
Words of Truth

That Did Not Happen On The Cross

By: Brian A. Yeager

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners (I Timothy 1:15). Part of what Jesus did included dying on the cross (Colossians 1:20). The preaching of the cross is vital in teaching about salvation (I Corinthians 1:17-18). For you and I to be reconciled to God Jesus had to be put to death (Romans 5:10). These things are true and a must for us to know.

What has become horrible concerning the “preaching of the cross” is that many have said more than what the Bible says concerning the death of Christ. These soul damning false doctrines are taught from pulpits, in classes, and even in songbooks. Among the many errors concerning what happened on the cross is the idea that God the Father forsook Jesus. Attached to that false doctrine is the idea that Jesus literally took our sins upon Himself and He literally became sin. That ignorance continues when people conclude that everything that saves us happened on the cross. Brethren, these errors are rooted in Calvinism. Ignorance promotes these errors amongst so-called “brethren”. These things are not true concerning the preaching of the cross. Let’s start our study by looking at the ignorance concerning the “vicarious death of Christ”.

Jesus Did Not Take Our Sins Upon Himself Nor Was He Abandoned On The Cross

Here is the argument Calvinistic, false teachers make: “when Jesus became sin on our behalf, that God the Father, in a sense, turned His back upon the Son. It says in Hab. 1:13 that God is too pure to look upon evil. Therefore, it is possible that when Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross, that the Father, spiritually, turned away” (<http://www.zianet.com/maxey/reflx150.htm>). Let me show you how simple of a subject this is. Sin is not something one takes upon himself or herself. Sin is not an object, but an action (I John 3:4). Jesus did not take on our unlawful actions.

Here are the Scriptures that PROVE that Jesus NEVER had sin on His account: *“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 an high priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come bold ly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need... For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself... And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin”* (Hebrews 4:14-16, Hebrews 7:26-27, and I John 3:5). To be clear, when Jesus died He was a lamb without spot or blemish (I Peter 1:18-19). That is, without His own or your spots and blemishes.

Brethren, Jesus did bear our sins on the cross (Hebrews 9:28 and I Peter 2:24). He did become a sin offering for us (Isaiah 53:10 and II Corinthians 5:21). Jesus was only an offering for sin (Ephesians 5:2 and Hebrews 10:1-18), not a vehicle that transported our sins from us to Him. If that were true, why were you baptized for the remission of something that Jesus already took away (cf. Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16)? Both the Old and New Testaments show us that we are each accountable for every single sin we commit (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 and John 5:28-29). Such was true before Jesus died (Psalms 62:12 and Isaiah 3:10-11) and after Jesus died (II Corinthians 5:10). When you consider all of the Scriptures we've examined, you cannot conclude that Jesus became a sinner for us.

Since we've proven that Jesus did not take on our sins, the argument that this is why God the Father turned His back on Jesus is a moot point. However, I want to scripturally prove that the Father did not abandon the Son. Jesus said the Father would be with Him when He was put to death (John 8:28-29). In fact, when the disciples forsook Jesus He still had His Father with Him (John 16:32). It was Jesus' duty to die as commanded by His Father (Hebrews 5:8-9). To conclude that God the Father forsook Jesus while He was dying is to conclude that God deserts the faithful when the faithful are doing His will. We know that this is false (I Samuel 12:22, Psalms 37:25, Psalms 94:14, and Hebrews 13:5-6). Sadly, these errors aren't even the beginning of what didn't happen on the cross.

Let's Expose A Couple Of Other Popular Errors That Didn't Happen On The Cross

Ignorant false teachers say this: "When Jesus shed His blood and died, the plan of redemption for all of mankind was finished" (<http://www.granbychurchofchrist.org/Studies/SermonFromCross.htm>). This is false in that Jesus had to be buried, resurrected, ascend to Heaven, the Gospel needs preached, people have to obey it, and Jesus still has to return for the plan of redemption to be finished (Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:44-47, Philippians 2:12, I Corinthians 15:14-24, I Peter 1:3, and I Peter 3:20-21). You can get even more detailed if you talked of Jesus being our mediator (I Timothy 2:5), God being longsuffering (II Peter 3:9-10), etc. Clearly, the plan of redemption was NOT finished on the cross.

"Well-known" men, such as the late Rober Turner, taught the false idea that Jesus "died in our stead" (<http://theplaintalk.org/plaintalk/v18/v18n10p7.htm>). Brethren, the cross was for Jesus not for us (Acts 2:22-24 and I Peter 1:19-20). Doing something in someone else's place [a substitute] means that person no longer has to do that particular task (i.e. II Corinthians 5:20). A substitute teacher means that the teacher does not need to teach. If Jesus died in our place, you'd not have to face death. We all know that is false (Hebrews 9:27), unless Jesus comes before we die (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Conclusion

I am amazed when I read how many have fallen into the false ideas addressed in this article. If you search for the quotes in this article you'll find many so-called "churches of Christ" teaching these things. Brethren, in times past, **WE** sung songs that have these false doctrines in them (Ten Thousand Angels, At Calvary, By Christ Redeemed, etc.). All Scriptures have to agree with the entirety of God's word (II Timothy 2:14-18 and II Peter 3:16-18). Just as we know we're not saved by grace alone (Acts 3:19, Romans 8:24, Romans 10:10, etc.) and thus we rightly divide Ephesians 2:1-8; we have to do the same with what happened on the cross. We have to make sure that we're teaching what really happened on the cross rather than what we've falsely heard happened on the cross.