

Salvation and the Cleansing of Our Spirit—Part 2

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How Jesus Our Substitute Cleanses Our Spirit

In our last blog, we explored [Salvation and the Cleansing of Our Spirit](#)—how we are sanctified in spirit, mind, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). We discussed how our spirit is our life energy, received from God, that invigorates and motivates us to action, and that our spirit can be either purified by the indwelling Holy Spirit or remain corrupted and defiled by our rejection of God and choosing that which is evil.

We also discussed that the Holy Spirit cleanses our spirit by taking what Christ achieved and reproducing it in us. When we surrender our hearts to Jesus, our spirits are united with His, His love casts out our fear, and we receive a new spiritual temperament invigorating us and motivating our lives. From Jesus, we receive a spirit of love, trust, loyalty, self-sacrifice, kindness, mercy, gentleness, and self-control.

In this blog, we want to examine how Jesus' vicarious, self-sacrificial, substitutionary death provides for our salvation, for our redemption, rebirth, and cleansing from sin.

Let me be explicitly clear on this point: No human being could be saved from sin without the substitutionary sinless life and sacrificial death of Jesus.

I believe that Jesus became a real human and voluntarily put Himself into a position that was not naturally His own for the purpose of delivering us from the position that was naturally our own; that is, He took our place. He substituted Himself. We should never deny this—for it is eternally true!

The question is: Why was His death required to save us?

Becoming the Righteousness of God

My view is that Christ's death was to accomplish what the apostle Paul described:

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might **become** the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV84, emphasis mine).

According to this passage, the reason for Christ's substitutionary sacrificial death was not a legal one; it was not for a penal reason. It was not a payment. It was also not to assuage God's wrath or propitiate His anger, for God was never our problem. God has always been for us (Romans 8:31); God was in Jesus reconciling the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). God was not changed by Adam's sin, nor did His law change. Rather, it was the condition of Adam that changed from sinless, loyal, faithful, and trustworthy to sinful, disloyal, unfaithful, and untrustworthy; he became a fear-ridden and selfish being. Adam no longer had a pure heart and right spirit!

Thus, Jesus became our human substitute, taking up the humanity that had been damaged by Adam, so that we might *become* the righteousness of God, so that humanity might be cleansed from sin and restored to His perfect ideal.

But why is it that Christ's substitutionary death was required for us to become righteous? Why was Christ's death necessary to save humans from sin? How did Christ's voluntary and substitutionary sacrifice achieve the righteousness of God in humanity?

After all, if God is love and He loves the world so much that He sent His Son (John 3:16), if God is merciful—full of mercy (Deuteronomy 4:31), pardons freely (Isaiah 55:7), and does not keep a record of our wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5)—then why couldn't He just forgive us outright without the death of Jesus?

First, God *did* forgive us outright! It was His love and forgiveness that sent His Son to do what was necessary to save us.

But God's forgiveness, extended freely from His loving heart, *does not* remove sinfulness from us! And salvation is something more than forgiveness—it *is* healing! Salvation requires that sinfulness, fear and selfishness, in us be replaced with sinlessness, love and trust, resulting in righteousness, purity, and holiness.

Thus, as John the Baptist said, Jesus is “the Lamb of God **who takes away the sin** of the world” (John

1:29 NIV84, emphasis mine). Jesus came to take away sin, to destroy death (2 Timothy 1:10) and the cause of death (Hebrews 2:14), thereby healing this creation. And the fear and selfishness, which is the corrupting, elemental aspect of sin infecting, tainting, polluting, and decaying our spirits (hearts) and souls (minds), must be purged, removed, destroyed, eliminated, cleansed from humanity.

Jesus had to provide **the truth** to free our minds from the lies of Satan—in order to win us (morally influence) to trust in Him—but He also needed to provide, in order to save *the human species created in Eden, a cleansed, purified, renewed, and perfected human spirit* (life, heart, motivational energy) that we receive through our trust in Him.

When Adam sinned, he corrupted himself, infecting his life with sin. His spirit (life, heart, motivational energy) became contaminated with fear and selfishness; his energizing motives to action were no longer love-driven selflessness but were fear-driven selfishness, the survival-of-the-fittest instinct.

And every human being is an offspring, outgrowth, extension *of that same life (spirit)!*

We are all born infected with sinfulness, with fear and selfishness, with unholiness (Psalm 51:5). In order to save us from this terminal sinful condition, Jesus had to not only restore our trust in God by a revelation of truth, but He also had to purge, cleanse, remove, eliminate, eradicate, destroy the sinfulness (fear and selfishness) from humanity.

And in order to do that, Jesus had to partake of the humanity, of the very life (spirit) given to Adam in Eden, that Adam had corrupted and to purify that life.

Humanity as a Family

God can create new species any time He wants.

After Adam sinned, God was free to gather up some dirt, form a new body, breathe the breath of life into that body, and create a new sinless human being—but such a being would not be part of the creation He had made in Eden. It would not have been related to Adam and Eve but would have been a new, similar, yet distinct creation. Creating a brand-new human would not save Adam, Eve, and their descendants from their terminal sin condition; it would not save the creation God had made in Eden. It would not purify the life given to Adam.

When God made Adam, He breathed into him the breath of life—or life-energy—and every other human being has received life from that same breath of life given to Adam. Eve was not formed out of dirt, and she did not receive her own breath of life. Instead, she was formed from the living tissue of Adam's body, tissue that was already alive—an extension of that same breath of life (life-energy) that God breathed into Adam.

The Greek (*pneuma*) and Hebrew (*ruwach*) words for “breath” are the same words translated as “spirit.” The life-giving energy from God was given to Adam pure, holy, undefiled, with the resonance, aura, quality, character, and motivation to love. The breath, the spirit, is the internal motivational energy that both animates and invigorates all of us. Adam came to life in Eden with a spirit of purity, holiness, and love. His natural desires and motives were perfectly in harmony with God and heaven. And Adam was capable, in his own God-given human strength and ability, of saying no to temptation

and, in his unfallen state, developing a mature, holy, and righteous character, thus settling his spirit into eternal purity and loyalty to God.

Adam and Eve were supposed to develop a mature and holy character at the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. It was at that tree that they were to exercise their God-given abilities to think, reason, and choose for themselves. At that tree, they were to choose either to know, by experience, love, trust, loyalty, faithfulness, righteousness—thus solidifying themselves in holiness and retaining a pure spirit, a sinless life—or they would choose to believe Satan’s lies and break trust with God and thereby know, in experience, in their being, fear, selfishness, distrust, guilt, shame, and evil—thus, corrupting their spirits, their lives, the breath of life that God animated them with and gave to them.

Because God gave Adam and Eve procreative abilities, that same “life” breathed into Adam is shared with every single human being. We are extensions of Adam, and the sad reality is that Adam altered the quality of that life-energy. His sin changed the motivational energy from pure love to a life contaminated with fear and selfishness, and we are all born with this motivational drive of fear and selfishness, with the *spirit* of fear. And such a spirit (life) is out of harmony with God and heaven. Fear causes selfishness, which is the opposite of love; it is out of harmony with God and His design for life and results in ruin and death (Romans 6:23; James 1:15; Galatians 6:8).

Jesus and the Human Family

So, what was needed to save humanity from this terminal sin condition?

A human being who is part of Adam, part of *this* creation, a human being who partakes of that same life, that same spirit or life-energy, that was breathed into Adam in Eden, that life which is now infected with fear and selfishness, and who then overcomes and eradicates the contamination and purifies that life, thereby destroying the terminal condition, purging the fear and selfishness, and restoring God’s perfect, pure, undefiled love back into this human creation, by perfecting/cleansing the spirit—the life given to Adam and shared by all of us.

Thus, Jesus came as the second Adam, partaking of the very same life that was given to Adam and passed down through David (Romans 1:3; Hebrews 2:14). He received His human life through His mother Mary—a humanity, life, that has been damaged by sin, infected with fear and selfishness, and terminal because of Adam’s fall (Galatians 4:4). Jesus’ human lineage through Mary is how He was able to be tempted in every way just like we are (Hebrews 4:15), and we are tempted by our own evil desires (James 1:14). Jesus’ humanity, life, received from Adam was capable of tempting Him with fear and selfishness, which was revealed in Gethsemane when He suffered terrible human emotions and anguish tempting Him to act in self-interest and not go to the cross.

But because the Father of Jesus’ humanity is the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18-20), Jesus was also born with, invigorated with, a pure, undefiled spiritual life-energy. As a real human being, partaking of the life passed down from Adam *and* the life given by the Holy Spirit, Jesus was able to face temptation and use only His human abilities to say no to every temptation coming from the infection in the human spirit (life) he received from Adam and yes to God and live a holy, pure life (Hebrews 4:15) in harmony with the Holy Spirit. (We receive that same ability to choose to live in harmony with God at conversion when we are reborn with a new heart and right spirit—when we receive the new life/spirit—by the indwelling Holy Spirit.)

And on the cross, Jesus chose only the pure life, the pure energy of love, that He received from the Holy Spirit and, thereby, destroyed the death-causing infection, the impure corrupting quality, character, inclination, motivation of fear and selfishness contaminating the life-energy breathed into Adam (2 Timothy 1:10). At the cross, Jesus destroyed the carnal terminal sin nature and arose in a purified humanity and became the new head of humanity (Hebrews 5:9), and He now stands in God's presence, not only in His pre-incarnate position as the Son of God but also as the representative head of humanity—Jesus, a real human being, sinless and perfect. He stands in the heavenly counsel as Adam's substitute, fulfilling the role that God had originally designed for Adam.

Now through faith, each one of us can receive that same pure, divine life-giving energy (spirit—life) via the indwelling Holy Spirit, who takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it in us, invigorating us with a reborn new spirit. Christ is the vine and we are the branches (John 15:5), who, being grafted into Christ by faith, receive the new invigorating spirit (life) from Him through the indwelling Holy Spirit. We die to the old spirit of fear and selfishness and live a new life with a new spirit of love and trust. As Paul wrote,

For **Christ's love compels us**, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should **no longer live for themselves** [no longer live the life of selfishness] but for him who died for them and was raised again (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15 NIV84, emphasis mine).

We, with our new life, our new spirit, our new purified spiritual energy are motivated, animated, compelled with new desires, attitudes, and priorities so that we become literal partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). As our spirits, our internal life-energy, our motives, drives, desires now come from Jesus and no longer come from what we inherited from Adam, we grow daily in godliness and, despite ongoing temptations from our old habits and conditioned responses, our renewed reborn spirits are no longer captive to fear and selfishness. As Paul wrote,

For God has not given us a spirit of fear [that we inherited from Adam], but of power and of love and of a sound mind [that we receive by faith/trust from Jesus] (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV).

We are literally changing from a *life, spirit*, of fear and selfishness to a *life, spirit*, of love and trust via the indwelling Holy Spirit.

And this is possible only because Jesus, as our human substitute, took up humanity infected with fear and selfishness by Adam and purified that life. Jesus revealed the truth to win us to trust, and He provides us with a new spirit, a new life, sinless and pure.

Thank You, Jesus!

So I encourage you, if you already haven't done so, to open your heart and invite Jesus in, to ask for the cleansing and washing by the Holy Spirit to purify your spirit, to renew you with new desires and motives, to invigorate you with love for God and your fellow man, to partake of the divine nature, a new, purified, Christlike spirit of love and trust!