

## MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

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Many people have been puzzled by the words spoken by our Lord from the cross of Calvary: *My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?* If they have been puzzled by these words, they have probably been puzzled by our Lord's prayer in Gethsemane and the fact that He sweat great drops of blood. These two events are closely associated with the curse of sin that was imputed to our Lord to effect our redemption:

And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:41-44, emphasis mine)

If we are to understand the circumstances that evoked these words, it is imperative that we consider our Lord's words in the light of Who He is. The Scriptures reveal that He is God; they reveal that God is Omniscient; they reveal that He was incarnated, by means of the virgin birth, to fulfill every jot and tittle of the law, to fulfill all righteousness and to offer Himself as a ransom

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for sin. Thus the Scriptures reveal that He entered this world as a body prepared for sacrifice (Hebrews 10:5), because, in the foreknowledge of God, He was slain from before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). Therefore it is impossible that His words in the garden and from the cross were spoken out of fear, confusion, doubt or any other strictly human trait. They were not spoken for His sake, but for the sakes of all who shall be redeemed, that we might understand all of the costs involved in our redemption: that not one aspect of our heavenly inheritance is because of works of righteousness that we have done. It takes the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ to make sinners fit for heaven, and this righteousness can only be obtained by God's grace through faith in the Person and the work of the Lord.

The Scriptures reveal that *in him is no sin*. Yet His crucifixion declares that he bore the curse of sin: ... *for he that is hanged is accursed of God...* (Deuteronomy 21:23). In order for God to redeem the world, the sins of the world were charged to the Lord Jesus Christ by the judicial reckoning of God. This was necessary in order for the Lord to bear the judgment due the world for its sins. Since He was without sin, yet charged with the world's sins, God has the right to impute the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ to those who believe the gospel, because ... *Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures* (I Corinthians 15:3-4). Even so the imputation of our sins to Christ could not be done without affecting the relationship between the Father and the Son, because sin (even imputed sin) produces separation from God.

This means that the agony our Lord suffered in Gethsemane came upon Him because the communion He and the Father had enjoyed from all eternity was going to be interrupted by the

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imputation of our sins. This agony was so intense that it caused Him to sweat great drops of blood (diapedesis: a condition that could have caused His death but for the intervention of the angels) and to pray: ... *if thou be willing, remove this cup from me*. Nevertheless He knew the answer to His prayer before He uttered it, but it had to be uttered so that the world could understand that the only way into the presence of God is by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as a ransom for sin. God could not remove the curse of sin that was to be imputed to our Lord Jesus Christ (i.e., the removal of the cup for which He prayed) and still save man; neither could Christ be hanged on a tree, bearing the curse of the sins of the whole world, and remain in the constant fellowship with the Father that They had enjoyed from all eternity.

This means that when God finally charged Christ with the sins of the whole world, it was as though Christ had actually committed all of the sins that were charged to Him, even though: ... *in him is no sin*. Likewise the imputation of Christ's righteousness to those who believe is as though they are without a sin nature (as our Lord is without a sin nature), and it is as though they have stood in the perfect righteousness of Christ from all eternity (the position that Christ has stood in). Imputed sin and imputed righteousness are judicial facts, not fiction. Therefore the judgment that our Lord bore in our behalf is fact, not fiction, and the eternal inheritance that we shall enjoy when raised, glorified and adopted is fact, not fiction. This means that the Lord's relationship with us and our relationship with Him by grace through faith is not an approval of a fiction, as some claim, for God cannot lie.

Since the Lord Jesus Christ is God, He fully understood the mission of His first advent upon this earth. This is the reason He told His disciples: ... *Except a corn of wheat fall into the*

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*ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit* (John 12:24), and the apostle Paul wrote:

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us [changed us completely] to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation [changing completely]; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling [changing completely] the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation [changing completely]. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled [changed completely] to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (II Corinthians 5:17-21, emphasis mine)

Paul has given us the essence of how sinners can be declared to be saints in this portion of Scripture. It is by imputation. This is the same means by which the sinless, spotless Son of God could be charged with the sins of the whole world and thus bear the world's judgment. This all hinges upon the fact that when Adam sinned (as our federal head) we were counted (by God's judicial decree) to have sinned with him. If all men could be charged with the sin of one man, then One Man could act as a Federal Head to fulfill all righteousness and bear the judgment of the sins of the world, so that the redeemed could be charged with Christ's perfect righteousness.

This takes us back in time to the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Eve was deceived by the serpent into eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, despite the fact that God had forewarned Adam and Eve about that tree: *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof [dying thou shalt die]* (Genesis 2:16-17). This means that Eve's deception and Adam's wilful sin introduced two kinds of death into this world, spiritual and physical. There is no human solution for either of these

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conditions. Nevertheless God's solution in Christ provides for the regeneration of our spirits (Titus 3:5) and the resurrection of our physical bodies (I Corinthians 15:52). Thus, *Salvation is of the Lord* (Jonah 2:9).

God judged Adam, Eve and the serpent immediately after they sinned. In the judgment of the serpent, God said: *And 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). The seed of the woman is the Lord Jesus Christ. We know this by progressive revelation. We also know that Adam believed the promise, because he called his wife Eve, *the mother of all living*. While this shows us that Adam believed the promise, it also shows us that God did not reveal to Adam how He would fulfill the promise of the seed of the woman, because it was not to be fulfilled in Eve. Nevertheless God acknowledged Adam's faith in the promise and clothed both of them in the skin of an innocent victim (probably a lamb). This signified: *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him* (II Corinthians 5:21). It also signified: *... and without shedding of blood is no remission* (Hebrews 9:22). Therefore the skin provided by the sacrifice to clothe Adam and Eve represented the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ; whereas the fig leaves, with which Adam and Eve had clothed themselves, represented the totally inadequate efforts of man to make himself fit for the presence of God by human effort.

One of the consequences of their sin was that they were expelled from the garden of Eden. This prevented them from eating of the tree of life and living forever in their fallen condition. Consequently it was an act of God's grace. After their expulsion, Adam and Eve began to produce

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the human family, and as can be seen in Cain and Abel, some believed the promise of God and some did not. Even so Adam's sin was the only sin that was charged to the human family for the next twenty-five hundred years and the giving of the law; because the Scripture says: ... *where there is no law there is no transgression* (Romans 4:15). This does not mean that man did not sin during this period of history, it means he was not charged with any of his sins but Adam's sin, despite the fact that: *God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually* (Genesis 6:5).

The entire human family is intrinsically related to Adam and his sin: *For the wages of [the] sin [Adam's sin] is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Romans 6:23). Consequently the sentence of death that was imposed upon Adam was also imposed upon his posterity. Therefore all men are born dead in trespasses and in sin (Ephesians 2:5), and all of Adam's race also suffers physical death (Hebrews 9:27). The fact of spiritual and physical death in the human family is proof of Adam's federal headship, which lends itself to the Federal Headship of Christ: *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive* (I Corinthians 15:21-22).

This brings us to the law of Moses. About sixty days after Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage by the blood of the passover lambs, God offered the law to Israel, and Israel said: ... *All that the LORD hath spoken we will do...* (Exodus 19:8). Interestingly God did not give the law to Israel as a source of life. It could not be, because the Jews, like all of the human family, were infected with the sin of Adam through his federal headship. Thus Paul tells us the *law was added because of transgressions, till the seed [the Lord Jesus Christ] should come...*

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(Galatians 3:19). He also tells us the law is a ministry of condemnation and death (II Corinthians 3:7,9). After God gave the law to Moses on tablets of stone on Mount Sinai, He also gave him the pattern for the tabernacle in the wilderness and its associated sacrificial system to reveal the solution (in the typology of Scripture) to Israel's inability to keep the law.

Thus the law was given to establish without doubt the sinful nature of man (received by the fall of its federal head), and the tabernacle in the wilderness and the sacrificial system were given to convey in shadows and types the promise of the seed of the woman: *Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons* (Galatians 4:1-5).

In the same letter to the Galatians (cited above), Paul made it absolutely clear that Christ was cursed with our sins, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him: *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.*

*But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall*

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*live by faith[,] And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 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: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:6-14, emphasis mine).*

Beloved brethren, do not misunderstand our Lord's prayer in the garden nor His cry from the cross: He willingly bore our curse and offered Himself as a ransom for our sins for the great love wherewith He loved us. There is no greater love! Selah (think of that).