

The reason the Son of God was made manifest

In 1 John chapter 3 and the second part of verse 8 we see a very clear statement. “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.” As you know, almost every day we learn of more atrocities going on in the world, and many obvious acts of evil, so has The Son of God failed to destroy the works of the devil or is there another explanation?

The fact is that in the Garden of Eden when the man and the woman disobeyed God (thus sinning against Him) they forfeited the authority God had given them over the earth and were under condemnation for it. Any offspring they might produce would be given automatically that sinful and rebellious nature that separates mankind from God.

However, God did not want to leave mankind in their sin since He created them to have fellowship and dwell in His presence forever. Therefore there had to be a way of restoring mankind back into the kind of relationship with God that they had before they were tricked into disobeying Him. How this was to be done was set out clearly in the books of the Old Testament until the time was right for the plan of salvation for mankind to be implemented.

In Matthew chapter 27 verses 15 to 23 we read something that can be proven through records that have been handed down since these events occurred. They were recorded and passed down not by Christians but by the Roman authorities themselves and therefore we know what they say is true.

We read “Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him”. But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” asked the governor. “Barabbas,” they answered.

“What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked. They all answered, “Crucify him!” “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!” A short study of the words in this chapter will show you that Barabbas led a rebellion and took part in the murder of a number of people. Jesus on the other was sinless.

The crowd had missed the point of what was going on but we can see clearly that here was the sinless one standing in the place and taking the punishment of the guilty. Many years later in the 1980s a similar situation would occur. At that time in Britain there was a major industrial dispute that resulted in much violence against the police and much rioting, led by a very well known union leader.

Because of his conduct he was summoned to appear before a judge to answer for his conduct. The sentence (had he received one) would have without doubt had to have been served in Prison. However, the union leader refused to obey the law and a summons was issued against him, imposing on top of any other penalty a heavy fine. The union leader still refused to appear in court despite all of this.

However, the judge in this case received a sum of money equal to the fine that should have been imposed on the union leader. It was paid by a man who had nothing what so ever to do with the dispute in question, but by law the judge was obliged to accept the money as punishment for the conduct of the union leader and all charges against that man were dropped.

When Jesus went to the cross for us more than 2000 years ago He took upon Himself the penalty that each one of us should have been given, but because an innocent man paid the penalty that the guilty should have received it was counted in God's eyes as paying the penalty for our sin and not only do we go free and unpunished but all charges the devil tries to bring against us are dropped because the penalty has been paid.

Just as that union man had the option of refusing to allow the one who paid his penalty to do what he did, so it is with Jesus. We can take the penalty of our sin upon ourselves if we want to, the penalty being eternal death and separation from God and to be cast into the lake of fire forever, or we can put our faith and trust in what Jesus did for us in paying the penalty on our behalf all those years ago.

If we put our faith and trust in what He did on our behalf then we go free and when God looks at believers He sees not their sin but the penalty that has been paid on their behalf – the blood of Jesus, thus we go free with all charges against us dropped. In the case of Barabbas the result was temporary, for those who put their faith and trust in what Jesus has done for us, the cleansing is eternal.

We could not take the penalty of our sin upon ourselves, knowing this the evil one had us permanently in fear of death and facing God on judgement day. Because of what Jesus has done we need fear these things no more for as the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans chapter 8 verse 1 "There is therefore now, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (those who continue to put their faith and trust in what Jesus has done for them and live in fellowship with Him and all other believers).

This is just one of the works of the evil one that Jesus has destroyed, our fear of death and condemnation. Only Jesus could have paid this penalty for us and next time we will look at the scriptures again and see how He alone was qualified to take our sins upon Himself in order to set us free forever. The evil one **cannot** reverse what Jesus has done for us nor our faith and trust in it.