

The Wednesday Word, May 22, 2019: The Shepherd and the Sword

Awake O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow" Zechariah 13:7.

The Lord Jesus came here to be the effective, substitute for sinners. As such, it pleased the Father to bruise Him. The decree went out from Yahweh Himself, "Smite the Shepherd." That's why we also read, "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Romans 8:32).

Although Jesus went to the cross, He was under no compulsion to do so. No man took His life, He laid it down voluntarily (John 10:18). The Father decreed that the Shepherd would die and Jesus willingly fulfilled those wishes. Men, it seems, were the unwitting accomplices in carrying out the great, eternal purposes of redeeming grace.

But why did Jesus die? Is there anyone reading this who can answer? Is there a prophet or a son of a prophet who can shed some light on this matter? But wait, who is that long bearded man coming towards us. It is a seer. It's Isaiah!

Let's ask Isaiah. "Isaiah, we need some help here...why did Jesus, our Shepherd, die? "...and Isaiah without hesitation answers, "He was wounded. for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him ... The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Thanks Isaiah! That shed much light on this question for us. (see Isaiah 53).

When Jesus died, He accepted the just penalty of His people's sins. The sword was turned against the Shepherd. He died for our iniquities. He bore our sins. Who then can condemn us?

"Complete atonement Thou hast made,
And to the utmost farthing paid
Whate'er Thy people owed;
Nor can Thy wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in Thy righteousness,
And sprinkled with Thy blood.
"For my discharge Thou hast procured,
And freely in my room endured
The whole of Wrath Divine:
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine"?

Augustus Toplady

Who then, is he that condemns? No one is qualified to do so. Christ has been convicted and punished in our place. This is the excellent ground of our assurance. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). Being redeemed, we are delivered from condemnation (Romans 8:1). The Father does not condemn those whom He, by the Spirit, has brought into Christ Jesus.

Another reason why none of the redeemed can be condemned is that Christ, not only died but is risen again. His resurrection proves that He has forever exhausted the entire penalty due to the sins of believers. He was raised again because He had secured our justification.

Bishop Pearson (1877) well said,

"By His death, we know that He suffered for sin,

By His resurrection, we are assured that the sins for which He suffered were not His own.

Had no man been a sinner, He would not have died;

Had He been a sinner, He would not have risen again."

Because Christ is at the place of cosmic authority, no one can condemn us. He has entered heaven as the forerunner of His people (Hebrews 6:20). He is the advance guard, and we will follow.

Eternity with Jesus! ...Just the thought of this is heaven. It's no wonder the Hymn writer wrote;

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

In a believer's ear

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds

And drives away His fears."

Right now, this very moment, Christ Jesus is representing us. We cannot, therefore, be condemned. We are dear to Him, He is our Priest and Advocate. He is the Shepherd who was smitten with the sword. He appears for us and intends to bring us to where He lives. There is no condemnation for us. We are eternally secure.

And that's the Gospel Truth!