

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Did Jesus Die Spiritually?

By Joe R. Price

This question causes some brethren to pause and ponder. Some have evidently concluded that yes, Jesus did die spiritually. We cannot entertain much less affirm such a conclusion.

The Bible does not teach that our Lord died spiritually. The implications of such a premise are too awful to contemplate. Some of these implications would include the following:

1. If Jesus experienced spiritual death, it means Jesus was a sinner (Eph. 2:1).
2. Jesus would not be our redeemer, for one sinner cannot redeem another (Rom. 5:8; Rev. 5:9).
3. Jesus would need a redeemer (Eph. 1:7). If Jesus died spiritually, whose blood redeemed His soul from eternal death? (Rom. 6:23; Heb. 10:22).
4. We must look for another Savior, not Jesus (Acts 4:12).
5. Jesus is now, at best, a glorified sinner, saved from spiritual death by the Father (Jn. 17:1-5).
6. God is a sinner since **“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself”** through Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-19).

Spiritual death never had dominion over our Lord. In Romans 6:9-10, Paul said, **“knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God”** speaking of the death of Jesus on the cross, not of His spiritual death. It is His death on the tree, inflicted by **“stripes”** which heals us from our sins, from which Jesus was raised by God’s power and glory (1 Pet. 2:24; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). Jesus was never raised from spiritual death, because He never died spiritually. (If Jesus did die spiritually, what constituted His spiritual resurrection from that death?)

When Jesus died on the cross, He committed His spirit to the Father (Lk. 23:46). Yet, the spirit of one who is spiritually dead is committed to torments (Lk. 16:22-23). The very reason it was impossible for death to hold (restrain, have power over) Jesus is because He was (and is) the sinless Son of God (Acts 2:24). Sinners, the spiritually dead, fear death and are held captive by that fear. The death of Jesus destroyed the power of sin, and His resurrection destroyed the power of death – the very tools used by Satan to hold sinners captive (Heb. 2:14-15; 1 Cor. 15:55-57). Thus, Jesus was **“delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification”** (Rom. 4:25).

God’s eternal plan for the redemption of sinners is stated in 2 Corinthians 5:21: **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”** This passage has been the source of trouble for some, but it need not be the case. First, since Jesus **“knew no sin”** He was indeed sinless – spiritually alive – not spiritually dead. God made Him to **“be sin”** does not mean that Jesus was made a sinner. It means that Jesus bore the punishment due our sins (death) when He died on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24 – His stripes heal us; Heb. 9:22 – the shedding of blood is the redemption price for sins). Isaiah 53 makes it abundantly clear that the Messiah’s death on the cross is the death by which He bore our iniquities (Isa. 53:4-8, 10-11).

Thus, 2 Corinthians 5:21 teaches that the sinless Son of God bore the penalty of our sins (see 1 Pet. 2:24, where this truth is confirmed). He bore the stroke we were due (Isa. 53:5). By His death He **“made intercession”** for the transgressors (Isa. 53:12) – not by becoming a sinner (dying spiritually), but by bearing the penalty of sin (death). His death on the cross was the **“cup”** He drank in fulfillment of the Father’s will (Matt. 26:36-44; Heb. 5:7-8; Isa. 53:10-12).

Please recall 1 Peter 1:18-19, which teaches we have been redeemed from our sins by **“the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”** If Jesus died spiritually, He was not like an unblemished lamb and therefore could not enter the Most Holy Place (heaven) to offer Himself as the sacrifice for the sins of the

world (Heb. 9:26-28; 10:10-12, 19-20).

Some appeal to Matthew 27:46 as proof that Jesus died spiritually. We have already adequately shown the folly of that thought. Since God's word harmonizes, there must be (and is) an explanation of this passage that does not contradict God's word in other places. Like David (Psalm 22), who endured suffering at the hands of his enemies, Jesus suffered at the hands of His enemies. And, like David, although God allowed the suffering to occur He did not let the sinners go unpunished. His cry in the moment of agony ("***My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me***"), like the cry of David, evinces His desire for the nearness of the Father who, though with great love for His Son, must allow Him to suffer even to the point of death on the cross. But, God did not abandon Christ. He was "***heard because of his godly fear***" and by death He was perfected as an offering for sin and "***became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him***" (Heb. 5:7-8; Heb. 12:2-3; Psa. 22:21, 24). Jesus did not become a sinner on the cross. He bore the penalty of our sins on the cross and became "***a ransom for all***" (1 Tim. 2:6; Matt. 20:28).

What about 1 Peter 3:18? Well, it plainly says "***the just for the unjust,***" not "***the just became unjust.***" The death Jesus "***suffered once for sins***" that by it "***he might bring us to God***" was "***in the flesh***" – it was not a "***spiritual***" death. In His death that shed His blood he "***Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree***" (1 Pet. 2:24). On the cross He suffered the penalty of death "***for the transgressions of My people He was stricken***" (Isa. 53:8). His bodily resurrection is then referred to inasmuch as He was "***made alive by the Spirit.***" Jesus was resurrection from physical death, not spiritual death. His body was not left in the grave, nor did He remain in Paradise where the thief was with him after death (Lk. 23:43; Acts 2:24-31).

The Scriptures affirm that Jesus Christ bore the penalty of our sins on the cross. By His death we have redemption. The Scriptures do not attribute the condition of spiritual death to Jesus Christ. ■

About Bible Patterns

By Joe R. Price

God expected His chosen people Israel to follow His revealed pattern when they built the tabernacle. He gave Moses elaborate, detailed instructions for its construction (Ex. 25-27). An overriding reason for Israel to follow God's pattern for the tabernacle was that God would there dwell among them (Ex. 25:8).

"8 And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it... 40 And see that thou make them after the pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount" (Ex. 25:8, 9, 40).

God wanted the tabernacle, which was a "***copy and shadow of the heavenly things***" (Heb. 8:5) to be built according to His revealed pattern. How much more then, must God be interested in seeing "***the heavenly things***" (the church, Hebrews 8:2,5; 3:6; 10:21) conform to the pattern He provided for it. God dwells with us in His church. "***Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit***" (Eph. 2:19-22).

More and more, people who should have been taught the importance of Bible patterns do not have the faintest idea what a Bible pattern is or how it should be used. As a result, division, confusion, and human doctrines are infiltrating the church and destroying souls. Basically, God's pattern on any subject is everything He revealed about that subject. Read the above passages about the tabernacle. Notice that God "***showed***" the pattern He wanted them to follow. God's revelation, then, is His pattern (Psa. 119:160; 2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

To properly use a pattern, one must identify the pattern. God revealed His pattern for our conduct in three ways – direct commands, approved examples, and necessary implications. These simple tools enable us to ascertain, and then obey, God's patterns for such things as the work, the plan of salvation, the worship and organization of the church, and morality. Are these patterns the right tools for us to use to establish Bible Authority – a thus saith the Lord. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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