

“The Fullness of Judgment Upon Christ”
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An Excursus to *Spirit, Soul, Body: The Blueprint of Man in the Image of God*
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THE FULLNESS OF JUDGMENT UPON THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

We must know God could not merely forget and forgive our sins with a shrug of the shoulders. God cannot let the guilty go unpunished¹ because then He would no longer be just; He would no longer be God. Our own deaths could not redeem us because our sinful blood did not please God – or we should say, appease His wrath in order to forgive and restore. The death of a sinful man is deserved and brings justice toward himself, not atonement for others.² Jesus offered His sinless blood as a substitutionary sacrifice. He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). God released upon Jesus the wrath we deserved.

It is easiest for us to think about the physical pain Jesus had to endure on the cross. But in truth, the Lord suffered in spirit, soul, and body to fully receive God's judgment upon the whole of Man.

Watchman Nee wrote, in part, "Man sins through his body and there enjoys the temporary pleasure of sin. The body must accordingly be the recipient of punishment.... The hands must be nailed, for they love to sin. The mouth must suffer [Ps. 22:15, 69:21], for it loves to sin."³ When Jesus was arrested and tried, He was beaten and scourged (Mt. 27:26). Scourging used a whip frayed into many strands embedded with shards of bone and glass. When the scourge struck the back, it dug in and ripped out chunks of flesh. Then wounds would begin to dry and clot until the convicted was placed on the cross, the wood breaking open the lacerations with every breath. Nailing Jesus to His Cross, they drove stakes into the places where His hands met His wrists and His feet met His ankles (Ps. 22:16). As they lifted the Cross to place it in the ground, Jesus likely dislocated His shoulders (Ps. 22:14), which in that position could not sustain the weight of His body. His blood would fail to circulate and back up in the cavity surrounding His heart, which is called a pericardial effusion. Eventually, Jesus would die of asphyxiation when His lungs no longer had the strength to breathe. Indeed, this pain was so unbelievable that Man invented a new word for it: *excruciating* literally means *out of the cross*. "His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind" (Isa. 52:14). "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isa. 53:5 NIV).

As the seat of the personality and home of the will, the soul is ultimately responsible for the decision to sin, and specifically the soul is in need of atonement.⁴ Jesus' soul endured the false accusations, the injustice, mockery, and shame (Heb. 12:2). He was offered myrrh to mildly numb the pain, but He refused it (Mk. 15:23). His soul, His self-consciousness, had to bear the full weight and the full awareness of God's judgment. "Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his *soul* makes an offering for sin" (Isa. 53:10). That passage went on to describe the anguish of His soul as He bore our iniquities and poured out His *soul* to death.

Shortly before the Cross, Jesus was able to say, "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30). This had been true for eternity past. Even when the Word became flesh, His human spirit was one with the Father by the Holy Spirit. Jesus never sinned, and so that oneness was never interrupted throughout His life. Yet when Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world, His once-holy being

¹ Nah. 1:3; Ex. 34:7; Nu. 14:18; Job 10:14; Prov. 11:21, 16:5; Jer. 30:11

² *Atonement* means to cover, to pay the debt to be free of guilt. "As we speak of a sum of money as sufficient to 'cover' a debt, so [atonement] is the payment of whatever divine justice sees as sufficient to cover the sinner's debt, the death of the substitute sacrifice...." J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993) 78.

³ *The Spiritual Man, Combined Edition* (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1977), 57.

⁴ Mic. 6:7; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Ex. 30:15; Lev. 17:11; Num. 31:50

became separated from the Holy Spirit. He cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46, quoting Ps. 22:1). Popular theology assumes the Father turned His Face away from Jesus in this moment, causing Jesus to cry out. However, verse 24 of Psalm 22, which Jesus quoted in this cry, reads, "For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has *not* hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him." The Father did not turn His Face away, but the sin Jesus then experienced for the first time – our sins – caused Him to be unable to sense the Father's pleasure with His sacrifice (cf. Isa. 53:10 NASB, Jn. 10:17). This sense of separation and the suffering of His spirit was surely worse than the suffering of both the body and the soul.

What a glorious Redeemer! Just as we showed with the tabernacle, the sacrifice of Jesus was a means to an end. The goal was the Holy Spirit of God in the spirit of Man. Before His death, Jesus actually told His disciples it was better for them that He would die. Imagine hearing that from the Friend for whom you left everything and with whom you lived for three-and-a-half years. Jesus said, "Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is *for your good* that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor [Holy Spirit] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (Jn. 16:6-7). We often make Jesus' death and our forgiveness the biggest deal. Jesus clearly considered His death the Way to accomplish something more important: enlivening us with His Spirit. He did not sanctify us to get us to heaven; He made us holy so the Holy Spirit could dwell in us for His glory.

May the Lamb who was slain receive the rewards of His suffering!

To the praise of His glorious grace!