

Did Jesus Die in Our Place? - Christians, Three Gods, and the Trinity (Pt. 4)

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A thorough study of Jesus' death is extensive. His role in the plan of salvation raises many questions. For example, why does the plan of salvation require that someone die? If the Father loves sinners enough to sacrifice Jesus, why did the Father not give Himself to die for sinners? What prevented the Father from selecting or creating an angel to die for sinners? Is there something in God's law that requires an innocent person to die so a guilty person can go free? Why did the Father wait 4,000 years before He sent Jesus to Earth? What happens to people who have died without hearing about the ministry of Jesus? Did Jesus die the first or second death? Did Jesus die in our place?

Most Christians believe the Father sent Jesus to die as a sinless substitute for sinners. (Romans 3:23; 6:23) These two verses declare that *everyone has* sinned and the penalty for sin is death, therefore God has condemned all human beings to death. Furthermore, since one sinner cannot atone for the sins of another sinner and since each sinner has been condemned to death for his own sins, the Father's solution for saving sinners was for a sinless substitute to die. Christians maintain that the Father sent Jesus to Earth to die in our place. Still the question remains how the death of a sinless person can save a guilty person. Is there something in God's law that requires an innocent person to die so that a condemned person can go free? God said **"The soul who sins is the one who will die."** (Ezekiel 18:4) Jesus' role in the plan of salvation is complicated. However, most Christians agree that salvation requires a sinless substitute. This understanding leads to an interesting dilemma if we consider an endless number of people and an endless amount of time.

Sin has already occurred twice, once in Heaven and once on Earth. If sin does occur again, will God provide another sinless substitute? I know many Christians believe sin will never occur again (the Bible does not teach this) and I cannot say that it will. However, billions of years from now, after God has created billions of new planets with billions of new beings living on them, the possibility of sin exists because what I call God's "sudden death law" never expires. As long as finite beings live with an infinite God who we cannot understand and as long as finite beings have the power of choice, the *probability* of sin occurring is low but the *possibility* is never eliminated. However, when created beings have knowledge of good and evil, if a person sins, God will immediately execute him just as God was to execute Adam and Eve on the day they sinned. (Genesis 2:17)

Guilt is Transferred to Heaven's Temple

The Bible does not teach that Jesus died in our place; instead, Jesus died for much higher reasons! The Bible teaches that Jesus saves sinners through a process I call, "The Transfer Doctrine." God does not forgive sin (all sins are recorded), but God is willing to separate a

sinner from his guilt by transferring a sinner's guilt into Heaven's temple through the sinless blood of Jesus. This transfer is possible if the sinner will in good faith confess and forsake the sin, provide restitution, and humbly obey the inner voice of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 8:5 says the earthly temple (starting with the tabernacle Moses built) and its services were a *shadow* of the real temple in Heaven. This means the ceremonial law in the Old Testament and its temple services were a *model* that generations of people could carefully study and understand how Jesus accomplishes the plan of salvation in Heaven's temple. During Old Testament times, if a person sinned and wanted to be free of guilt, the first step was to show sorrow for his sin by making restitution to the person he offended. Then the sinner brought a flawless lamb to the temple. When the sinner arrived at the Altar of Burnt Offering, he confessed his sin to God with his hands resting on the lamb's head. The sinner then killed the lamb and a priest captured some blood in a cup. The priest applied this blood to the four horns of the altar, separating the sinner and his guilt. The sinner's guilt was transferred to the temple through the sinless blood of the lamb and simultaneously, the righteousness of the lamb (lambs are sinless) was transferred to the sinner.

The beautiful point is that when the sinner left the temple, it was as though, in God's sight, he had never sinned! So, God is willing to separate the sinner from his guilt by transferring it to the temple. Simultaneously, God is willing to *justify* a sinner by transferring the righteousness of the lamb to him! The word *justify* in this context means, from God's perspective, it is as though the sinner never sinned. Remember that earthly temple services were a *model*, a shadow of events occurring in Heaven's temple. The Bible says that animal blood could not transfer guilt. (Hebrews 10:4)

The Transfer Doctrine is wonderful because it also makes salvation possible for people who have never heard of Jesus. After Adam and Eve sinned, the Father planned to send Jesus to Earth about 4,000 years later. The Father foreknew that billions of people would live on Earth who would not have a chance to hear about Jesus. So the Father, with generosity and love, designed the plan of salvation to include *all* human beings. Here is the process: From the time Adam and Eve sinned, salvation has been based on faith, not knowledge. This occurs whenever a person hears and obeys the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is why God gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to every person (Romans 12:3) and *our response to His voice determines our eternal destiny*. (Matthew 12:31,32) God will save everyone who faithfully obeys the Holy Spirit (as the harlot Rahab did - Hebrews 11:31). Through faith, the Father can legitimately transfer a sinner's guilt to Heaven's temple through the blood of Jesus and simultaneously bestow the righteousness of the Lamb of God on him.

The Scapegoat is the Guilt Bearer

The Transfer Doctrine resolves an interesting problem. If the penalty for sin is death and Jesus did not die in our place, who pays the penalty for the sins of the saints? First, all who refuse to obey the voice of the Holy Spirit will die for their own sins. Their guilt will rest on their own heads. Jesus said, **"I am He who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds."** (Revelation 2:23) Unfortunately, this will be a huge number of people! (Revelation 20:8) On the other hand, each person who faith-fully obeys the voice of

the Holy Spirit will have his guilt transferred to the temple through the blood of Jesus; his guilt remaining there until the temple is cleansed and transferred to the head of *the* guilt-bearer.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the earthly temple was cleansed of guilt. After the high priest was found worthy to officiate for Israel, two flawless goats were brought into the temple courtyard and the priest cast lots to see which goat would die. The remaining goat became the guilt-bearing goat (scapegoat) and the guilt in the temple was transferred to its head.

Two goats, instead of two lambs, were used on the Day of Atonement to show that sin began in Heaven. The two goats represented Michael and Lucifer. (Jesus lived in the form of Michael the archangel before coming to Earth to live in the form of a man. Although Jesus is a member of the Godhead, He takes our form and lives among created beings as one of us.)

Before sin began, Michael and Lucifer were “covering cherubs,” the highest possible positions in Heaven. Both of them were sinless until Lucifer became jealous of Michael, because Lucifer wanted to be worshiped as Michael was worshiped. When the Father told Lucifer that was impossible because Michael was a member of deity, Lucifer became angry and rebellious. The Father was patient and He did everything possible to keep Lucifer and his followers from sinning. Eventually, the Father cast the devil and his angels out of Heaven when they rebelled.

The casting of lots to see which goat would become the guilt-bearer indicates the Father’s omniscience. The Father foreknew the mind, heart, and ways of Lucifer long before Lucifer was created. Yet, the Father gave him life and made him the highest and most capable of all created beings. The Father and Michael loved Lucifer dearly, but Lucifer became vain and hostile when fellow angels could not worship him like Michael. Lucifer’s disaffection led him to seek sympathetic followers, and one-third of the angels followed Lucifer.

In the temple services after the lot was cast, the priest killed the *chosen* (the anointed) goat. He sprinkled the blood of the sinless goat on the Ark of the Covenant, the horns on the Altar of Incense, and the horns on the Altar of Burnt Offering. After this, the priest placed his hands on the head of the guilt-bearing goat and announced that the temple was clean. All of the guilt that had been stored in the temple during the year was transferred to the scapegoat. A strong man took the scapegoat far into the desert so that the goat might die a slow protracted death. The scapegoat was not killed. In this service, the scapegoat does not pay the penalty for sin; instead, it bears the consequences for sin. This part of the model reveals there is no substitutionary death in the plan of salvation. Lucifer will suffer for a period of time in hell before he dies. First, he must die because his own guilt is upon his own head. Second, he must die a protracted death because he received the guilt, which the saints transferred to the temple.

The cleansing of the earthly temple model illustrates how judgment day occurs in Heaven. After breaking the third seal on the Book of Life in 1844, Jesus began reviewing the records of every dead person. Jesus presents the life of each person to watching angels. He shows them everything, most of all, that person’s response to the Holy Spirit. When Jesus completes His presentation, as God He pronounces a verdict: The sinner’s guilt is assigned to his own head or transferred to Lucifer’s head. Either way, that sinner’s guilt is no longer in the temple. When Jesus completes the judgment process, the Heavenly temple will be clean, totally free of guilt.

Jesus is the Perfect Sacrifice

The Father selected Jesus to die for sinners because Jesus, as a member of the Godhead, had elements within Himself that could be transferred to sinners. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost face-to-face communion with God, their beautiful garden home, access to the Tree of Life, and the infinite joy and excitement that comes with endless life. *They also lost two elements that a created being (an angel or a perfect man) could not give a sinner – their ability to live forever and propensity for righteousness.*

All created beings borrow life from God. We live from one moment to the next because God gives us the breath of life. Sinless beings have a propensity for righteousness because the power from God never ceases to flow. Therefore, the Father needed a God, a member of the Godhead, who was willing to bestow these powers to sinners. If the Father could provide such a donor, He could legitimately transfer both divine powers to sinners and intelligent angels would unanimously agree that the Father had infinitely exceeded the demands of justice. This is achieved by transferring the guilt of sin to the head of the *father of sin* and transferring Christ's propensity for righteousness to every repentant sinner. All of the redeemed sinners, despite how evil they might have been, would easily "fit in" with the eternal happiness and joy that fills Heaven.

When the Father informed Jesus that He needed a "divine donor," Jesus volunteered. On the day that Adam and Eve sinned, Jesus became "The Son (the subject) of God." (Psalm 2:7-12) When Jesus came to Earth, He came as the "Lamb of God," (John 1:29) and through His infinite sacrifice, the Father can restore Adam and Eve and their offspring to Eden without breaking or changing His laws of love! The Father is a God of love. He and Jesus have proved they love their neighbors as themselves. No greater demonstration of love is possible! No price for the salvation of sinners could be higher!

When we combine the Transfer Doctrine with the conclusions presented in the first three parts of this study, the evidence is clear: Monotheism and the idea that one God manifests Himself as three different persons are insufficient doctrines. The truth is the Father and Jesus are separate, distinct, coeternal members of the Godhead, who love one another with all their hearts and their neighbors as themselves.

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