

JEHOVAH'S CHARACTER MANIFESTED IN HIS GREAT PLAN OF THE AGES

WHY was Jesus Christ called upon to suffer and die? Could not the great God have accomplished the salvation of humanity in some other way, without the agony and death of His Son? These are questions which often present themselves to the thoughtful student of God's Word, and which can be answered very satisfactorily. God could have arranged the matter very differently; He is not an unresourceful God. He is an All-Wise God, an All-Powerful God. We can see, for instance, that God could have decreed that Adam should be excluded from the Garden of Eden for a time, and that after he had suffered somewhat for his disobedience, and had thereby learned a lesson, he should then be restored to favor. By that experience Adam would, no doubt, have been taught a very good lesson. So all of Adam's children might have undergone some penalty, some purging experiences, whereby they might have profited, and then have come back again into harmony with God.

But the Wisdom of God is a Mighty Deep, and He has a great and wise Plan! He had purposed that all of His intelligent creatures – angels, cherubim, seraphim, and humans – who would gain eternal life, must be absolutely loyal to Him, and hence that they should all be tested in respect to their loyalty. They must all be tried and tested characters. It was His purpose, therefore, that all His intelligent creatures in Heaven and on earth should be brought to perceive His goodness and worthiness of all praise, that they might be able to exclaim from the heart: "Blessing and honor and might be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne...forever!"

Those who prove their loyalty to the Creator shall live everlastingly. Those who will not prove their loyalty shall die – go

into absolute extinction. Up to the time man was created, God had not made known this feature of His Plan. He then declared that death should be the penalty for sin, in order that all might know the Law of His Government – that only the righteous shall live, and that all sinners shall eventually be destroyed. Hence God arranged beforehand that man's sin, which He foreknew, should bring upon Adam and his posterity the extreme penalty of His Law.

Many would not have chosen sin if they had known its sure results, and had been born with perfect ability to choose the right. But God purposed that Adam's posterity should come into the world under fallen conditions, as the result of his disobedience. He purposed to make manifest here on the planet Earth what is the natural tendency and certain outcome of sin. Sin's tendency is always downward; and not only so, but it aggregates itself, and leads to ruin and death.

God designed that this great lesson of the evil results of sin should be witnessed by the angels also, who before the creation and fall of man were surrounded by such conditions as presented no special temptation to sin.

TEMPTATION COMES TO THE ANGELS

God desires the worship of only such as worship Him in spirit and in truth. Any who will not worship from this motive shall eventually be destroyed. We see that God allowed sin not only to enter the world through the machinations of Satan, but to be a source of temptation to the angels. We see how all the angels became exposed to a peculiar temptation in connection with fallen mankind. (Genesis 6:1-5; Jude 6.) We believe that Satan instigated this temptation, as he did the temptation of Mother Eve. He himself was the first transgressor.

Some of the angelic host succumbed to this temptation, and some remained loyal to God. So we know that all the angels of

Heaven were subjected to a great test as to their obedience to their Creator. All those angels who are in harmony with God, according to the Bible, have stood their test. These, we understand the Scriptures to teach, have been granted the reward of everlasting life, because they proved faithful and obedient and demonstrated their loyalty. Those who fell were bound in chains of darkness unto the Judgment of the Great Day – now present, we believe.

GOD'S ECONOMICAL PLAN

Man has for six thousand years borne the penalty, "Dying, thou shalt die" – the penalty which the Bible declares to be the wages of sin – death and all the weaknesses and depravities of mind and of body which are its accompaniments. But God purposes that all shall have a full opportunity of recovery from this condition of sin and death; and the provision for man's recovery has been made in Christ. This provision is the most economical one that could have been arranged. If a thousand perfect men had sinned, it would have required a thousand perfect men to redeem them – one redeemer for each sinner. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," a man's life for a man's life, is the requirement of God's Law. – Exodus 21:23-25; Deut. 19:21. [R5430 : page 100]

Before the creation of our first parents God had arranged that *only one* man should have the opportunity to fall and to be *sentenced to death*, that thus only *one* man would be required as a *Redeemer*. This Divine arrangement was most economical because it will bring all the masses of humanity back to life at the cost of but one human life as the redemption-price. No *fallen* man could be a ransom, a corresponding price, for the perfect man Adam. Therefore God purposed from the very beginning that His Only Begotten Son, the First-born of all creation, should become man's Redeemer and that in order to become the Redeemer He should become a man.

The death of an angel could not have redeemed man. Divine Justice required that a perfect human life must be given for a perfect human life. And God, knowing all this, sent His Son to carry out His great Plan of human Redemption and Restitution. Neither was there anything unkind or unjust to His Son in this, although for the Almighty to have forced the matter upon His Son would have been an injustice; and God could not be guilty of injustice.

Thus the Scriptures inform us that the coming of the Logos into the world was a voluntary matter. He did this "for the joy that was set before Him," by the Almighty. The Father set before the Son that if He would suffer the ignominy of the transference of His being from the higher plane to a lower, a human plane, in order that He might redeem the lost race of Adam, He should be highly exalted, next to Jehovah; He should be made a partaker of Jehovah's nature – the *Divine* nature. All this was the inspiration of our Lord's course – the joy of doing the Father's will and of having His approval; the joy of restoring mankind and of being exalted to His Father's glorious nature. He who thus humbled Himself to become a man and die the ignominious death of the cross, has indeed been highly exalted as promised, and has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. – Hebrews 1:3.

INFINITE WISDOM OF GOD'S GREAT PURPOSE

Thus we see that the Plan which God has adopted furnishes opportunity for the manifestation of the principles underlying His own glorious character, which neither angels nor men could so clearly have understood by any other means. When the great work of restoration is fully accomplished, angels and men will see the Justice of God – a Justice which permitted the penalty of death to be executed upon our race for six thousand years – a Justice which provided a Redeemer to pay this penalty for Adam, that he and all his posterity might go free – a Justice, too, which provided a great

reward for the faithful Son who carried out, at such a cost to Himself, the Father's Purpose! This is the highest conception of Justice of which men or angels could conceive!

By this means God will also manifest His sympathetic Love, which otherwise neither angels nor men might ever have known. Had there been no sin, no death, no sorrow, no pain, they might never have known the depths of Divine Mercy. After sin had entered the world, the angels beheld the Love of God, in that He "gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever [of mankind] believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his *life*" for another! The Father's Love was thus shown in His Plan to send His Son to die for the world. This Love will be manifested to all men in the incoming Age, now very near at hand.

Through His Plan God will manifest His Power also; for while His Power has been shown in the creation of the worlds, of men and of the various orders of angels, still this manifestation of energy is small in comparison to the Power which He will yet exercise. This Power will restore every individual of the race to his former condition; every soul of man will be awakened from the tomb. This will be a manifestation of Power that is beyond the comprehension of humanity.

Then, too, God's Wisdom will be wondrously manifested. When the grand outcome of the Divine Plan of the Ages shall have been seen in its glory and majesty by all the created intelligences of God, all will hail Him as the infinitely Wise One – who fittingly ordained that every creature formed in His image should be tested as respects absolute loyalty, that only the loyal and obedient should have life, and that all others should be destroyed!

Thus we see that in His wonderful Program for dealing with sinners, angelic and human, God chose the very best way, the one most profitable to angels and to men, the one which most redounds

to His own ultimate glory and honor. "Who shall not reverence Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?...All the nations shall come and worship before Thee, when Thy judgments are made manifest!" – Revelation 15:4.

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