*. Rewriting the verses we have: 20. Now then we are ambassadors in behalf of ^(g5228) Christ, as though God is calling you through us: we beg you in behalf of ^(g5228) Christ, be ye reconciled to God. 21. For

(the reason of reconciliation) ^(g1063) *he (God) hath made him to be sin for the benefit of ^(g5228) us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

How was Christ made to be sin and how does that benefit us? **Galatians 3:13:** *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse [for the sake of] us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree: Romans 8:3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and [concerning] sin, condemned sin in the flesh: Christ was made to be sin by coming in sinful flesh; He became a curse and was crucified based on man's perverted understanding of the law. In the eyes of the Jews he was a sinner. However, when we understand the cross, we see the sinless Lamb of God and all the things done to him were because of our sins and also for our benefit by understanding it.*

Isaiah 53:6: *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on ^(h6293) him the iniquity of us all. Compare this to **Ezekiel 18:20:** *The soul that sins, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. If one person cannot and will not bear another's iniquity, why would God contradict his own inspired word, and lay man's iniquity on Christ? He did not do that! Examine the verb in the phrase *the Lord hath laid ^(h6293) on ^(no Strong #) him the iniquity of us all* which is in the Hebrew *causative* (i.e. the subject is causing the action of the verb) and the meaning of the Hebrew is to meet. The phrase should be translated as - *the Lord made to meet ^(h6293) in him the iniquity of us all*. The *iniquity* made to meet in Christ was because of his human birth. **Hebrews 2:14:** *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same...* The Son of God took man's fallen nature, but was without sin (See also Hebrews 4:15; Romans 8:3). Is Isaiah 53 speaking of Christ?**

Isaiah 53:1: *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? **John 12:37-38:** 37. *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38. That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* Christ is referred to figuratively as the arm of the Lord.*

Isaiah 53:4: *Surely he hath borne ^(h5375) our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. **Matthew 8:16-17:** 16. *When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. The phrase *he hath borne* ^(h5375) *our griefs* should be translated, *he lifted up our griefs*, which is how Matthew understood it. Christ does not take our personal sins into himself - he lifts them up from us by giving us an understanding of the truth so that we can stop doing wrong. **Psalms 32:1:** 1. *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered* (Proverbs 10:12). 2. *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity...* If the Lord is not imputing iniquity, then there is nothing to forgive. So, what does the Hebrew say: *Blessed is he whose transgression is lifted up*. God lifts up our corrupted thoughts by giving us truth.**

1John 1:7: 7. *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.* The key to being cleansed from sin, is to apply (walk) the light (understanding) God gives us through the experience of the cross. This begins with the understanding of the Father and Son, and coming to know and practice the love of God. Therefore, *All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets...* *For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself* (cp Matthew 7:12; Galatians 5:14, American Standard). Amen.