

My God, My God Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?

An Examination of the Jesus didn't die “spiritually” controversy.

by Dan Lash

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Statement on Translation usage

This book quotes many translations of the Bible: King James, New King James, American Standard of 1901, The English Standard Version (2001), Young's Literal Translation, New International Version and the Greek Septuagint. All New Testament original language citings and corrections are based upon the Hodge-Farstad Majority Greek New Testament.

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I would also like to thank God, who in his sovereignty, continues to pull the strings of His universe to make this ministry possible and still distribute our books for free.

It is a blessing watching Him work.

Introduction

What follows in this book is a series of six sermons which I delivered in June, 2024, addressing a controversy which exploded on the internet in the spring of 2024 and caused a huge division in the body of Christ which, as far as I know, has not yet been healed. These sermons have been edited for print but, because they were sermons, some repetition of truths may occur in the chapters.

The controversy revolves around the posed question, “Did Jesus die spiritually on the cross?”

Those who have pushed this controversy have used the word “heresy” to describe any position which was divergent from their own.

This controversy caught many free grace believers off guard. Many younger free grace believers, not wanting to be lumped in with all of us “heretics” were sent fleeing to their safe space of submitting to the intimidation of this new controversy and amplifying its assertions across the internet.

Other teachers, many of whom simply parrot the positions of others, were likewise forced to recant some of their former positions as well lest, they too, be convicted as “heretics”.

I, however, chose to stand my ground in believing that the whole person of God the Son, including His Spirit, experienced the agony of the cross.

What follows in the six primary chapters of this book is my defense of my position.

I am, of course, convinced that it is the correct position on this topic.

It is also the position which is still held, in one form or another, by the vast majority of those men who have been faithful to familiarize themselves with the language skills necessary to examine this issue in the original languages in which the Scriptures were inspired.

I still consider myself in good company with those men who have written before on this topic.

Moreover, while this issue has caused me to lose the esteem of many of my former free grace friends; I am convinced that my position is correct. Moreover, I also believe that this is not a secondary issue. If it were, I would have simply left it alone.

If we are to really understand the work of the cross, then we must know just Who it was that was suffering there and, if humanly possible, the extent to which He suffered.

While we cannot know the anguish that the Lord experienced when He assumed our sin debt upon his person, we can allow the Scriptures to speak in their fullness on this topic. These six messages reflected in the six chapters of this book are my attempt to do just that.

Dan Lash
May 2025

1

The Sufferings of Christ on the Cross

There is a small, but vocal, group of people out there today who want to call the rest of us heretics for believing that the sufferings of Christ on the cross were more than physical.

This small, but bullying, group gets all bent out of shape when people like me teach that the sufferings of Christ for sins were more than just a physical suffering. That is, that Christ Himself suffered something on the cross which, while He was being made sin for us, caused him to cry out, “MY GOD, MY GOD, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

This group actually likes to use the term “spiritual death” to describe our position. That is, they want to insist that we believe that Jesus experienced a “spiritual death” on the cross. They also seem to want to believe the worst about those who include in their explanations of the death of Christ a spiritual component to His sufferings.

I have searched the Scriptures; the phrase “spiritual death” is never once used in the word of God.

It is pointless when discussions concerning the word of God revolve around terminology which is not actually used in the word of God, because you end up arguing about a man-made definition.

For example, the word “depravity” does not actually appear in Scripture; so the definition of this term cannot be nailed down because different groups will define the word differently.

Therefore, in my discussion of exactly what the Lord experienced on the cross, I will not include a discussion concerning the term “spiritual death”.

However, we can say that Jesus’s SPIRIT never died. Upon His physical death, His spirit left His body and immediately descended into Hades where He liberated those Old Testament saints from their sequestration of comfort from the Father. That is why Jesus told the thief on the cross, “this day, you shall be with me in paradise”... The spirit of Jesus also did not lapse into a state of unconsciousness.

Of course, I am sure that some would like to argue as to whether it was the soul of Jesus or His spirit which descended first into the lower parts of the earth to preach to the souls in prison. After all, Jesus did say to the Father just before His physical death, “Into Thy hands I commend My spirit”. So, I suppose, someone could declare us all heretics who question whether “spirit” is another word for “soul” in this context. Enough said on that point.

The first thing we need to establish concerning what Christ experienced on the cross is just who was and who is Jesus? Here is a passage which establishes that for us.

John 1:1-14: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- ² He was in the beginning with God.
- ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
- ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
- ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.
- ⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.
- ⁸ He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.
- ⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.
- ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.
- ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.
- ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
- ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- ¹⁴ And the Word became 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.

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” means THAT BEING, that eternal Second Person of the God-head, added humanity to His everlasting person.

The Word, that unique second person of the God-head, that Creator of all things, as we see in verse 3, forever added to His existence a human body.

“And we beheld his glory.” The word “beheld” here in the Greek is the Greek word, **θεάομαι**, which means “to gaze upon with perception”. It is the Greek word from which we get the English word “theater”.

Matthew 1:23: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us".

John 2:19-22: Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

²² Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

1 John 4:2, 3: Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

³ And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

It is important to see in the above passage that the verb “is come” is a perfect tense verb. This means He came AND STILL EXISTS, in the flesh. The person who denies that fact, according to this context, is not of God.

Jesus Christ IS come in the flesh, that is, the second person of the Godhead added to His being human flesh and

today still exists in that state. Jesus, to this day, still has a glorified human body. We know that is true from many passages of Scripture; here is just one:

Zechariah 13:6 And *one* shall say unto him, What *are* these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, *Those* with which I was wounded *in* the house of my friends.

The above verse is a record of a future interaction between the Lord Jesus and the Jewish saints in the kingdom. They are going to be inquiring why His glorified body still bears the marks of the cross. The Lord will basically tell them, “You are all my friends now; all is forgiven; the past is the past”.

Here are two other contexts on the person of Christ:

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:
God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.

Colossians 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

The word “bodily” in the above verse is an adverb. Adverbs mainly modify verbs. The verb in the sentence is “dwells” (or “dwelleth”).

The fullness of the God-head dwells in the body of Christ.

That total second person of the Godhead now dwells in a body.

Understand this: There were and are not two personages dwelling within the body of Christ.

This means that the person and personality of God the Son, became a human so that HE, could experience the judgment of our sin in human flesh.

There was not both a divine personage and a separate human personage dwelling within a human body.

The divine person of God did not leave the body of Christ while Christ was bearing our sins.

His person experienced something He had never before experienced.

This divine person, hanging on the cross, experienced something He had never experienced before in the infinite history of His existence which caused Him to cry out, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Only the infinite God the Son could give up something which was of infinite value to Himself that He NOT give up (but did for us) in order to offer to the Father an equivalent payment for all the sins of mankind for all time.

A sinless, but not divine, person could not have done it. I mean, every time a new birth occurs, a sinless, but not divine, person is created. But a sinless, yet not divine, person would not be an infinite being. It took an infinite divine person to, in one fell swoop, present to the Father an equivalent payment for the redemption of all of the sins of mankind.

Nor could a divine person, who experienced only the physical suffering of the cross, present to the Father a

payment equivalent to the sins of all mankind for all time. I know it really hurt, but mere physical suffering would not be an equitable payment for the sins of the world.

It took a God-man, so that this infinite God-man could suffer something on the cross which He did not want to experience (which was of great value for him to NOT experience) which was an equitable payment for all the sins of all men for all time.

Let's look at Matthew 27:46 in detail.

Matthew 27:46: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

“Jesus cried out with a loud voice.” Literally, He SCREAMED!

This word “cried out”, “αὐβοῶ” occurs only three times in the New Testament; two times used by Christ as he hung on the cross, screaming out to the Father, and once by a desperate man who was desperate for Jesus to heal his only son from demon possession.

Luke 9:38: Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child.

Okay, back to Matt. 27:46

Matthew 27:46: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

By the way, who was Christ crying out to in desperation?

In the Greek, the words “My God, My God” are in the not-so-common vocative case of nouns. The vocative case is the case of direct address.

And this is especially true in this verse. The above verse is the only place in the New Testament where the unique vocative ”Θεε“, (God) is used in an address to God.

So to whom is Jesus talking here? He is talking to God. He is crying out to His God, His Father.

What is He experiencing?

Why have you forsaken me?

ἐγκαταλείπω forsake, abandon, desert; leave, leave behind; neglect

The word is stemmed from the Greek word “λείπω” which means to leave, to desert.

“Why do I sense that you are no longer near?” I mean, quite frankly, every major English translation of the Bible gets this verse spot on! Every underlying Greek manuscript reads identically here. There are no variants here. Christ on the Cross is asking the Father why has the Father forsaken Him?

This verse is the focal point of divine and human history. It records for us that one unique event in the existence of the God-head where Christ is made to be sin for us, the Father makes His soul an offering for sins, and Jesus experiences the judgment of God upon Himself which was due all of humanity.

By the way, I know that those who want to deny the spiritual component of Christ’s sufferings on the cross will say, “Well, Jesus is simply quoting Psalms 22:1”. While these words of Christ are found in Psalms 22:1, Jesus is not quoting Psalms 22:1; the Psalms are quoting Jesus. The Holy Spirit, through the pen of the prophet David, drills

down into the future with precision and quotes the agonizing cries of Christ!

Do you really think at this point in the suffering of Christ, He is making sure that He is following a script? These are the screams of agony of desperation, not of an actor following a script. The Holy Spirit, in Psalms 22:1, through the pen of David, is applying His foreknowledge down through the history of mankind, observing the suffering of Christ on the cross, and recording His words, one thousand years before He shouted them in agony from the cross!

Understand this: Jesus dreaded experiencing His work on the cross.

John 12:27: Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

The intensity of the troubling of His soul only intensified as the time of His offering for sin drew near.

Oh, I know that “for the joy that was set before him” He endured the cross; that joy being able to populate heaven with like-minded beings.

Hebrews 12:2: looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

But, as the time of His sufferings drew near, He began to experience anxiety over what was about to occur on the cross. He began to agonize over the event which He was about to experience.

Luke 22:41-44: And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed,

⁴² saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

⁴³ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

⁴⁴ And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Matthew 26:39: He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

"If there is any other way"? Of course He knew there was not.

It was not the physical sufferings of the cross that He was dreading. We have no record in Scripture of His complaining about the physical suffering He experienced. Actually, Scripture records His silence over His physical sufferings:

Isaiah 53:7: He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. (See also Acts 8:32)

We have no record in Scripture of Jesus crying out because of the physical pain of crucifixion.

The dread of Christ pertained to the fact that He was going to have to bear in his person the judgment of God against the sins of the world.

Here are several verses in the New Testament which describe the sufferings of Christ on the cross:

2 Corinthians 5:19-21: To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ 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 to God.

²¹ 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.

When Jesus was made to be sin for us, He became the recipient of the retributive justice of God. When He was experiencing this, He experienced something which he had never experienced through the eons of eternal history: the anger of God was directed at His person. He became the recipient of the retributive justice of God. So, instead of communion, He, for that moment in the history of The Godhead, was made an offering for sins and experienced the retributive judgment of God against our sins. This caused Him to exclaim “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Only an infinite person could do that for the entire world, and there was only One who qualified: The God-man, Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:13: 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:

Notice that Christ, for us, became the accursed one of God. He became the One upon whom our condemnation fell.

Jesus experienced something on the cross that only God could experience. He experienced something which was of infinite value for Himself not to experience, in order that an equivalent payment for the sins of the world might be transacted between God the Father and God the Son.

Isaiah 53:10: Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.

Jesus experienced in his person the retributive justice of God.

Why did Jesus cry out, “My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me?”

Because of sin! Because God is unable to even LOOK upon sin! God HAD to turn His back to His son!

And so, we see Christ crying out to the Father, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani”; that is to say; “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” It was because the sins of the entire world had been placed on the person of our Savior. These were the sins of the world; past, present, and future.

Every lie ever told, every murder, every act of adultery, every bit of unbelief, every bit of envy, pride, and hatred was laid upon the Savior of the world. The separation that we would have endured for an eternity was replaced with the separation between the Father and the Beloved Son for but a moment in time, all for us.

2 Corinthians 5:21: For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

God the Father turned His back on His Son, having been made sin for us, in order that He would not have to turn His back on us forever.

2

The Charge of Heresy

What DID Jesus experience on the cross?

What is Heresy?

The charge of “heresy” has been charged lately against many of my free grace friends who take the same position that I do on just exactly what Jesus experienced on the cross.

When somebody finds fault with the position of most of the staff of Chafer Theological Seminary, which is today the most sound free grace seminary in our nation, and calls them heretics, one has to wonder who the true heretics are. I mean, when you are finding fault with such free grace men as Dennis Rokser, Tom Stegall, Andy Woods, Robert Dean and others professors at Chafer Theological Seminary, one needs to re-evaluate their own position on an issue.

Now I am sure, if I look hard enough, I could find something that I differed with on each of these teachers; and, in fact, I do. But to describe their differences as “heresy” is another issue all together. These are fine men who are my brothers in Christ.

We should not charge others with “heresy” unless it is necessary.

By the way, what IS heresy from a Biblical perspective and what is a heretic?

Heresy is divisive doctrine. It is teaching through which one attempts to drive a wedge between fellow believers in order to knock away believers from their brethren and draw away disciples unto oneself.

The word “αἰρέσεις” means “division or faction”. A heretic or, as the Greek says, “αἰρετικός” is somebody who seeks to cause divisions in order that he can draw disciples away to himself. Quite often the one who is charging others with heresy is, himself, behaving as the heretic. God wants believers to stay unified, as we read in our verses below:

Ephesians 4:3: endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:13: till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

The Bible teaches that believers are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. To attempt to divide the saints over a relatively secondary issue is, in itself, heresy because it is what heretics really try to do: They attempt to divide the saints over secondary issues. So, to slander a person with the label of “heretic” because he doesn’t see what I see on a theological fine point is true heresy. It is an attempt to cause divisions where divisions should not be forced. True heresy is to cause divisions between the brethren where such division is not warranted.

One thing I DID NOT KNOW is that most people who teach that Jesus died spiritually are actually teaching that Jesus paid for our sins in hell.

That is a pretty wacky idea but, nevertheless, is held by some pretty prominent national Pentecostal preachers.

To be quite honest, I had never heard of that teaching until I started studying this topic. “How can that be?” you say? Because I do not watch Pentecostal preachers on TV. So, until I started looking into this “Did Jesus die spiritually” issue, I had never really understood that some DO teach that Jesus went to hell to pay for sins.

The truth of the matter is that Jesus paid for the sins of the world while He hung on the cross, while He was being crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:23: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

Philippians 2:8: And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

The death of the cross was a unique death that only Jesus was commissioned to experience. Physical death concluded His sufferings on the cross.

Now, immediately after Jesus died, He descended into the lower parts of the earth, not to pay for sins; but, rather, to announce to the Old Testament saints who were in that place

of sequestered comfort that their sin debt had been cancelled and they were now free to go into the presence of God.

That is why the Lord said to the thief on the cross the following:

Luke 23:43: And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

By the way, since we know that Jesus did not ascend to the Father until He arose from the dead, then Jesus cannot be talking about going to heaven to the thief on the cross. Rather, He is referring to that place of sequestered comfort where pre-cross saints went, before their sin debt was canceled through the once and for all payment of Christ on the cross. Once that payment was made, those pre-cross saints were free to enter into the presence of God.

Notice in John 20:17, when Jesus confronts Mary Magdalene in the garden, He will not let her give Him a hug:

John 20:17: Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.' "

We can conclude several things from Jesus' statement to the thief, "Today, thou shalt be with me in paradise."

1. The Lord's person never ceases to function as God.
2. His person never lapsed into unconsciousness but merely left His physical body.

3. He was going someplace else other than the presence of the Father.
4. He was taking the thief with him.

The book of Ephesians makes mention of this event.

Ephesians 4:8, 9: Therefore He says:

"When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men. "

⁹ (Now this, "He ascended" -- what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?

Those in captivity are also mentioned in Zechariah.

Zechariah 9:11, 12: "As for you also,
Because of the blood of your covenant,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

¹² Return to the stronghold,
You. prisoners of hope.
Even today I declare
That I will restore double to you.

The first thing that Jesus did after He yielded up His Spirit on the cross is to descend to that that place of sequestered comfort in the lower parts of the earth; that is, Abraham's bosom, as mentioned in the account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. Once there, He announced His redemption to those sequestered saints and told them that they could now enter the presence of God.

He didn't go to hell to pay for sins. He descended to the lower parts of the earth because He had just finished paying for sins and He needed to proclaim to the captives there that there that the price for their release had been secured.

Okay, back to the “spiritual death” of Jesus controversy.

There are some that teach that the death that paid for sins was a “spiritual death” that Jesus experienced on the cross.

In order to clear up some of the controversy, let me say this: I do not know of anybody, among free grace people, using that terminology to mean that the divine nature of Jesus, the eternal second person of the God-head, somehow perished on the cross.

Obviously, God the Son's divine nature was not annihilated on the cross.

God the Son did not die in that sense. His being was not annihilated on the cross. Rather, the Lord Jesus died “the death of the cross”, an experience that only He could and only He was commissioned to experience, a death that involved the totality of His person.

Understand this: The word “death” does not always refer to physical death. Here is an example in Scripture.

1 John 3:14: We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death.

Death, as in the above verse, sometimes an inability to experience communion with God.

Here, we see that a person who is not experiencing communion with God is said to be abiding in death.

Therefore, it is probably safe to say that when our sins were placed upon Jesus on the cross, He, at that moment or period of time, experienced something that is described as the “death of the cross”, a death that was reserved only for Himself. The “cup” that He often mentioned, was those sufferings that only He was to experience.

Matthew 26:39: He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*."

Matthew 26:42: Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

John 18:11: So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

So what was it that Jesus was dreading about the cross? What was the cup of which He was about to partake which He was dreading? What was His own unique agony that He was about to experience on the cross?

He was about to experience the sins of the world being somehow infused into His person.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21: Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

He was made to be sin for us...He who knew no sin.

Jesus did not become a sinner on the cross. According to this verse, He was MADE to be sin for us. That could not have been a pleasant experience for the soul of God the Son.

By the way, verse 21 of II Corinthians chapter 5 is a simple construct in the Greek. It is not a verse for which there is any “wiggle room” to divert from the translations that we have the English language. If the verse says, “He was made to be sin for us”, then we must adjust our theology to include this truth and must not just blow it off because it does not fit our theology.

Let's look at Isaiah 53 and see what that context says about the sufferings of Christ for sin.

Isaiah 53:10-12: Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;
He has put *Him* to grief.
When You make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see *His* seed,
He shall prolong *His* days,
And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

¹¹ He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied.
By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,
For He shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,
Because He poured out His soul unto death,
And He was numbered with the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors.

Look again at verse 10 and ask the question, “Did God bruise Christ and was that the cause of His grief? When He made his soul an offering for sin?”

The Lord suffered on the cross when He was experiencing the retributive justice of God for our sins.

How long that took is up for discussion.

For example, Dr. Robert Dean believes it took the entire time of the darkness. He believes that the spiritual sufferings of Christ lasted 3 hours. I mention Dr. Dean because he is attacked in the writings of those who are pushing this “Jesus did not die spiritually” controversy.

Dr. Dean also calls the sufferings of Christ on the cross “Christ’s spiritual death”.

Now what does Dr. Dean mean by that? Well, since he is a professor at Chafer, probably the best conservative free grace seminary in North America, a seminary where a whole lot of my friends in the faith teach, I would assume that he does not mean that Jesus paid for our sins in hell. No responsible conservative theologian believes that.

I would also assume that he does not believe that deity perished on the cross, so that a member of the Godhead lost his deity. Deity did not perish on the cross. Jesus did not give up His deity. He COULD NOT give up His deity.

Acts 2:22-24: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know –
²³ "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;
²⁴ "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

From the above verse, we can see that it was NOT possible for Christ to have been held by death. Why? Because deity cannot perish.

And, by the way, I am sure that Dr. Robert Dean would acknowledge that as well.

So when Dr. Dean refers to what Jesus experienced on the cross a “spiritual death”, it does not bother me in the least; because I know what he does not mean, and I know what he means.

What Dr. Dean most likely means is that the spirit of Jesus was troubled on the cross when the sins of the world were placed upon Christ and that He had to agonize under the weight of those sins, having the retributive justice of God poured out on His soul while He hung on the cross. The death that Dr. Dean is referring to is most likely a sense of a loss of communion which the Son had never before in the history of the Godhead experienced. We know that Jesus was troubled on this earth while He was anticipating the events of the cross.

John 12:27: “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.”

Now am I going to crucify Dr. Dean because he says “the spirit” of Jesus was troubled instead of his “soul”?

Is that a reason to call Dr. Dean a heretic and what he believes heresy?

No, the true heresy, according to the Bible, is to become divisive over such a point.

I would suppose that, if I ever talked with Dr. Dean in person, I might disagree with him concerning the duration of Christ’s spiritual anguish on the cross. The time of Christ’s

troubling of His soul, when His soul was made an offering for sins, during which time God poured out his retributive justice on Christ, and instead of Christ experiencing the joy of His communion with the Father, He experienced the anguish of the retributive justice of God being poured out on his person.

The only difference I might have with Dean is how long that justice took. Dean seems to think it took three hours; I would suspect it was shorter than that, specifically around the time when Jesus shouted out to the Father “My God, My God, while hast thou forsaken me?” If, after a discussion with Dr. Dean, he persuaded me that it lasted three hours, I would walk away with my mind changed. If he failed to persuade me of his position, I would not call him a heretic. I would call him a Bible teacher holding an understanding concerning something for which I was not yet persuaded.

Understand this: The term “spiritual death” is never used in Scripture. Therefore it is somewhat pointless to argue over a term which is not found in Scripture, much less charge a person with “heresy” over such a term. If a term is not found in Scripture and a person has coined the term for himself, before I would accuse a person of flagrant false teaching, I would want to know what he means by the term. It appears that the “Jesus did not die spiritually” proponents have chosen not to seek to understand what a person means when he says that “Jesus died spiritually”, and would rather just assume the worst about their position.

This is the same reason that I do not argue with a person who uses the word “depravity” or “total depravity”. If a

word is not found in Scripture, it is really pointless for us to argue over our own definitions of a term.

Back to the question at hand:

To those who insist that the sufferings of Christ were only physical: Ask yourself this question: Did Jesus fear physical death?

Why do people fear physical death? For the most part, people fear physical death because it forebodes an unknown future, they are comfortable here on earth. They do not want to leave their loved ones. Also, if a person is not a child of God, then death also forebodes eternal condemnation: the fear an uncertain judgment.

Did any of those reasons exist for Christ? Jesus tell His disciples in the upper room that it was to their advantage that He depart.

John 16:5-7: "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'"

⁶ "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

⁷ "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

If Jesus was not sweating great sweat drops of blood because He dreaded physical death, then what part of His work on the cross was He dreading?

Luke 22:44: And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Would it be a heretical opinion that Jesus dreaded the sins of the world being laid upon Him and His becoming sin for us and experiencing something in His person that down through the eons of time he had never experienced? DO YOU THINK THAT IS A HERETICAL POSITION?

I wouldn't. It is a reasonable assumption, giving all of the evidence we can glean from Scripture.

After all, Jesus did say, "It is finished" before He physically died.

John 19:30: So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Let me ask you this: What was finished?

Dare I say that what Jesus suffered on the cross for our sins which constituted the work of redemption was finished?

Dare I say that what Jesus went through when He hung on the cross was a unique death? What He experienced was a death designed only for Him to experience, an experience which the Bible calls the "death of the Cross".

Dare I say, the anguish of soul which He experienced for our sins He experienced WHILE HE WAS STILL PHYSICALLY ALIVE?

Unless you think what accomplished our redemption was the moment when His spirit left His body and He took the thief with Him to paradise.

No, I believe, along with the faculty of Chafer Theological Seminary, along with the Dennis Rokkers, the Tom Stegalls, the Charlie Bings, the Andy Woods, the J.B. Hixsons and many other fine Bible teachers, that that the Lord Jesus experienced a unique death on the cross, designed only for Him.

He came into this world to bear the sins of the world and to suffer under the penalty of those sins until the justice of God was satisfied, and only when that justice was satisfied did Jesus proclaim "It is finished". Then He bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

My friend, that is not heresy. That is not divisive doctrine. It is sound Biblical theology.

3

WHO WAS THAT PERSON ON THE CROSS?

For several weeks now, I have been locking horns, so to speak, with a small but very forceful group of people on the internet who have managed to malign nearly every sound, free-grace pastor who believes that what Jesus experienced on the cross was more than just a physical suffering; who believe that there was actually another component to the suffering of Christ on the cross which, in the very fiber of His being, caused Him to scream, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46)

The aforementioned group just goes ballistic over this verse of Scripture and toward those of us who seek to simply take the verse at face value concerning just what the Lord experienced on the cross.

After a month of going back and forth with these internet theologians, I finally figured out what their real issue is with the above verse:

They have a problem with just who it was who was hanging on that cross. They go to great lengths to deny that the person on the cross was the same person who came down from heaven into this world and took upon Himself the form of a servant so that He could become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8).

So who was it on the other side of the eyeballs that looked down from the cross? Was He truly God enrobed in human flesh, or was it just the humanity of Jesus? Was He the person of God manifest in the flesh, or somehow just a very godly person, born of a virgin, who never sinned?

This small, but very persecutorial, group has a large problem with the idea that the person on the cross experienced anything but a physical death. They want to very forcefully assert that the flogging of the soldiers, the torturing of Jesus at the hands of the human agents, and the physical agony of being crucified was the sum total of the sufferings of Christ.

These people have a big problem with God's actually administering the divine justice against our sins upon the Divine Person on the cross.

These people have an even bigger problem with God's administering His divine justice upon the person of His Son; that is, the eternal Second Person of the God-head who had taken upon Himself human flesh for the distinct purpose of His being delivered up for us all on the cross. Somehow, that Person, on His way to the cross, gets lost in this group's theology.

Romans 8:32: He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

At the risk of being repetitive, let me ask just who was that Person on the Cross? Who was the person on the other side of the eyeballs, looking down from the Cross?

John 1:1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Without getting too far into the weeds here, I will state that the last part of John 1:1 is a classic predicate nominative which ascribes the attribute of God to the Word.

The Word has always existed as a companion with God and, in fact, He, Himself possesses the attribute of God.

John 1:2: He was in the beginning with God.

That is, He has always existed alongside the Father.

John 1:3: All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

This Word was the Creator of all.

John 1:4-14: In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.

⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.

⁸ He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became 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.

We can see from this passage that this Word, that is, this eternal companion with the Father, who likewise is of the same Divine nature as God and shares all of His attributes, became flesh and dwelt among us; that is, His eternal person became fully integrated into a human body and made His home among us.

Somehow, this divine person of eternity past, who forever added humanity to His existence as God, gets lost on His way to the cross in the minds of this persecutorial group. They reject the idea of God manifest in the flesh, hanging on the cross, as being the One on the receiving end of the retributive justice of God for our sins.

There are two verses from the Word of God that we must come to grips with if we are to understand exactly what Christ experienced on the cross when He was made to be sin for us.

First, the Scriptures teach that God the Father poured out His judgment upon Christ on the cross for our sins.

Isaiah 53:10: Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,

Now the “Him” of Isaiah 53:10, is this person, “The Word”, of John chapter one, the eternal companion of the Father, God the Son, who added to His existence human flesh and dwelt amongst us.

Isaiah 53:10 teaches us that the Lord bruised Him and hath put Him to grief when He made His soul an offering for sin.

Furthermore, Scripture also teaches that the person of God, God the Son, was in Christ when God the Father poured out His judgment on Christ for our sins.

Colossians 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

This verse is not saying that all three members of the God-head had taken up residence in the body of Jesus so that there was no distinct member of the Godhead outside of His body. The Father was still seated in heaven and the Holy Spirit was still operating in this world. But what Colossians 2:9 is teaching is that the entire second person of the God-head, the Lord Jesus Christ, His entire personality, had been integrated into a human body and now dwells, and forever will dwell, in a human body.

So it was this Person, who was the eternal Second Person of the God-head, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14) who experienced the retributive justice of God.

2 Corinthians 5:19: To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Notice that the above verse says that “God was in Christ”; that is, the Second Person of the God-head was dwelling in that human body of Jesus when the sins of the world were imputed to Him on the cross, and He experienced the retributive justice of God in our behalf.

This experience of the retributive justice of God against our sins concluded with the physical death of Jesus, but it did not begin with it. We know from some of the statements that Jesus made from the cross that Jesus had been experiencing that death for a period of time while He hung on the cross.

This is made clear by several statements He makes from the cross.

John 19:26-30: When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"

²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.

²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"

²⁹ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth.

³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

In this context, Christ twice indicates that His work on cross, as prophesied in the Old Testament, had now been accomplished.

This would indicate that He had been experiencing the retributive justice of God in His body on the cross while He was still alive.

We may not understand it all, but we must not deny it.

It was this person who agonized on the cross when our sins were laid on Him. The agony culminated with Him shouting, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This death of the cross which He was experiencing while he was still alive then concluded with His physical death.

It took this Infinite Person to offer Himself as an equivalent payment for the sins of the world.

This Person became a man, so that He, in human flesh, could offer Himself for the sins of the world.

His name is Jesus.

Understand this: The death of the Person on the Cross must constitute an equivalent payment for the sins of each and every person of the human race. A sinless person who was not divine could not accomplish that. Moreover, since the body of Jesus is a finite body, that would not be an equivalent payment to all of the sins of the world.

It took an infinite person to suffer something of unmeasurable consequence to Himself in order that an equivalent payment for the sins of the world might be transacted between God the Father and God the Son on the cross.

Also understand this: Every cult in the world has to somehow redefine either Jesus or His work on the cross to deny the infinite payment for sins which transpired on the cross.

Some cults seek to define the Lord Jesus as something less than the unique, eternal second Person of the Godhead as the one suffering on the cross.

If the person on the cross is somehow less than the unique, eternal second Person of the God-Head, then a transaction between the Father and the Son, which paid for the sins of the world, could not have transpired. Moreover, to believe in a savior who was less than God would be to believe in a payment which was less than a satisfactory exchange for the sins of the world. If it was not the very Second Person of God, who experienced the payment, then you have believed in a less than adequate sacrifice for your sins.

And that is where these people who believe that “Jesus did not experience a spiritual component to his sufferings” eventually land. They end up believing in a payment which is less than an adequate and equivalent transaction for the sins of the world.

In this way cults can SAY they believe that “Jesus died for them” while, at the same time, believing that it was not God on the cross but, rather, somebody less than God.

Let’s now look at some additional verses so that we can clearly understand just who this person is and who was suffering for our sins on the cross.

Hebrews 2:9: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (ESV)

Now I normally do not divert away from the King James or New King James while I am teaching, but in this verse it is necessary to do so because the ESV catches something here that the others don’t. And, by the way, this is not caused by the underlying Greek text of the verse. There is no variant here in any of the Greek texts. The TR and the

Majority text and the Alexandrian text all read the same. Quite honestly the translators of the English Standard Version here catch an alternate meaning: the Greek adjective Βραχύ which can also be translated “for a little while”. Here is the resulting translation:

“But we see Jesus, who, FOR A LITTLE WHILE, was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death” I believe is the best translation.

Moreover, it better fixes the theology and context of the verse.

Jesus is not today “a little lower than the angels”; Jesus today is crowned with glory and honor.

But He was, for little while, made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.

This verse communicates to us that, before His incarnation, Jesus was NOT lower than the angels; however, for the purpose of coming into this world for the suffering of death, He became lower than the angels.

This verse also teaches us why the Person of the Word, came into this world: for the suffering of death; because only an infinite member of the Godhead could suffer a death which was the equivalent to the collective sin debt of all of the world.

This verse, like our passage in John chapter one, “the Word becoming flesh and dwelling amongst us”, also

teaches the preexisting person of the Godhead taking upon Himself the form of a servant for the suffering of death.

It is this person, who existed forever with and as God before His incarnation, who came into this world and received a body, which meant, for the time of his earthly existence, He existed a little lower than the angels.

It is this person who came into the world for the suffering of death. It is this person who hung on the cross.

God manifest in the flesh, took the punishment for our sins, and by the grace of God “tasted death for every man” (person).

So what does this mean that He tasted death for everyone?

It means that the eternal alienation from the Father, which was due each of us for all eternity, He experienced in a moment's time. He, as the Person of God, because His person was housed in the body of Jesus, could experience a death on account of our sins, which was of great cost to Him and His communion with the Father, so that we not be obligated to forever experience the wrath of God forever.

Some people reject this line of teaching shouting, “God cannot die!”

Understand that Jesus did not experience a lapse of consciousness; nor did he give up His deity. Deity did not for one moment perish on the cross.

What Jesus experienced on the cross, for a brief period of time, was a loss of communion with the Father, when our sin was laid upon Him, and He became the focal point and target of God's retributive justice against our sins. That was something He dreaded. It also caused him to cry out, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The communion which He experienced from eternity past was lost, and He experienced an agony in His soul which only He could describe.

Here is another passage concerning the identity of the person who hung on the cross:

Philippians 2:5-8: Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,
⁶who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,
⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.
⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

"Who being in the form of God" is literally translated, "who existing in the nature of God".

I am going to share with you the American Standard Version here because it is the translation with the most powerful, unambiguous statement on the deity of the pre-incarnate Christ.

Once again there are no variants between any underlying Greek manuscripts. They all read the same.

Philippians 2:5-8: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

⁶who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped,

⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men;

⁸ and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

This context is referred to as “the Kenosis”, which is the account of Christ’s emptying of Himself and becoming man, in order to take the form of a servant, so that this member of the Godhead could experience death for every person.

He did not count His equality with God a thing to be greedily held on to, but he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

So let’s in this verse, once again, seek to understand who it is that ends up on the cross. It is the same person who forever existed alongside of God as the Second Person of the Godhead who decided to empty Himself of His pre-incarnate glory, take the form of a servant so He could experience the death of the Cross.

Now why did HE have to do it?

Because only a person who eternally existed with all the attributes of God, only an infinite being who has always

existed as God the Son, could offer Himself as an equivalent payment for the offenses against God committed collectively by each and every fallen human-being, made in the image of God, on the face of the earth.

It took an infinite person to do that, not just a sinless person.

Only a member of the God-head could meet that requirement.

From the above passage in Philippians, we can see that the personality of God was NOT set aside in His incarnation. He retained His pre-incarnate personhood, and added to his person human flesh. It was this God the Son looking out into the world that He created, who agonized when the sins of the world were laid upon His person.

It is THAT person who experienced the retributive justice of God on the Cross.

1 Timothy 1:15: This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

The statement that “Christ Jesus came into the world” assumes that He existed before He got here.

The biggest problem with the proponents of the “Jesus did not die spiritually” controversy is that they have somebody less than God offering a less than equivalent payment for sins on the cross; as if only his physical death was sufficient.

The truth of the matter is that Jesus on the cross proclaims that the purpose for which He came to this earth had been fulfilled before physical death.

John 19:28: After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"

If Jesus stated that the purpose for which He came had been fulfilled, then it stands to reason that the death He died included more than His physical death. Indeed, His entire cross experience is included in those sufferings which paid for our salvation, sufferings which were expressed in His words, "My God My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46)

Hebrews 10:5: Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.

Understand this: What makes the body significant is the personality contained by the body.

Some people want to say that only the BODY of Christ suffered.

The body of Jesus housed the person of Jesus, who was the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. It is this PERSON who suffered for our sins.

Do not cheapen the sufferings of Christ. It was God the Son, enrobed in humanity, who agonized for our sins.

4

The Kenosis

And Other Dynamics within the Godhead

As I was in discussion with those of the “Jesus did not die spiritually” controversy, I asked them, “What was Jesus experiencing when He cried out to the Father, ‘My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?’” (Matthew 27:46).

There are objections to the above verse that resulted in the following questions:

“How could there be such a split in the Godhead?” Or
“How could God turn His back on God?”

Both of these objections arise from a basic misunderstanding of the functional nature of the Godhead.

It is as if the objector might be close to a modalist in their thinking.

“Oneness Christology” would be another name for modalism.

A modalist is a person who believes that there is One God who manifests Himself in three persons; that is, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Modalists believe that these

three persons are actually the same personage being manifested in different forms.

A true Trinitarian like myself believes that the Godhead exists as three distinct persons, bound together by a perfect, continuous love, communion and harmony with each distinct person of the Godhead functioning in His own agency or capacity but in perfect orchestration with one another. Each person of the Godhead performs specific tasks, although the responsibilities can sometimes be shared.

In order to understand the nature of the Godhead, it is helpful to go back to the book of Genesis and listen to God as He deliberates concerning His creation of man and then draw a couple of conclusions from those deliberations.

Genesis 1:26, 27: Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷ So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Several things can be assumed about the Godhead from the above context.

First, God exists as a plurality of Beings. In this passage, we can observe the members of the Godhead deliberating with one another concerning the creation of man. They have been talking it over, deliberating the components of man's being and decide that he would exist as God exists.

By the way, the very fact that the members of the Godhead are deliberating with one another demonstrates that they exist as three personalities. If He were only one person manifesting Himself as three different persons, such interactions would not be taking place.

Notice verse 27 again.

So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Incidentally, this pattern is repeated in Genesis chapter 5.

Genesis 5:1, 2: This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.
2 He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created.

Now are these passages trying to teach us that one of the persons of the Godhead is a woman? Of course not. What this passage is teaching us is that the members of the Godhead function in complementary roles with one another. They are companions.

Just like the perfect marriage, in which the husband and wife function together in complementary roles of a companionship, thus the Godhead exists of three companions, existing as individual entities but functioning in distinct and complementary roles in perfect harmony. We

can see this companionship mentioned in the following verse:

Zechariah 13:7: " Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,
Against the Man who is My Companion,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"Strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep will be scattered;
Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.

Notice in the above passage that the Lord Jesus is called the Companion of the Lord of hosts. In the New King James the words, "Man who is my Companion" is capitalized. That is because those words are assumed to be talking about a member of the Godhead.

The above verse is a prediction that the Great Tribulation would not start until the true Shepherd, the Companion had been smitten.

But, I wanted you to see this one additional thing in this above verse, the person being smitten is a companion of the Godhead.

The Godhead consists of three persons who are companions, like a perfect marriage (only with three persons rather than two), in perfect harmony, deliberating together over issues with each functioning in His own agency.

Genesis 3:22: Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and

evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"

Notice once again the conversation going on among the members of the Godhead.

God the Father's primary agency in the Godhead is Decreeing Agent.

He decrees when a person is saved. He decrees when events are going to occur here on earth.

The Son is the Creator and Sustainer of all life, the Arm of the Lord, the Redeemer of mankind and Firstborn over all creation.

God the Holy Spirit is the Curator of the human conscience and Generator of spiritual life.

Each person of the Godhead has a part in their collective dealing with men, each bringing to the table His own deliberations. We can see the Lord mentioning the decreeing agency of the Father in the following verse:

Acts 1:6-8: Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

⁸ "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in

Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

When Jesus is asked the question as to whether or not, at this time, the Kingdom was going to be restored to Israel, He basically replies, "That is the Father's decision".

Mark 13:32, 33: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

³³ "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.

How could Jesus not know the timing of the events of the Great Tribulation upon the earth? It is because that decision lies with the Father, who is the Decreeing Agent of the Godhead, and He had not yet decreed it.

Let's return to the original objection to God the Son's crying out to God the Father on the cross. To make the statement that God could not cry out to God on the cross constitutes a basic misunderstanding of the fact that the Godhead exists as three persons.

The God head exists as three persons bound together by perfect love, communion and harmony; while, at the same time, bringing to the table their own unique perspectives concerning man.

This truth explains how the Lord Jesus can function as our Advocate to the Father.

1 John 2:1: My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Jesus is our defense attorney, so to speak, pleading our case to the Father, the Decreeing Agent of the Godhead. We can also see Christ functioning in His agency as Advocate in the following context:

Luke 13:6-9: He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.

⁷ "Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'

⁸ "But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it.

⁹ 'And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' "

This passage is a picture of the advocacy of Christ during his three-year ministry in Israel, the Father being the Owner of the vineyard and Christ being the Keeper of the vineyard. So Christ, as Israel's advocate, pleads for mercy.

Let's also talk about the Kenosis; that is, the person of Jesus which came into being as a result of God the Son being born into this world as a human.

A whole lot of people are missing an important fact in the Kenosis: although the Second Person of the Godhead, the

Lord Jesus, emptied Himself to take the form of a servant for the purpose of suffering for the sins of the world, He did not divest Himself in any way, of his personhood. He remained the Companion, the full, eternal Second Person of the Godhead, divested only of some of His non-communicable attributes.

Philippians 2:5-11: Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,
⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,
⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.
⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,
¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The words “made Himself of no reputation” in verse 7 are actually a single verb in the Greek, “κενῶ”, (Kenao) which means “to empty oneself”. This is talking about the pre-incarnate Christ, who, when He came into this world, set aside the independent use of His attributes of deity for the purpose of functioning in this world as a servant.

He was still fully the person of God; but God, having laid aside the independent usage of some of His non-

communicable attributes and, in the process, becoming obedient to the Father.

The Kenosis resulted in Jesus being dependent upon and obedient to the Father for the duration between His birth and His death.

There are so many people who forget this very important event in the earthly existence of the Lord Jesus. Jesus, while on this earth is not exercising His pre-incarnate and resurrection powers. He emptied Himself; that is, He set aside the independent exercise of His non-communicable attributes for the suffering of the death of the cross, submitting Himself to the Father.

Our verse above says that He took upon Himself the form of a servant. And he became obedient to the Father even to the point of the death of the cross.

This is why he could make this statement in John 12:

John 12:27: " Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

We can also see this same truth in Hebrews.

Hebrews 5:7-9: who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,

⁸ though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

⁹ And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

By the way, it is interesting that in this passage we see the intense aversion that Jesus had to experiencing the bearing of our sins on the cross. Jesus was resigned to the fact that it had to happen. There was no other way he could save sinners than through the way of the cross.

He became totally submitted to the will of the Father and, in fact, according to Hebrews 5:8, He learned obedience.

He learned by the things He suffered.

This brings us to another question concerning the Kenosis: How can it be said that Jesus learned? Does God have to learn anything?

The word “learned” in Hebrews 5:8 means “experienced”. Understand this: God the Son, in order for Him to become our advocate, needed to experience what it was like to be a human. It is one thing to look on from outside; it is another thing altogether to experience all of the human urges and pressures, in order that Jesus might be a merciful and faithful advocate of the child of God.

Hebrews 4:15, 16: For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, *yet* without sin.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus experienced humanity not only so that He could die for our sins, but also so that He could experience our humanity and, therefore, function as our advocate to the Father.

Hebrews 2:14-18: Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,
¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

¹⁶ For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.

¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Once again, this underscores the fact that the Godhead consists of three deliberating persons. Moreover, sometimes the Son has to deliberate for us sinners and plead our case to the Father because the Lord can relate to what is like to be a human, now that He has experienced it for Himself.

Look again at verse 18 of our above passage.

¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Jesus makes intercession because He brings to the Godhead a perspective which is meant to temper the justice of God with compassion.

I mean, stop and consider this, the very fact that Christ is our Advocate to the Father means that He brings considerations to the Father which would and could temper the justice of the Father. The very fact that such advocacy occurs between the believer, Christ and the Father demonstrates that the Godhead consists of three deliberative persons who consider one another's input when making decisions.

This occurs because the Second Person of the Godhead, as a result of His incarnation, has experienced all of the temptations that people experience and can communicate those experiences to the Father when He is deliberating how long He is going to allow an erring saint to continue on this earth.

Hebrews 4:15, 16: For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The word "tempted" in the above verse should probably be translated "tested". Christ did not "toy" with the idea of

sinning, as might be suggested by the word “tempted”. However He was “tested” in all points like we are.

There was not anything that Jesus never knew; however, there were things that He had never experienced until He entered this world as a human.

Head knowledge is one thing, experience is another. Jesus knew all as the eternal second person of the Godhead; however, He had never experienced humanity.

It is the experience of humanity which fully qualified Him to become our advocate with the Father.

By the way, that is what the advocacy of Christ is all about. His advocacy brings a human perspective before God the Father, the Decreeing Agent, which the Lord Has learned because only He, among the members of the Godhead, has existed on this earth as a man.

Here is another interesting consideration concerning the incarnation of Christ:

When the Lord became a man, for the purposes of suffering and death, He became subject to the same human limitations as others and needed others ministering to Him.

From the day of His birth until the day of his death, He needed others to minister to Him.

Luke 8:1-3: Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and

bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve *were* with Him,
² and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities -- Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons,
³ and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.

Why did Jesus need others ministering to Him from their substance? HE'S GOD! He could have conjured up more food anytime He wanted right?

Well no, because He set aside the independent exercise of his attributes of deity when he came to the earth, and took the form of a servant. Several context can demonstrate this fact.

In John chapter four, He had to ask the immoral woman at the well at Sychar for a drink. The Person who created the oceans full of water, needed a hussy to deliver Him from thirst by drawing Him a cup of water from a well!

John 4:7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink.

He also needed angels to minister to Him:

Matthew 4:1-11: Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
² And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

³ Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

⁴ But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

⁵ Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,

⁶ and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In *their* hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' "

⁷ Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.' "

⁸ Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

⁹ And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

¹¹ Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Luke 22:42, 43: saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

⁴³ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

I recently watched a sermon by one of these preachers who insisted that the sufferings of Christ were only physical and he made the following statement:

“HE IS GOD! He didn’t need anybody to save Him! HE IS THE SAVIOR!”

My response to such a statement is twofold.

1 There are deliverances in the Scriptures which have nothing to do with sin. I mean, the word “save” in the Greek simply means “to deliver”, So when Jesus says, in

John 12:27: "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

He is not talking about salvation from sin, He is talking about deliverance from the intense suffering He is about to experience on the cross.

2 A person who would make the statement about Jesus not needing anybody to deliver Him because HE was the omnipotent one, is not taking into consideration the practical effects of the Kenosis; that is, what happened when Jesus became a man. Using this preacher’s logic, Jesus should have never needed to be ministered to by angels. I mean, HE IS GOD! He doesn’t need others ministering to HIM!

To make such an assertion is to fail to have understood what happened when Jesus emptied

Himself to become a person and our perfect sacrifice.
Even though in Him dwelled the fullness of the
Godhead bodily, He became submitted to the Father
and had to depend upon others for His needs.

5

THE PREPOSITIONS OF THE CROSS

One of the most important parts of speech in Koine Greek is the Greek preposition.

What is a preposition?

In its simplest form, a preposition is a word that shows the relationship between a verb and the object of the prepositional phrase. Prepositions can denote a time relationship, a spatial relationship, or even a logical relationship.

He ran up the street. In the prepositional phrase, “up the street”, the word “up” would be the preposition, with “street” being its object.

The cow jumped over the moon. “Over” would be the preposition; “moon” is the object.

The moon rose over the horizon. The preposition is “over” and “horizon” is its object.

He gave at home instead of at the office. This one is a little more complicated. The preposition “at” is used twice. In the prepositional phrase, “at home”, “home” is the object. The phrase, “instead of at the office” serves as a contrasting prepositional phrase that indicates an alternative location for the action. The preposition “instead of” introduces this

alternative, with "at the office" being the object of that preposition.

Because prepositions are usually not large words, sometimes their significance in a sentence is ignored. However they are quite often the most important word in a sentence, especially when we are discussing the fundamentals of the gospel of Grace.

So let's now consider several statements of Scripture which relate to the work of the cross and understand just how the preposition contributes to our understanding of the doctrine in the verse in question.

For example, let's study the Greek preposition "anti" (αντι).

In first century Greek, this preposition had come to mean "instead of". It is used three times in the New Testament to discuss for us Christ's work on the cross.

The preposition anti (αντι) is used in Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45. These two verses are virtually identical in the New Testament so we will simply consider the meaning of one: Mark 10:45.

"A ransom *instead of* the many"

Mark 10:45: καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν

Mark 10:45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Specifically, let examine the last nine words of this verse: "And to give his life a ransom for many."

"His life"

The word "life" in this verse is the Greek word "psuche" (ψυχήν). It is commonly translated "soul". It is a reference to one's self, our innermost being, the totality of our existence.

Here are a few uses of this word in the New Testament:

Revelation 6:9: When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls (psuche) of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.

In this verse, the soul is a reference to the disembodied spirit of the saint awaiting his glorified body. It speaks of the person, minus his body.

Here is another example of the use the word psuche (ψυχήν) (translated soul) in the verse below:

2 Peter 2:8 βλέμματι γὰρ καὶ ἀκοῇ ὁ δίκαιος ἐγκατοικῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἡμέραν ἐξ ἡμέρας ψυχήν δικαίαν ἀνόμοις ἔργοις ἐβασάνιζεν·

2 Peter 2:8: (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul (ψυχὴν) from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)

In the case of Lot, we can see that the soul speaks of the innermost being of Lot. It does not speak of Lot's body. Lot did not experience any physical torment while he lived within the walls of the city of Sodom, but he did experience the continual grieving of his innermost being as he dwelt in the midst of the wicked men of Sodom.

Hebrews 4:12” Ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐνεργῆς καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον καὶ διϊκνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς τε καὶ πνεύματος ἁρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν καὶ κριτικὸς ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας·

Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul (psuche) and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In this passage, we see that the word of God enables the child of God to be able to discern what is going on in his soul; as distinguished from what is occurring in the inner man, the spirit man, that new man, which today indwells every born again saint. But, once again, the soul is not a reference to the body of the saint; but, rather, to his inner being.

We can see, in most places in the New Testament, the soul is a reference to the inner, immaterial being within the individual. The soul can also be a reference to the whole of a person, but never a reference to only a person's body.

Let's go back to Mark 10:45, "(The Son of Man gave) his soul"...

"A ransom"

The Greek word for ransom is the word "Lutron" (λύτρον), which speaks of "the means of release, a means of redeeming".

This word "ransom" speaks of a release of a person's obligations because the price of release has been paid by another.

Let's continue to build out the last nine words of Mark 10:45. "(The Son of Man gave His soul) as the price of redemption"...

The next word in the last nine words on Mark 10:45 is the Greek word "anti" (αντι). It is the preposition which most commonly means "instead of".

Let's now finish our expanded translation of Mark 10:45 from the Greek and then talk about it. Here is the verse again for reference:

Mark 10:45 καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἤλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν

Mark 10:45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The last preposition in our verse which, in our English Bible, is translated "for" is actually the Greek preposition "anti" which literally means "instead of".

"(The Son of Man gave) HIS soul as the price of redemption instead of the many."

Who are "the many" in the above verse? They are each and every person on the face of the earth.

Understand: This verse is a statement on the equivalency between the soul of the Son of Man and the collective souls of each and every person on the face of the earth.

In other words, instead of everybody having to pay for their sins forever in hell, alienated from God, the Son of Man gave His soul as the price for our redemption on the cross, a price that the infinite Second Person of the Godhead paid and experienced in His innermost being, which was of unmeasurable importance for Him not to experience in his soul, in order that all the souls of all mankind who would live throughout the history of the world would be released from their obligation to be forever alienated from God, because Jesus on the cross experienced an equivalent amount of suffering, in a moment in history.

That is what the Mark 10:45 means when it says "He gave his soul as a ransom instead of the many."

This is why people like me believe that the suffering of Christ on the cross had to be more than just the physical suffering of His human body. His suffering had to be an equivalent to the whole of humanity not suffering forever in Hell. Moreover, only God could offer Himself as such an equivalent transaction.

He was experiencing a suffering in his innermost being which caused him to scream, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

...Unless Jesus was mistaken; and I don't believe He was, do you?

He experienced a forsaking of the Father, while He was bearing your sin and mine in His own body.

Matthew 27:46: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

In a finite period of time, the Father was making His (Christ's) soul an offering for sin, and the love and companionship that the Son had experienced from the eons of eternity past had been temporarily displaced by the retributive justice of God while He was being made sin for us.

...Unless Jesus was mistaken concerning the moment in time in which He was experiencing the forsaking of God.

Unless, of course, the second person of the Godhead misinterpreted what He was experiencing on the cross, while He was bearing our sins, because His exclamation does not fit your theology.

If you need to, I can send you an Exacto knife so you can cut that verse out of your Bible. Or, better yet, adjust your theology to accommodate what the Lord actually experienced on the cross when He was made to be sin for us. Be humble enough to agree with what Jesus exclaimed about what HE experienced on the cross, which He described as a forsaking of God.

Here is another passage which we need to consider when we are examining the extent of Christ's sufferings on the cross:

Isaiah 53:10-12: Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

¹¹ He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Once again, the word “soul”, which is used three times in this passage, was translated “ψυχη” in the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew text.

Isaiah 53:11: He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

In Isaiah 53:11, the Jews, in the Septuagint, translated the word "soul" in the above verse as "ψυχη", which speaks of a person's innermost being. The word never means “body”

The Greek word for “body” is “soma” (σωμα). It is used 122 times in the New Testament.

The Word "ψυχη" in the New Testament means “the innermost being” or “the whole of a man's being”, but it NEVER means "body". It occurs 105 times in the New Testament.

From this we must conclude that the suffering of Christ on the cross involved more than just His physical body. It involved the whole of His innermost being.

Here is another verse where this Greek preposition “anti” contributes greatly to our understanding of the sacrifice of Christ for our sins:

1 Timothy 2:5, 6 εἷς γὰρ θεός εἷς καὶ μεσίτης
θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς
ὁ δὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων τὸ μαρτύριον
καιροῖς ἰδίοις

1 Timothy 2:5, 6: For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus,
⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

In our previous passage, Mark 10:45, “anti” and “lutron” were two separate words. Here, in I Timothy 2:6, these two words are slapped right together to constitute the only place in the New Testament where this word occurs.

In our English Bible, the word is translated “ransom”. In the Greek, it is the “instead of payment”: the “antilutron” (ἀντίλυτρον). Thayer, in his Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (which is my favorite), defines this word “antilutron” as “what is given in exchange for another as the price of his redemption”: an “instead of payment”.

Therefore, we could consider this verse to be saying “who gave Himself an instead of payment in behalf of all.”

We can again see, in this verse, the concept of the offering of Christ being an equivalent payment instead of “the all” being banished forever from the presence of God because of their unredeemed sin debt.

Now I know, in our English Bible, we have the translation, “He gave himself a ransom for all”, and that is fine. But what I want you to see is the actual unique construction of the word and, once again, the equivalency it creates with regard to the payment of Christ being an equitable exchange for the cumulative sins of the world.

Only the person of God could offer Himself as an equitable exchange for the sins of the world.

But there is something else I want us to see in at the end of I Timothy 2:6: “to be testified in due time”.

What is this?

I Timothy 2:6, we have the gospel and the proclamation of the gospel in one sentence. Here is the verse in Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible:

1 Timothy 2:6 who did give himself a ransom for all
-- the testimony in its own times – (YLT)

What the last half of this verse is actually saying is that the message of Christ giving Himself as a ransom for all, is the testimony of the ages. Since the word “time” here, in the Greek is actually plural, then it seems like this verse is saying that the proclamation of Christ giving Himself a ransom for all is the gospel which was to be proclaimed in every dispensation. It is an inter-dispensational message. That is, the saving message of grace is the same for all dispensations. It is the testimony of its own times.

We can also see the inter-dispensational nature of the gospel message in the following context.

Acts 3:18-21: "But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

¹⁹ "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

²⁰ "and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

¹⁹ "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

²⁰ "and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

²¹ "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

In other words, “to be testified in due time” means “to communicate that the message of Christ giving Himself a ransom for all, which is the core message of the gospel for every dispensation of times”. According to the above context, all of the prophets, who have been since the world began, had been proclaiming that Christ would suffer. This message remained the same during every dispensation of man. It was an inter-dispensational message: a message which remained consistent in every dispensation.

So far, we see in these three verses (Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45 and I Timothy 2:5-6) that there was an equivalency factor in the offering of Christ for sins. That is, instead of the many perishing forever, the Lord Jesus had to provide a payment for sin which was an equivalent to the alienation which was to be experienced by all humanity, caused by their sins.

By the way, in I Timothy 2:6, we have another preposition of the gospel: The Greek Word “uper” (υπερ).

“He gave Himself a ransom for all.” The preposition “for” in I Timothy 2:6 is the Greek preposition “uper”.

Uper (prep.) - with the genitive case means, “for, in behalf of, for the sake of”.

So Christ gave Himself a ransom in behalf of all, for the sake of all.

As we can see, the word “uper” also communicates substitution.

We can also see this in the following context:

Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for (uper) me.”

It is unfortunate that the translators did not seek to use the more precise definitions of many of these prepositions. I mean the word “for” could be a meaning of many of the Greek prepositions. However most of them have more precise definitions which quite often should have been used. Here in Galatians 2:20, we again have the Greek preposition “UPER” at the end of this verse.

“He loved me and gave himself IN BEHALF OF me”

Or, if you want to get even more literal with the end of verse 20, “He loved me and delivered himself over in behalf of me”.

“In behalf of”, which is the most common meaning of the word “UPER”, conveys the message of substitution much greater than the word “for”.

Here is another translation where a more precise usage of the prepositions delivers a more powerful consideration of the gospel message:

Peter 3:18 ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι·

1 Peter 3:18: For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

Let’s hang some understanding on the above verse.

“Christ also suffered once for sins”

The word “once” here is an adverb which is usually translated “once for all”. It is an event never to be repeated. This communicates the total sufficiency of the one offering of Christ.

“The Just for the unjust”

The word “just” is a singular noun, referring to Christ and the word “unjust” is plural, referring to the rest of humanity.

The preposition “for” in “the just for the unjust” is, once again, the preposition “uper”, and it means “in behalf of, for the sake of all of us”.

Again, this preposition conveys the idea of an equivalence between the suffering of that singular God-man: Christ, and the sufferings which all humanity would have had to experience for their own sins.

“That He might bring us to God”

The ultimate goal of the salvation of Christ is that sinful men might be reconciled to God, that is, that we might be brought back into a relationship with God.

“Being put to death in the flesh, but being made alive by the spirit”

NO, this is not the new birth. The new birth is for sinners, not for the Savior. This is simply the Holy Spirit regenerating the mortal body of Jesus into his new spiritual body at the moment of Christ’s resurrection.

Romans 8:11: But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Jesus was born into this world with a human body, with a heart, and blood, and all of the organs which are meant to

manage a dying body. When he raised from the dead, his body did not contain blood. The renal system of our human bodies is, to a large degree, for the purpose of filtering out dying cells and other impurities produced by a mortal body. The resurrected body will not be a dying body, so there will be no need for blood, or the systems of the human body which involve the transportation and filtering of blood.

A third preposition of the message of the cross is the Greek preposition, “apo” (απο). It means “away from”. It is a preposition of separation.

Titus 2:14: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from (apo) all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Titus 2:14” ὃς ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἵνα λυτρώσῃται ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας καὶ καθάρῃ ἑαυτῷ λαὸν περιούσιον ζηλωτὴν καλῶν ἔργων

In the above verse, the preposition “from” is this Greek preposition, “apo” which means, “away from”.

It produces a literal translation of:

He gave Himself in behalf of (Uper) us, in order that He might redeem us (away from) all iniquity and purify unto Himself His own special people, zealous of good works.

By the way, do you see how much more clearly we can understand the gospel message if we would simply pay a

little more attention to the prepositions which occur in the texts of Scripture which contain that message?

So what should the English student of the word of God do?

If you seriously want to investigate the prepositions of the Bible for yourself, you could get an interlinear Bible (which is the English Bible with the Greek directly below it). Learn the 24-letter Greek alphabet and then get yourself a Greek lexicon which is nothing more than a dictionary of Greek words.

I know that I make a whole lot of people mad when I try to encourage the English readers of Scripture to familiarize themselves with the underlying Greek text of the New Testament. Quite frankly, is probably one of the main motivations behind the King James-only movement.

All of you young people out there: Learn the language. It will pay off with a lifetime of discernment in the word of truth, without having to be another man's parrot, without having to always turn to the commentaries to glean from another man's opinion.

As you can see from this chapter, those little Greek prepositions, when their meanings are properly unpacked, can deliver much more clarity to the gospel message than what we have in the English text.

6

Was Christ's Suffering on the Cross Limited Only to Physical Sufferings?

There has been some discussion recently on chat rooms and other online forums seemingly excoriating those of us who believe that the anguish that Jesus experienced on the cross was more than a physical anguish; as if the only thing that Jesus was dreading about the cross was the physical pain of dying or, perhaps, the torture or abuse by His persecutors.

The purpose of this chapter is to document what the Scriptures teach about the sufferings of Christ.

Some people with whom I agree state that Jesus experienced two deaths on the cross: a physical death and a spiritual death. I would respond that Jesus did not experience two deaths on the cross; actually, He experienced the death of His total person as one continuous event concluding with His physical death. Having made that distinction, however, I would not ascribe heresy to those who would say that He experienced two deaths. I believe that those who have made that assertion are simply distinguishing between His physical suffering and His spiritual suffering on the cross.

Those who try to claim that that only the body of Jesus suffered on cross are attempting to separate the person of God from the body of Christ so that only the body of Christ

suffered on the cross. However, Scripture teaches that the whole person of Christ experienced the anguish of being made sin for us.

First of all, I believe that we need to come to grips with just who Jesus was and who He is.

Jesus was the eternal Second Person of the Godhead, the one who was and who will reign over this earth forever, the Creator and sustainer of the universe, come to this earth and fully integrated into a human body for the purpose of Him, in His human body, experiencing the punishment of the sins of the whole world.

Let's look at a passage which spells out for us who Jesus was, and is.

John 1:1-14: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God.

³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.

⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.

⁸ He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became 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.

Jesus was, and is, God the Son or, as He is identified in this context, “the Word” fully integrated into a human body. The person of the Lord Jesus was God.

Twice in the Epistles of John, John states that he who denies the above truth is antichrist.

1 John 4:3: and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

2 John 1:7: For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

Paul also told us the same thing about the Lord Jesus.

1 Timothy 3:16: And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.

Jesus was the person of God fully integrated with a human body. The soul gazing through the eyes of Jesus was God.

I do not see in Scripture any place where the personality residing in the body of Jesus was anyone less than God the Son, the unique, eternal second person of the God-head.

This person agonized upon the cross when He bore the sins of the world.

Here is what Isaiah chapter 53 says about the suffering of Christ:

Isaiah 53:11: He shall see the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Further down in the context we are considering in the book of Isaiah, Isaiah states that His soul was made an offering for sin.

Isaiah 53:9, 10: And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he

had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

⁰ Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand.

He made his soul an offering for sin. Whatever that means, Jesus screamed out and agonized when it happened to Him. This is what he screamed out:

Matthew 27:46-50: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

⁴⁷ Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that*, said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!"

⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled *it* with sour wine and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

⁴⁹ The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."

⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

Christ Jesus experienced something on the cross which He had never experienced down through the eons of time when our sin was placed upon Him. He perceived Himself to be forsaken by the Father when the Father's justice was poured out upon His total person as our sin was placed upon Him. We know that He perceived that because of what He exclaimed from the cross. Call it what you want to call it.

Jesus sensed that the Father had forsaken Him. The very thing that Jesus never wanted to experience, He did experience when our sins were placed upon Him, causing him to cry out, “My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?”

By the way, the human body does not have a sense of God forsaking it.

Nor does the human body sense that God is distant. However, Jesus sensed in His person that God was distant from Him. Jesus, at that time, sensed the absence of the Father from His sphere of existence.

If you don’t believe that, flush your theology down the toilet, because we are discussing the ramifications of the most important event in human history.

King David expands upon this event in Psalm 22, with the most detailed account of this event recorded in history, recorded for us approximately a thousand years before the events of the cross occurred.

The anxiety of soul that Jesus experienced on the cross is recorded for us in Psalms 22.

By the way, I am well aware that the “Jesus did not die spiritually” folks assert that Psalms 22 does not document for us the sufferings of Christ. That, indeed, is a stretch because, as in many of these New Testament accounts of the sufferings of Christ, the participants in the crucifixion are not seeking to fulfill Psalms 22. rather the Holy Spirit is exercising His foreknowledge into the future and recorded

those events through the writings of King David. This truth is underscored by the fact that most of the prophetic events recorded in Psalms 22 were not committed by Christ but actually carried out by those who were participating in His crucifixion.

Seven of the events of Psalms 22, were not fulfilled by Christ but actually fulfilled by those who were crucifying Him. Certainly THOSE people were not seeking to fulfill the events of Psalms 22!

The participants in the crucifixion were not seeking to act out a script; rather the Holy Spirit, in His omniscience was looking ahead into human history, and documenting the events of the cross. Likewise Christ was not seeking to fulfill Psalms 22: Psalms 22 is future prophecy flowing from the foreknowledge of the Holy Spirit exercising His foreknowledge into the future.

Psalms 22:1: <To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David.>

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

*Why art thou so far from helping me,
and from the words of my roaring?*

Skip ahead to verse 6.

Psalms 22:6-21: But I *am* a worm, and no man;
A reproach of men, and despised by the people

⁷ All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip,
they shake the head, *saying*,

⁸ "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"

⁹But You *are* He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust *while* on My mother's breasts.

¹⁰ I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You *have been* My God.

¹¹ BE NOT FAR FROM ME, For trouble *is* near; For *there is* none to help.

¹² Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled Me.

¹³ They gape at Me *with* their mouths, *Like* a raging and roaring lion.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me.

¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.

¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet;

¹⁷ I can count all My bones. They look *and* stare at Me.

¹⁸ They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.

¹⁹ But You, O LORD, DO NOT BE FAR FROM ME; O My Strength, hasten to help Me!

²⁰ Deliver Me from the sword, My precious *life* from the power of the dog.

²¹ Save Me from the lion's mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen! You have answered Me.

Notice twice in this context, plus in the first verse in this Psalm, the sense is that God is far away. I believe that what Jesus had always dreaded about this event was that the communion He had always experienced with the Father

down through the eons of time was about to, in a moment's time, be broken.

For that brief, but eternally significant, moment in time, Jesus sensed God the Father at a distance from Himself. If this were not true, then why does Jesus, three times in Psalms 22, express His concern over God being far away? That is what Jesus dreaded most about the experience of the Cross.

Some people teach that Jesus could pay for our sins because He was the perfect, sinless spotless, human Lamb of God. While that is certainly true, if that is all that was necessary, why could not have God simply generated another sinless Adam? After all, Adam was sinless until he fell in the transgression.

Don't you think that the Godhead would have thought of that and thus prevented the agony that the second Person of the Godhead experienced on the cross?

Luke 22:42-44: saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

⁴³ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

⁴⁴ And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

This agony was not because of mere physical pain or suffering; there was an agony of soul which He, as God the Son, was about to experience; and He dreaded it.

There had to be an infinite component to the suffering of Christ on the cross or else an equitable exchange, which would cancel the sins of the world, would not have transpired.

Remember, THAT WAS THE SECOND PERSON OF THE GODHEAD enrobed in human flesh, HANGING ON THAT CROSS AND DYING FOR OUR SINS.

Understand this: there must be an infinite component to the cross work of Christ, otherwise it is not a fair exchange for the sins of the world.

That is why the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins; it is not a fair exchange.

Hebrews 10:4, 5: For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

⁵ Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.”

...But a body you have prepared for me.

By the way, who are the “He” and the “Me” of verse five? HMM? They are the eternal second Person of the Godhead being enrobed in human flesh for the purpose of dying for the sins of the world, speaking to the first Person of the Godhead.

Let's continue reading.

Hebrews 10:6-10: In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You had no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come -- In the volume of the book it is written of Me -- To do Your will, O God.'

⁸ Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and *offerings* for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure *in them*" (which are offered according to the law),

⁹ then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second.

¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

Christ is the God Man: God enrobed in human flesh.

Hebrews 10:11, 12: And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

¹² But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

Can you imagine what would happen if animal sacrifices were sufficient? Every time I committed a sin, I could just get a fly swatter and kill a fly and declare it to be a fair exchange for the sin I just committed. Animal sacrifices were not sufficient to pay for sins because animals do have an eternal soul which could spend eternity in hell. Animals are not made in the image of God.

An equitable exchange needed to take place on the cross in exchange for the sins of the world. Anyone less than an infinite being could not have done that.

1 Timothy 2:5, 6: For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

The word “ransom” in verse six is the Greek word “antilutron”. It means “that which is given in exchange for another as the price of his redemption”.

An equitable payment for the collective sins of the whole world, a fair exchange, a fair purchase price, such a debt, could only be satisfied by a person with an infinite component to His personage, with a suffering of that part of His person equivalent to the sins of the world. Otherwise, it would not be a fair exchange. Otherwise, the antilutron is not equitable. Jesus had to experience something on the cross which was of infinite value to Him that He not experience, in order that the collective mass of humanity might not experience something which was of infinite value to us that we not experience. Jesus was experiencing that when he cried out, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”!

God the Son did not cease to be fully God when His person was integrated into human flesh. There were not two egos in the body of Jesus. The person of God the Son experienced in His person the consequences of our sin being laid upon His person. The dynamics of that event and what

exactly that was like for Him we can only speculate based upon His reaction to it on the cross.

Closing comments:

It is hope that this book will enable many young, free grace believers to overcome the intimidation of those who wish to intimidate them into submission to accept a less than adequate explanation of what transpired on the cross of Christ. We as believers need to stop being intimidated by those who seek to shame us into silence by charging us with heresy.

The best defense against those who seek to intimidate us into silence is to be fully armed with the truth. We need to become so comfortable with the truth, that those who are amplifying error across today's media platforms do not cause us to pull back from the truth and bind us into a state of silence.

We need to become so skilled at presenting the truth that it convinces those who are captured by error through the intimidation of others.

^{NKJ} **John 8:31** Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

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