

How to Avoid the Fear of Death

When God created the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). The serpent (also called, "the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, Revelation 20:2), beguiled Eve and then Eve gave the fruit unto Adam, who ate, (Genesis 3:1-8) and as a result "God sent him forth from the garden of Eden" (Genesis 3:22-24). "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned" (Romans 5:12). Sin is the problem which man has. When man sinned, it severed the fellowship he had with God. "Behold Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2). Law is for the benefit of society. Moses told Israel, "Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day" (Deuteronomy 6:24). Law was given to preserve. "The fear of Jehovah (which is manifested by obedience to His will, etc) prolongeth days" (Proverbs 10:27). When man sins (and "all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23), the consequence is death, "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), or separation from God. Once the transgression had taken place, man's only hope was that God would intervene. As we understand in our society that it is not those who violate the law that set the conditions of reconciliation, so it is with God. Mankind does not have the option of telling God what the conditions are regarding salvation. "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). It is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26), that God was able to redeem mankind and yet remain just in regard to the just recompense necessary for man's violation of law. God could not forgive the sins of the world, and remain just, without requiring that payment be made.

What Jesus did for man was to divest himself of his heavenly position, in that "existing in the form of God, counted not being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men...he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8). Through this means, God determined that "he should taste of death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:9-10).

What Jesus of Nazareth did was to provide, through his death, the means by which mankind could be reconciled to God. Some may deny the need for reconciliation, but it does not eliminate the reality of such. God affirmed that Jesus is not only "a way" but "the only way" to be reconciled: "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

If your conscience is burdened with the guilt of sin (Romans 2:15) and you are living your life in "fear of death" (Hebrews 2:14-15), you have hope in Jesus: "since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives" (Hebrews 2:14-15). Turn to God and have faith in "the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God" that you may "cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:14). ret