

Fake Sacrifices

Ezekiel 18:20

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”

In contrast to the clear counsel (in Ezekiel 18: 4, 18 & 20), unloving religions require a sacrifice – someone or something pays the penalty – is punished - on account of someone else's wrong doing.

A perfect lamb, goat, doves, heifer etc have been used in religious rituals as a substitute for the 'sinner' and the 'sin' is supposed to be 'magically' transferred to the unfortunate beast. The perfectly innocent animal is then violently slaughtered and its blood collected.

The 'sin' is considered to pass into the life-giving blood of the beast and be miraculously washed away in a ritual of sprinkling the 'precious blood' around on 'holy,' religious artefacts and thus the selfishness/sins are negated.

Something innocent, pure and perfect suffered, bled and died as a sacrifice and the precious, pure blood and death diffused the wrath of the gods. This is the theme of pagan religions, including mainstream Christianity and Satanism.

In contrast, Jesus speaks of a true sacrifice, not a works-based ritual.

Luke 4: 17-21

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, *18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, *This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.* (From Isaiah 58: 6, 7; 61: 1,2)

Jesus made it completely clear that a bloody, sacrificial ritual is not the same as a benevolent sacrifice which is the loving, saving action where someone helps another out of a tough situation.

For example consider:

A helicopter pilot regularly patrolled the beaches in a coastal region. He would report any safety conditions as a free service to the townsfolk. The pilot's adult son enjoyed accompanying his father on the patrols.

One day beach conditions were reported as dangerous. Nevertheless, a child was allowed by his parents to play on the beach but was warned not to enter the water. The child disobeyed the instructions and was rapidly swept out to sea by a rip. The pilot in the helicopter sighted the drowning child. From their vantage point in the sky, both the pilot and his son saw numerous sharks circling closer to the struggling child. They knew that a vicious attack on the child was imminent. Without hesitation they set about to save the child's life. The son leapt from the safety of the helicopter into the deadly waters. He swam

to the child, lifted his face above the water and worked quickly to attach his body to a strong rope. The son tugged on the rope and the father winched the child into the helicopter. Miraculously, the child's life was saved, but as if in revenge, the huge frenzy of sharks rushed to attack the child's rescuer and he suffered a horrendous death. Both the father and his son had made a true sacrifice to save the child.

Let's dissect the analogy. The child could not force anyone to save him. The sharks could not harm the rescuer while he was in the helicopter. The helicopter pilot did not force the rescuer to leap into the watery grave. The helicopter pilot was not so angry with the child that he wrathfully took out his anger on his son. The rescuer died as a result of the vile conditions and evil beings that inhabit the ocean, but His loving sacrificial actions saved the child.

In the analogy, the Father and Son are in the heavenly helicopter. They can see the problems in the world and the satanic danger facing fallen human beings. Disregarding their own happiness and safety, both Father and Son involve themselves in rescuing humanity. They are motivated by love, which is life-giving.

The Son's priority was to save the doomed child, but He could not save him from the safety of the helicopter. To become the Saviour, the Son had to join the child by plunging into the dangerous conditions where the child was located. So the Saviour came down to humanity's level, despite knowing that the plan of salvation would certainly cost His mortal life - and endanger his immortal existence.

In the divine plan of salvation both Father and Son knew that the Son was going to die a human death. Not because the Father was going to kill his Son. Not because torture and suffering were necessary for justice. But because plunging into this sinful world required that the Son be clothed in sinful human flesh. "A body thou hast prepared for me." Paul states in Hebrews 10:5 with reference to Psalm 40:6. To become the Saviour, the Son had to take on humanity and humanity was in a dangerous, desperate and dying condition.

If the Son of God failed to live a perfectly loving life, He would have died a mortal death but it would also be his permanent death. There would be no resurrection. Sinners are devoid of love. Therefore they are devoid of life.

Being unloving is another word for selfishness. The result of being unloving is death – not because the Creator decides to kill us, but because love is creative life-giving power. If love is removed from a creature, only death remains.

Romans 6:23

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In the analogy, it can be clearly seen that there was no artificial punishment forced onto the child and no transferring of guilt to an innocent Person. Almost drowning and being attacked by sharks were natural consequences suffered by the child for his disobedience. The child was not attacked by the rescuer nor berated by the pilot in the helicopter.

There was only Love and Love came to the rescue in the only way possible.

John 10: 17

"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 18" No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have

authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

Which life did the Son of God lay down? His divine life or his human life? Which life did he take up again? His divine life or his human life? We know that the Son of God laid aside His divine attributes of immortality, omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence and took on himself sinful flesh - a mortal body.

Ellen White states that Jesus “could, in His divine person, ever have withstood the advances of death, and refused to come under its dominion; but He voluntarily laid down His life, that in so doing He might give life and bring immortality to light.” (The Faith I Live By, p 46).

Divinity could not die- could not become mortal - and that is why the Son of God chose to lay aside his immortality. "*Deity did not die. Humanity died*" (MS 131, 1897) and again "*Humanity died: divinity did not die*" (Youth's Instructor, Aug. 4, 1898; SDA Bible Commentary, 5:1113).

Jesus was not able to represent fallen humanity and be the new head/representative of the now fallen human race, unless he took a fallen human body. The mortal human body was sinful flesh – sin was in every cell of his human body. This body of death ensured that at some stage, Jesus would die. It was a mortal body, a corruptible body that the Son of God took upon himself.

So how did an immortal being die? "A body thou hast prepared for me." Paul states in Hebrews 10:5 with reference to Psalm 40:6

It was our mortal body that Jesus took on that ensured he would die. He did not need to be murdered. He would have died even as an old man and still saved humanity if he had never sinned.

Who killed Jesus? Or should we say, "What killed Jesus?" His human mortal sinful body. The same way every human being dies when the mortal body is unable to continue sustaining life.

Love motivated the Son of God to take on a mortal human body so that He could teach us how to live in love with each other; so He could take over the challenge of living with only love when all around Him was violence. He became our Saviour; our Enabler; our Healer. His suffering was because of the dangerous conditions from which He chose to rescue us – not because of His Father's bad temper (over the child being disobedient). The Father was not desirous of having a sacrifice! He was desirous of saving the helpless child and his efforts to save that child cost him dearly. That was the true sacrifice.

Love does not blame others or punish others for the wrong doings of others.

Love rescues. Love saves. Love rehabilitates.

Jesus showed us the Father truly is love.

John 14: 8, 9; 15: 13

“he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...” “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”