

11. Why Did Jesus Die?

“Out predestination to glory is prior by nature to any notion of sin.” John Dun Scotus, OGM

- The penal substitutionary atonement theory” becomes the dominant answer to the question sometime after the Reformation. It couples with the notion of original sin.
- The early church never heard of this; at best they had some idea of ransom from the many biblical metaphors.
- The “penal substitutionary atonement theory has kept us from a deep and truly transformative understanding of both Jesus and Christ.
- This theory has inoculated us against the true effects of the Gospel, causing us to largely “thank” Jesus instead of honestly imitating him, i.e. just believe in the right things, say the right things will go right for you in the divine courtroom.
- But as this way of thinking loses its power as people and cultures grow up and seek actual changes in their minds and hearts. Then transformative thinking tends to supplant transactional thinking.
- The Christian vision: Instead of having God “eat” humans, animals or crops, which we sacrificed at the altar, as did the ancients, we claim, through the Eucharist, that God’s very body was given to us to eat! This does away with quid pro quo (transactional) thinking – retributive justice, or the myth of redemptive violence vs. restorative justice. . . . reconciliation and rehabilitation.
- “Myth of redemptive suffering – not paying a price but offering the self for the other: “at-one-ment” vs. atonement.

Jesus’ mission was to heal people, not punish them. There was/is no retributive justice in his ministry.

The History of a Theory

“Appeasing an angry fanatical father was not the reason for the tragic death of the religion’s founder,” was not in the minds of the early Christians

- For the first 1100 years a ransom was being paid to the Devil. But after that, Anselm of Canterbury convinced a very receptive crowd that a price did have to be paid to God for our sins – substitution atonement – and Jesus was it; this nullified any in-depth spiritual journey. But John Dun Scotus (1266 – 1350) didn’t buy in.
 - Why would you love or desire to be with such a God?
 - Substitution atonement is the kind of thinking that makes the “law and order “ culture make sense.

- Instead, the Franciscans claimed that the cross, as a mere reaction to sin
- The cross was a freely chosen revelation of total love on God's part.
- God was spilling blood to reach out to us... .. meant to utterly shock the heart and turn it back toward trust and love of the creator.
- If forgiveness needs to be bought or paid for, then it is not authentic forgiveness or grace.
- A religion based on necessary and required sacrifice, and those ending up required primarily of Jesus and later the underclass, is just not glorious enough for, hopeful enough for, or even befitting the marvelous creation that we are all a part of.. (Read Rena Girard "The Gravid Reader", edited by James Williams in the NY Crossroads./
- Far too many evils have been committed in history under the manipulative cry of sacrifice.
- Jesus undoes the sacrificial Gospel requirements for God to love us. [What I want is mercy, not sacrifice.](#) Is what he said. (Matt 9:13,12:7)

The notion of Sacrifice keeps us in the retributive Justice framework and outside of the essential and Grace and love.

A collision of Cross-purposes

The problem of divine love is settled forever from God's side.

- In our insecurity, we keep re-creating necessary sacrifice.
- It is not God that is violent; we are.
- It is not that God demands suffering; we do.
- God does not need or want suffering; neither in Jesus nor in us. (Hebrews 7:27, 9:12, 26, 10:10)

Once I can make the switch from a Juridical and punitive worldview to a grace filled and transformative one, I WILL SEE SUCH PASSAGE THROUGHOUT THE New Testament in a new and central light.

- God punished Israel by loving them (Ezekiel 16:53ff)
 - Jurisprudence cannot be transferred to the divine mind.
 - There is a science about which God knows nothing – addition and subtraction. (Therese of Lisieux)

The Real Meaning of Crucifixion

- The divine mind transforms all humans suffering by identifying completely with the human predicament and standing in full solidarity with it from beginning to end.
 - The cross was the price Jesus paid for all the primary opposites.
 - The results is all things recapitulated in Jesus the Christ.
- Jesus agreed to carry the mystery of universal suffering .
 - He allowed it to change him (Resurrection) and, it is to be hoped, change us, so that we would be freed from the endless cycle of projecting our pain elsewhere or remaining trapped inside of it.
 - The people who hold the contradictions and resolve them in themselves are the saviors of the world.
 - They are the only real agents of transformation, reconciliation, and newness.
 - “Christians are meant to be the visible compassion of God on earth more than those who are going to heaven. They are the leaven who agree to share the fate of God for the life of the world now and thus keep the whole batch of dough from falling back on itself. A Christian is invited, not required to accept and live the cruciform shaped of reality.” (We go through disorder)

Some agree to embrace the imperfection and even the injustices; allowing those situations to change themselves from inside out, which is the only way things are changed anyway.

Jesus is not loyal to groups, to countries, to battles, to teams; Jesus is loyal only to suffering.

- To him nations count for nothingness and emptiness (Isaiah 4:11)
- The Jesus Nation crosses all boundaries and frontiers, and is occupied by only the wisdom and freedom of those who have suffered and come out the other side not destroyed, but larger and stronger and wiser.
- The Gospel is simply the wisdom of those who agree to carry their part.

SCAPE GOATING AND THE SIN OF THEIR WORLD.

Leviticus 16 --- the Day of Atonement - - guilt transformation

- Symbolic act that helped to untie and free people in the short term. Catholics latter called “general absolution” or “public confession.”
- A dualistic approach to display blame. Today we prove our own personal righteousness by crucifying others.
 - Humans should recognize their own negativity and sinfulness, but instead we largely hate or blame anything or anybody else.
 - The pattern is unconscious and unchallenged and, without repentance, will remain forever. This is the human condition. *(Remember, repentance is to change the way you think ... metanoia . . . shifting the paradigm towards an incarnational worldview)*
 - Repentance is shadow work.
 - We hate it when we see our own faults in other people. Thus reflecting on who and what we really are and what we actually do, and embracing our own shortcomings with acceptance and forgiveness is a good place to start finding less faults in others.
- God and religion is used to justify most of our violence and to hide from our own shadows.
 - The denied sins that are really destroying the world are much more the sins that are often admired and fully accepted in our pu
 - blic figures:
 - Pride, ambition, greed, gluttony, false witness, legitimated Killing , vanity, etc.
 - This is hard to deny.
 - This is what Jesus is exposing and defeating on the cross. He did not come to change God’s mind about us; It did not need changing. Jesus came to change our minds about God – and about ourselves – and about where goodness and evil really lie.

We Carry and Love What God Carries and Loves

- In turning our gaze to divine truth . . . dropping our modes of scapegoating and self- justification, we gain compassion toward ourselves and all others who suffer.
- A transformative religion must touch us at the primitive brainstem level, or it is not transformative at all.
- Following Jesus is a vocation to share the fate of God for life of the world; to allow what God, for some reason, allows and uses, and to suffer ever so slightly what God suffers eternally.
 - Often this has little to do with believing the right things about God beyond the fact that God is love itself.

- Those who agree to carry and love what God loves – which is both the good and the bad – and pay the price for its reconciliation within themselves, these are the followers of Jesus Christ; these are they whose paradigms have shifted to an incarnated (non-dual) worldview.
- The cross is a very dramatic image of what it takes to be usable for God. It means that you have entered into heaven (d'bwashmaya) much earlier and thus can see things in a transcendent whole, and healing way now.
- Saints are those who wake-up in this world, instead of waiting for the next one.
 - They don't feel superior to anyone else; they just know they are let in on a big divine secret, and they want to do their part in revealing it.
 - They all refuse to trust even their own power unless that power had first been taught and refined by powerlessness.
 - Their challenge is fitting back into the dominant worldview . . . usually to no avail, at least not completely.
 - This failing to fit back in becomes their crucifixion.
- The kingdom of God is always a leaven, a remnant, a critical mass, a few chosen ones who save us from ourselves.
 - God saves by loving and including, not by excluding or punishing.
 - God is calling everyone and everything to God's self. God first needs willing models and images to be conformed to his death, and transformed into his body of resurrection.
- "If we do not recognize that we ourselves are the problem, we will continue to make God the scapegoat, which is exactly what we did by the killing of God-man on the cross." For, in all apparent reality, we would rather kill God then change (shift our paradigm or submit to incarnation) ourselves.

A Dialogue with the Crucified God

Go directly to pages 155 to 158.