

Turn Good Friday

“The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” 1 Cor 1:18

This Good Friday gather your family together to study the immense importance of what God accomplished for us on the Cross of Calvary. Study these Scriptures and show your family ‘Ben Hur’ or ‘The Passion of the Christ’ films. If you could hear a recital of Handel’s Messiah that would be a tremendous worship experience.

The Centrality of the Cross

All too often the Cross is seen as the ‘national flag’ of the Church. But the Cross was never meant to be the mere nostalgic symbol of a religious system. Neither is the Cross a signpost. The Cross was not meant to re-direct our lives, but to end them. The Cross is not an ornament, but an instrument of death!

The Cross was used by the Romans in the same way as others have used the gallows, a gas chamber, an electric chair or a firing squad. The Cross in the Bible was an instrument of death, yet out of it has come life. It was meant to be the sign of a curse, but it has become a symbol of God’s blessing. It should have signified defeat, yet through it Christ achieved a triumphant victory. Christ has turned that instrument of destruction into the means of salvation

The Necessity of the Cross

- (1) God is Holy and He cannot overlook sin. His justice must be maintained. *“God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood. He did this to demonstrate His justice, so as to be the One who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus.” Rom 3:25-26*
- (2) God’s Law is immutable and His Holy Nature demands punishment of sin. *“God’s curse on anyone who does not obey all of God’s Laws and teachings.” Deut 27:26*
- (3) God had declared that the penalty for sin would be death. *“The soul who sins is the one who will die.” Ezk 18:4 “For the wages of sin is death.” Rom 6:23*
- (4) Christ taught His disciples that the Atonement was necessary. *“These are the very things I told you about while I was still with you: everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the writings of the Prophets and the Psalms had to come true... this is what is written: the Messiah must suffer and must rise from death three days later.” Luke 24:44-46*

Christ, by His death on the Cross, gave His life as a ransom for our sins. *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.” God*



into God Friday

— by Peter Hammond

was the initiator; it was because He *“so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”* Christ’s death reveals His infinite love for us and awakens in us a reciprocal love (2 Cor 5:14), but that is not the basis of our acceptance before a Holy God. Christ, through His death on the Cross, overcame the world (John 16:33); disarmed the powers and authorities; made a public spectacle of them and triumphed over them by the Cross (Col 2:15). Christ destroyed the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) and set us free (Heb 2:14, 15). Yet we are not only victims of Satan needing deliverance and liberation, we are also guilty sinners needing forgiveness.

The Work of the Cross

“As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one’ ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Rom 3:10-12, 23

There are four New Testament words which express the Salvation we have in Christ: Sacrifice, Propitiation, Reconciliation and Redemption.

1. Sacrifice

Throughout the Old Testament redemption is connected with the shedding of blood and substitution.

When Abel killed the firstborn of his flock as a sacrifice (Gen 4:4), he symbolised several important truths:

- a) sin must be judged
- b) a price must be paid for sin
- c) the innocent must die for the guilty
- d) without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

When Abraham was told to kill his only son, God provided a substitute to die in place of Isaac (Gen 22:8). This foreshadowed the time when God would show His love for us by sending His own

beloved Son as a sacrifice to die in our place for our sins.

At the Passover God delivered His people from both the bondage of slavery and from the danger of death through the shed blood of the sacrificial lambs (Exod 12). In this powerful picture of God’s redemption of His people, we can see a type of the Lamb of God. For *“Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed”* 1 Cor 5:7, in order to deliver us from the bondage of sin and from the sentence of death.

Hundreds of years before Christ, the prophet Isaiah described in detail the future sacrifice of Christ:

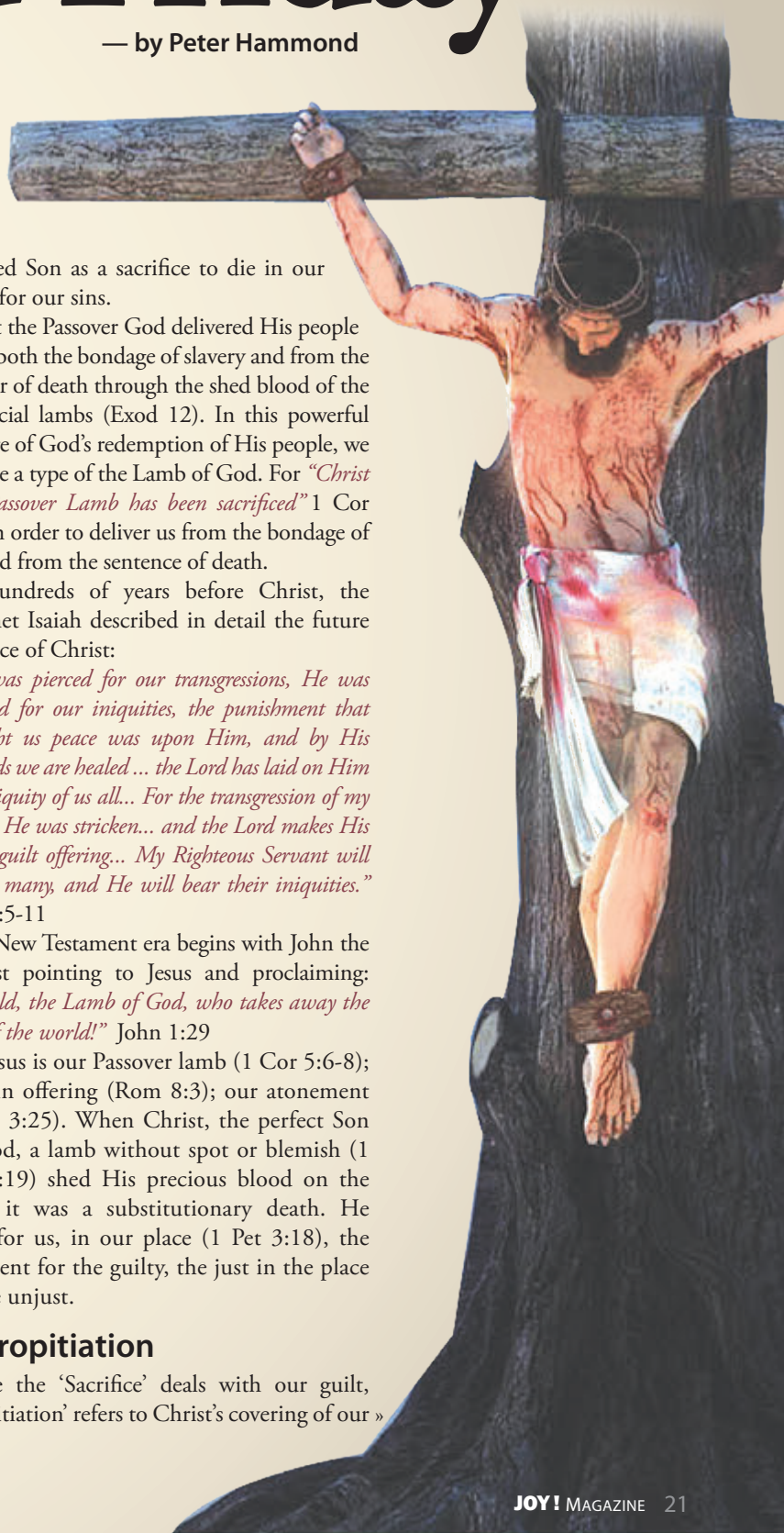
“He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed... the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all... For the transgression of my people He was stricken... and the Lord makes His life a guilt offering... My Righteous Servant will justify many, and He will bear their iniquities.” Isa 53:5-11

The New Testament era begins with John the Baptist pointing to Jesus and proclaiming: *“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!”* John 1:29

Jesus is our Passover lamb (1 Cor 5:6-8); our sin offering (Rom 8:3); our atonement (Rom 3:25). When Christ, the perfect Son of God, a lamb without spot or blemish (1 Pet 1:19) shed His precious blood on the cross it was a substitutionary death. He died for us, in our place (1 Pet 3:18), the innocent for the guilty, the just in the place of the unjust.

2. Propitiation

While the ‘Sacrifice’ deals with our guilt, ‘Propitiation’ refers to Christ’s covering of our »



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sin in order to remove God's wrath. God's wrath is that Holy revulsion by the Godhead against all sin and evil. Christ's propitiation is God Himself taking upon His own holy and eternal heart the implications of His own wrath.

"He is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 2:2 *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."* 1 John 4:10

Through His death on the Cross, Christ removed the wrath of God, which was abiding over us, by covering over our sins. By removing our guilt, Christ saved us from God's wrath.

3. Reconciliation

On the Cross, Christ's love dealt sacrificially with the implications of our sin and gave us *"peace with God."* Rom 5:1

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were

reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received reconciliation." Rom 5:8-11.

Reconciliation is God's work: *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."* 2 Cor 5:19. Our sin had made us enemies of God and it was necessary that Christ should make peace between us by dealing with the cause of the enmity, our sin, on the cross.

"For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things . . . by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross." Col 1:19, 20

4. Redemption

Because of our bondage to sin, Christ died to set us free. Christ gave His life *"as a ransom for many."* Mark 10:45. A ransom is the price paid in order to secure a release. The sinner has been bound to the law of sin and death.

Our redemption from sin is past, present and future:

Justification

We were redeemed from the **Penalty** of our sins. This deals with our guilt. We are fully forgiven for our sins. (Col 1:14)

Sanctification

We are being redeemed from the **Power** of our sin. This deals with our natures. We are progressively delivered from our sin. (Titus 2:14)

Glorification

We shall be redeemed from the **Presence** of all sin. This deals with the very presence of sin. We shall be eternally freed from sin. (Rom 8:23)

"We wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness." Titus 2:13

"You are worthy . . . because You were slain and with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." Rev 5:9 ■

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Easter is not about eggs!