

In the New Testament, those who are “in Christ” are granted the tremendous privilege of being forgiven of sins. Ephesians 1:7 reads, “**In Him** we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses ....” Obviously, the forgiveness of sins is available and it appears that God has a great desire to give His children another chance. But still, we wonder why this blessing came at such tremendous cost. Hebrews 9:22 says, “Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” Why did Jesus have to die on the cross before this privilege could become reality? The answer to this question is found in an unavoidable dilemma our Heavenly Father faced from the beginning of time.

God’s problem begins with the motive for His creation. The apostle John considered the outstanding characteristic of God to be “love” (I John 4:8). We might speculate, then, that the motive behind creation was God’s desire to love and to be loved. Undoubtedly, God wanted mankind to love and obey Him; but we could never do so unless we were granted freedom of choice. You see, love is a choice. And where there is no choice, there can be no love. But, where there is choice, there will always be the problem of sin. Of course, God could have created beings without this freedom; who were programmed to always do, say, and be exactly what He wanted. If He had, then sin would have never become a problem. However, love could also have never been a possibility. And without love, the whole reason for creation would be eliminated. So there had to be freedom of choice.

What, then, would God do about sin? Would He condemn and banish every soul that sinned? If so, then He would never have had a people with whom to share His love. Creation would have been for nothing. Would He forgive every person who sinned and remain in union with them all? Even the rebellious and those who were hateful toward God? Even those who actually desired no relationship with Him? That would be as bad as the first alternative and totally unthinkable. But, if He forgave some sinners and not others, that would make Him a partial judge -- unfair and unjust. The question, then, is this: How could God impose a penalty upon sin and disobedience yet still be fair if He rescued those who loved and sought Him?

Undoubtedly, our Heavenly Father realized all of this before He began the process of creation. He already knew the solution to the problem before the problem was ever a problem. The apostle Peter explained that the sacrifice of Christ was “foreknown before the foundation of the world” (I Peter 1:20). But, again we face the question of WHY? Why did the death of Jesus on the cross solve this great problem?

In Romans 3:25-26, Paul explained why Jesus died on the cross. He said it was to demonstrate that God was righteous even though He had “passed over the sins previously committed.” You see, from the time of Adam to the time of Christ, God had allowed human beings to continue upon the earth even though they all were sinners. In light of this, God had an enemy who was constantly in His face, reminding Him how unrighteous He was to let this go on. In Revelation 12:10 this enemy is called “the accuser of our brethren ... who accuses them before our God day and night.” This adversary was not only reminding God of the sinfulness of mankind, but was also accusing God Himself of being unfair and unjust in His dealings with men. In the first chapter of Job, Satan comes right into heaven and tells Almighty God that He has blessed this mortal man with far too much. We have to wonder how this rebellious and sinful angel could so freely roam both heaven and earth while laying accusations against both God and His people. Obviously, this was all a part of God’s problem. Satan’s accusations had to be answered and Satan’s rebelliousness had to be dealt with, along with all other sins of mankind.

The message of the New Testament writers unanimously agree that the death of Christ on the cross solved all of these problems. Revelation 12:7-11 reveals that Satan was defeated and cast out of God’s presence because of the blood of Christ. I Peter 1:18-19 explains that God’s people were purchased back to Him with the precious blood of Christ. In Romans 3:24-26, Paul declares that the

sacrificial death of Christ solved God's problem and ours. Somehow, it showed God to be fair in His dealings with sin, and, it allowed us to be innocent in His sight if we have faith in Jesus.

In our next Bible Talk, we shall consider exactly HOW IT IS that the death of Jesus accomplished these things and why Salvation is Only in Christ.



**Bible Probe**

**GOD HAD A PROBLEM TOO**

**108**

1. Agree/Disagree: It seems probable that the motive behind creation was God's desire to love and to be loved. (I John 4:8)
2. Why do you think God allowed mankind to have freedom of choice?
3. If God condemned and banished every person that sinned, how many people would be left to enjoy a loving relationship with Him?
4. Why would it be unthinkable for the Lord to excuse every single person that sinned?
5. Before the atonement of Christ's death, why would it have been "unjust" for God to forgive and pardon some sinners while condemning others?
6. Do you believe that God understood this dilemma before the first man was ever created? (I Peter 1:18-20)
7. Did the Lord believe it was important that He solve this problem in a fair and righteous manner? (Romans 3:24-26)
8. Who tried to take advantage of the apparent injustice with which God treated mankind? (Revelation 12:7-10; Job 1)
9. Until the time of Christ's death on the cross, how do you think "the adversary" was able to "get away with" his own wickedness?
10. How would you sum up the problem that God needed to solve at Calvary?