

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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Christ The Substitute

Introduction

In many tragedies there are always those who, without considering their own safety, seek to rescue others. Such was a case when the Costa Concordia crashed onto the rocks of the island of Isola del Giglio. Giuseppe Girolamo was a thirty year old musician. He was safely in a lifeboat when saw a little boy on the sinking ship. Getting up from his place of safety he put the little boy in his place of safety. That night, in the cold waters off the island, Giuseppe drowned. He gave his place of safety for an individual he did not know, he died and another lived. It made me think of the vicarious suffering and death of the Lord as my Substitute.

From childhood days many of us have heard the story of Abraham and Isaac. Isaac was taken, and being bound he was put on the sacrificial altar. With deliberate movement Abraham took the knife in his hand and at that moment the angel of the Lord spoke saying: "Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing to him" (Gen. 22:12). Lifting up his eyes Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. Taking it, he lifted it onto the altar and this time when the knife was raised, there was no voice from the Angel. The ram was offered in sacrifice instead of Isaac. It is one of the most illustrative examples of substitution in the Old Testament (Gen. 22:13). Abraham was able, by divine decree, release his son from the place of death and offer the ram instead of him. The ram became his sacrifice and Isaac could have said, "It died for me".

There are at least two other doctrines which are closely aligned with substitution. They are "expiation" and "propitiation". These are dealt with more fully in the paper on "The Doctrine of Substitution", but it is sufficient here to state that before there could ever be salvation, expiation, propitiation, and substitution, all had to be accomplished. Simply put, "expiation" is the removal of the penalty by the price paid. When this is done, "propitiation", the righteous moral justice of God is satisfied. As these are done Christ became a substitute for those who believe.

When Giuseppe determined to be the substitute for the child, he had to make a decision and then act upon it. Without any outside coercing, of his own volition, he had to leave his place of safety and give it to the child. Giuseppe did not know the child, so it was not an act of love but of courage, kindness, and compassion. He did not know he would forfeit his life for the saving of the child's life. What similarities and contrasts to Christ.

The Initial Steps Taken For Christ To Be My Substitute

In the first chapter of Ephesians and Titus we are given an insight into the counsel chamber of God. In that "time" before the world was, God made a promise and decreed an activity of love. The promise was to provide "eternal life" (Titus 1:2), and the activity was to choose us "in Christ" and "predestinated us unto the adoption of children" (Eph. 1:3-5). The

persons of the Godhead knew the arrogance, insolence, and rebellion of sinful man, yet in love the second decision was made. Christ was foreordained to be the sacrificial Lamb by whose precious blood man could be redeemed (1 Pet. 1:18-21). Having made the decision: “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son” (Gal. 4:4). Christ, taking the form of a Servant, began the path of condescension and incarnation to the cross to be our substitute (Phil. 2:6-8). He left the “ivory palaces” to come into this world of woe that by His sacrifice humanity could be brought to where He is (Jn. 14:3). But that was not all. He provided the way for man to be better off than he ever would have been had Adam never sinned.

The Enrichment Man Can Receive Though Christ the Substitute

This is a stupendous truth, for it is not a matter of Christ swapping places with me, taking my guilt and giving me His righteousness. Swapping always deals with things of equal value which both individuals desire. The Lord took my punishment, something He dreaded (Mk. 14:36), and gave His blessings (Eph. 1:3), blessings I had no interest in receiving. At least two glorious truths begin to come into focus:

- a) All that was lost in Adam Christ restored fulfilling the scripture: “Then I restored that which I took not away” (Psa. 69:4).
 - i) Adam lost kingship, but we are made kings (Rev. 1:6)
 - ii) Adam lost heirship, we are made heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17)
 - iii) Adam lost priesthood, we are made priests (Rev. 1:6)
 - iv) Adam lost sonship, we are made sons (Jn. 1:12)
 - v) Adam lost harmony with God, that has been restored (Rom. 5:1)
 - vi) Adam lost peace in himself, that is restored (Jn. 14:27)
 - vii) Adam lost fellowship with his fellow being, that is restored (Eph. 2:13-22)
 - viii) Adam lost harmony with creation, that will be restored (Isa. 11:6-10)

- b) It was not swapping places and it was more than the innocent for the guilty. It was:
 - i) The guiltless for the guilty
 - ii) The selfless for the selfish
 - iii) The doing of God’s will for the self willed
 - iv) Added to this is the truth that by the keeping power of God, these blessings can never be lost ever again, and will be eternally fresh in a far superior way.

- c) Christ our Substitute has provided:

Eternal	Reference
Life	Jn. 10:28
Weight of glory	2 Cor. 4:17
House in the heavens	2 Cor. 5:1
Glory	2 Tim. 2:10
Salvation	Heb. 5:9
Inheritance	Heb. 9:15
Redemption	Heb. 9:12

The Qualifications Needed To Be The Substitute For Those Who Would Believe

- 1) There had to be a willingness to be the substitute. God does not want reluctance. He loves to give and: “God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7). Christ was such, for His attitude was: “I delight to do thy will” (Psa. 40:8) and with such an attitude He was to God the One “In whom my soul delighteth” (Isa. 42:1).

- 2) Christ was the only man who ever was transparently pure in His motives for His sacrifice was for the glory of God (Jn. 17:4) and in love for Him (Jn. 14:31). Nothing he ever did was of a covert character.

- 3) He was moral perfection personified, intensely holy, and in whom there was no sin. (1 Jn. 3:5)
- 4) The quality of the sacrifice offer and blood shed, must be superior than the blood of an animal or man. How could a guilty human ever offer a sacrifice for another's guilt? Its an impossibility, a truth confirmed by the scriptures when it says: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psa. 49:7). Furthermore, even though God gave the commands for the animal sacrifices, concerning them His response was: "neither hadst pleasure therein" (Heb. 10:8, 6). He also said: "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22) which means that despite the animal blood shed, a superior blood had to be given. The Blood of our Lord is the only blood ever called "precious" (1 Pet. 1:19).
- 5) Deity. Only one who is God could offer such a sacrifice, satisfy the moral claims of God most perfectly and be a ransoming substitute for the whosoever.

[The Superiority of Christ, The Sacrifice of Christ](#)

No matter how many sacrifices were offered in a single year, (and there were over one thousand) or throughout the duration of the Levitical system, they could never be a perfect substitute and could never provide:

- a) Satisfaction to God, but Christ has (Heb. 10:6)
- b) Restoration of the fellowship which was lost, now the prodigal can be restored to the Father's home. (Lk. 15:24)
- c) Full approachability to God, now all the redeemed can come to the Throne of grace. (Heb. 4:16)
- d) Peace to the conscience. (Heb. 9:14; 10:22)
- e) Liberate from being under the curse of the law. (Gal. 3:13)
- f) Elevation to be sons and daughters of the Almighty. (2 Cor. 6:18)

[Concluding Comments](#)

J.N. Darby penned sentiments which flow from these truths.

And is it so! I shall be like Thy Son? Is this the grace which He for me has won?
Father of glory—thought beyond all thought! In glory, to His own blest likeness brought!

Oh, Jesus, Lord, who loved me like to Thee? Fruit of Thy work, with Thee, too, there to see
Thy glory, Lord, while endless ages roll, Myself the prize and travail of Thy soul.

Yet it must be: Thy love had not its rest Were Thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest;
That love that gives not as the world, but shares All it possesses with its loved co-heirs.

Nor I alone; Thy loved ones, all complete In glory, round Thee there with joy shall meet
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord, Object supreme of all, by all adored.

In contemplating such truths the Holy Spirit begins to enlighten the mind of the profoundness of the statements:

"Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (Jn. 13:1)

"Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25)

"The Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20)

. . . . Rowan Jennings