

Thursday, November 29, 2007

BOOK BANNED IN BOSTON, Part 2

A Reader, commenting on my post below, asked a good question. Here is my reply. I am posting it here so that more than he will read it. Are you saying God's wrath was expiated with only the physical punishment Jesus endured on the cross? God's wrath is the emotion of great displeasure: anger [controlled and directed, not irrational rage] directed toward sin; it also can mean punishment, as a consequent of the anger] Christ's offering of himself on Calvary was a propitiation of God's anger- it placated (appeased) Him. Christ's death also expiated the cause of the anger, our sin- it put an end to our sin and guilt, it removed it from His sight (thus we say, "our sins are covered by the blood of Jesus") Propitiate and expiate are used today interchangeably. However, there is an important distinction in both the Greek and in Theology. God hates sin. He abhors it. This concept is rejected by many today- it does not fit the popular concept of God as Love. That God is angry and must be appeased is also a concept derided by many. Thus the word (and doctrine of) propitiation is rarely used and expiation is deemed far preferable by many. Evangelicals are satisfied with the teaching that Jesus' death paid for our sins. Period. Propitiation requires an atoning sacrifice- a innocent substitute for the guilty. The death of Jesus was penal, ie- a punishment required to appease an angry God. That, too, is a repugnant Doctrine to many. Contemporary Christians are glad to believe that their sin has been forgiven by a loving God; but they do not want to probe deeper as to how and why such forgiveness is made possible. I am not saying that God's wrath was expiated with only the physical punishment Jesus endured on the cross. I am saying God's anger was propitiated and our sin was expiated by the offering of the perfect life of Jesus as an atoning sacrifice. Jesus' life was perfect in obedience and righteousness. And the offering of that life involved his suffering, which he experienced from birth until his last breath on the cross. All of that was the Sacrifice by which we are saved. If the punishment for sin is separation from God, True, the wages of sin is death and that "death" is spiritual separation from God. But that death (separation) does not await sinners when they die. That death is their reality from birth, the consequence of Adam's sin in the Garden. People are born spiritually dead, i.e.- separated from God and they live that way their whole life, unless they become saved. Rom 5:12-21, 1 Cor. 15:22 People who come to saving faith, receive life then and there and are no longer dead (separated) from God- Eph 2:4-5 et al Jesus took our punishment upon Himself, doesn't this mean He suffered separation from God (ie Hell)? This is a common definition of Hell these days, but Hell is not separation from God per se. Hell involves eternal Torment. What sinners face in eternity is not an extension of their life-long separation (spiritual death), but Torment. Rom 2:8-9 Here are two texts of Scripture that teach that Hell involves everlasting punishment. Matthew 25:46 sums up the judgment on the "sheep and goats" with the words. "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." The same word aionion (eternal) is used to describe the punishment of the wicked and the blessing of the righteous. Whatever we say about the duration of "eternal" life for believers must be said about "eternal" punishment for unbelievers. Since "life" for believers is everlasting (John 10:28), so must be the punishment for unbelievers. In a second text, Revelation 20:10, John describes those in the "lake of fire" being "tormented day and night forever and ever." The expression day and night is used in Revelation to express the concept of "forever." The lake of fire is described in Revelation 19:20 as a place that "burns with brimstone." John declares that anyone whose name is not written in the book of life is "thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). The Bible certainly teaches us that there is very real and very terrible place of punishment for those who keep Christ out of their lives. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself probably had more to say about it than anyone else. This is what he taught: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Mark 9:43-48 KJV Mr Pynchon [in my post below] rejected the idea that after Christ suffered on the Cross, he then went to spend time in the place called Hell and suffered torment there for our sins. As I did say, I agree with him about this.

Posted by Cal in Theological Issues at 11:04

Thanks for commenting. I continually have tried to sort this out...and, I guess, I still am. If I can ask a related question, that I think has bearing on this matter: Is there a difference between Jesus' resurrection and, let's say, Lazarus'?

Anonymous on Dec 5 2007, 00:45

Your welcome. Thanks for the questions. Jesus was resurrected, ie- his body was glorified, never to "die" again. Lazarus was resuscitated and did die again.

How do you see a bearing between this and what we have discussed?

Anonymous on Dec 5 2007, 12:20

Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>

If Jesus died eternal death (ie our punishment-separation from God) than His resurrection defeats not just physical death (like Lazarus), but spiritual death. But i like your explanation, too.
Anonymous on Dec 5 2007, 14:33