

WHO KILLED JESUS CHRIST?

A few years ago there was, outside a Pentecostal Church, a “Wayside Pulpit” proclaiming...

“GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE MURDERED HIS OWN SON FOR US.”

It was meant to be startling but is it true? I think most people would find this statement offensive and I feel a great sense of sadness when reading such unfounded teachings. I cannot but be dismayed that anyone could imagine that the God of love, compassion, mercy, grace and truth would do such a wicked thing as murder His own Son. There are some who see Jesus dying as the substitute for mankind and therefore reason that God must have punished His own innocent Son with crucifixion in order that the guilty may go free, but this is against all Scripture teaching. It could further be argued that God’s ways are higher than man’s ways and God’s thoughts are higher than man’s thoughts, and the seeming heartless action of God, who so loved the world that He “murdered His own Son for us,” is simply a failure on our part to know and understand all things - things we shall know and understand when we are in the Kingdom. But is this explanation good enough?

All those who receive everlasting life most certainly will know all things in the Kingdom for it has been promised that they shall know even as they are known. Nevertheless, in this present time we are able to learn much about our loving heavenly Father - about His will, and about His plan and purpose with the earth. A lawyer asked Jesus, “Master, which is the great commandment of the law?” Jesus said unto him, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Again we know that God is love and that Jesus manifested His Father to us in His manner of life. Scripture teaches us much about God’s goodness, mercy, long-suffering and loving-kindness, and Jesus reflected all these attributes, so how then can anyone say that God punished the innocent so that the guilty could go free? Does God have double standards? That would be blasphemy. No, God did not punish the innocent so that the guilty can go free. God never, ever punishes the innocent. Neither does He let the guilty go free! The innocent and faithful go free!

Another line of argument in support of the notion that God killed His own Son is that the reason Jesus Christ was brought into the world by the will of God was for the very purpose of dying a violent death in order that, in some way, it would save us. Some say, as do the Pentecostals, that God murdered Jesus Christ instead of punishing us. While others see this as very wrong, and rightly so, they nevertheless say God killed His own Son, not instead of us but as our Representative, to show what sin deserves and convince us of the seriousness of sin. Is this view of Jesus being killed by His Father any better? We must leave the reader to judge righteous judgment in the matter, but for those Christadelphians who doubt it is a true teaching of the BASF let them look up clause 12 and see for themselves where they are supposed to believe that God killed His own Son using the Jews and Romans as His instruments! Should any Christadelphian reader of these notes, believing the Pentecostal view to be an abomination and is yet prepared to accept the BASF teaching in this respect, feel disposed to explain his understanding of BASF, we would very much like to hear from him or her.

However, none of this rules out the fact that Jesus Christ died instead of us, in our place and on our behalf, for there is an altogether better understanding taught in the Scriptures which gives honour where honour is due to both God and to His Son. Of course it was in the foreknowledge of God before He created Adam that He would bring His only begotten Son into the world in due time - 1 Peter 1:20, “Foreordained before the foundation of the world.” This fact alone also proves God knew Adam and Eve would fail in obedience and would need to be redeemed. Adam and Eve were provisionally redeemed while in Eden when the animals were slain to provide them a covering in

order to prevent their dying that very day. The abiding redemption was effected on Calvary when Jesus Christ gave His life to purchase Adam and all in his loins. Redemption was now complete – Jesus Christ had now purchased the whole human race, good and bad alike. It is therefore inconsistent to think of redemption being a future event. Redemption has passed - it is history and Jesus accomplished it on Calvary when we were “purchased with His blood.” (Acts 20:28). By this grace of God we have our present life. Our present life then, is our redeemed life (though not many will take advantage of this redemption).

Will anyone doubt this?

So let us ask the question, who did kill Jesus Christ? His Father? No; that should be unthinkable. Was it the Jews with the aid of the Romans? The Jewish authorities of His day certainly wanted Him dead and out of the way, and they did indeed persuade the Romans to allow His crucifixion. So the answer is, Yes, the Jews and the Romans killed Jesus.

Next let us ask who was responsible for killing Jesus Christ?

When we read the gospel accounts of the events and circumstances leading up to His arrest and trial we are convinced that Jesus was in complete control of His situation. There is no room for any idea of His enemies surrounding Him, trapping Him and eventually leaving Him no way out and finally, they had their own way and killed Him. This is not what happened. Just to note the three days before His crucifixion we see Jesus riding into the city of Jerusalem with the crowds hailing Him as their King. Previous to this the people had been charged that if anyone should know of His whereabouts they must notify the chief priests, but now we see those authorities outraged and they could only stand by helpless for fear of the people. The next day Jesus went into the Temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and drove all the animals outside. This scam of the money-changers was a good money-spinner for the high priests and this man Jesus was having things all His own way, so apart from the authorities appearing utterly helpless in the eyes of the people they were now even more incensed against Jesus. When the next day Jesus came and preached to the people the chief priests demanded of Him by what authority He did these things. In return Jesus challenged them to answer His questions, and the answers they gave were turned against them to their great discomfort, so again they were put to shame in public. That night in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus made no attempt to escape His arrest but allowed Himself to be taken for trial. Then at His trial He was again in control of His accusers, provoking their reactions to the end they should crucify Him ensuring they were ever more determined to put Him away for good, as they supposed. They were angry beyond restraint and accused Him out of malice and on a whim, overriding the more reasonable counsel of Pilate.

Was Jesus therefore responsible for His own demise? Could we say He committed suicide? Not if we ask why He acted in such a way, for we will realize that what He did was for us, that we might share eternal life with Him.

So who then was responsible? Why, we sinners, of course! Adam and all in his loins. All are the purchase of His blood, so the result of Jesus volunteering or choosing to go to the Cross was that the human race now belongs to Him. It was His purchase and He has been given all power and authority over it (Matthew 28:18). He is in the position to forgive and save whomsoever He will.

Jesus Christ Himself gives the lie to the notion that His own Father killed Him, for when the chief priests were demanding of Him by what authority He did these things, one of the stories He told them was the parable of the vineyard - Matthew 21:33-41 - “a certain householder planted a vineyard... and let it out to husbandmen... and he sent his servants... that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another... last of all he sent them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, this is the heir; come let us kill him, and let us seize on his

inheritance... When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" This parable hardly needs explaining to us but when the chief priests answered Jesus and said "He will miserably destroy those wicked men" (Matthew 21:41), they condemned themselves for they themselves were those wicked men who were about to kill the Son of the Lord of the Vineyard. How can anyone, therefore, say the Lord of the Vineyard, killed His own Son as is taught and believed in some churches? Christadelphians and Pentecostals alike. "Blasphemous theology" as someone once said!

It will be seen that the Son went into the vineyard knowing full well that the husbandmen would kill Him. This is surely proof enough that Jesus offered Himself as the willing sacrifice - a free-will offering of the greatest magnitude - for the joy that was set before Him - in bringing many sons to glory.

How very thankful we should be!

Russell Gregory.