

JESUS CHRIST, THE UNIQUE SON OF GOD: THE RELATIONSHIP OF HIS DEITY AND HUMANITY REPORT

Secretary: Ray C. Stedman

In many and various ways the New Testament declares that Jesus Christ combines in his unique person the fullness of the nature of God and the fullness of the nature of man. While this truth is not a required element in every declaration of the Gospel, it is nevertheless the essential and fertile ground out of which the Gospel grows and from which it derives its beauty, strength, and glory. Apart from this truth there would be no Good News at all.

Jesus himself is the one who conveyed this truth to his Apostles and out of their profound conviction of its reality they have taught the church. His humanity was clearly evident to the Apostles in the way he lived, walked, and behaved before them. His essential deity gradually dawned upon them as they observed his doing works attributed in the Old Testament only to God himself; as they became convinced, by the Spirit, and through witnessing his many miracles, that he was the long-expected Messiah whose divine qualities were described by the prophets — eternal Father, mighty God; and by the direct claims of Jesus to identity in nature with the Father and the spoken confirmation of the Father at the baptism and transfiguration.

It is apparent, however, that the Apostles did not proclaim Jesus as the Son of God until after the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost, and when they subsequently preached Jesus they began with statements presenting his humanity and ended with clear declarations of his Lordship, rooted in his essential deity.

We affirm, therefore, that though the preaching of the Gospel in today's world should properly begin wherever man is, taking note of his hurts, his sorrows, his hungers, and dreams it must conclude with declarations, explicit or implicit, that Jesus Christ is Lord, whether men acknowledge it or not, and that all judgment is committed into his hands and from that judgment there is no escape but by means of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins through calling on the name of the Lord.

We take special note of those working among the 600 million of the Moslem world and urge them to make it clear that the title "Son of God" as applied to Jesus means an essential oneness with the Father and not physical procreation.

As a necessary follow-up of evangelism we urge churches everywhere to make clear that the humanity of Jesus is the pattern for Christian living, both as to what Christians do and also as to the power and resources by which they do these things. As the Father sent the Son into the world to live by means of the Father, so the Son sends us, to live by means of him.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS AND OF THE RESURRECTION IN OUR UNIQUE SALVATION

Rudy Budiman

Dr. Budiman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, is a Professor at the Theological Seminary, "Sekolah Tinggi Theologia Duta Wacana" in Indonesia

1. Evidence of the importance of the Cross and the resurrection in Paul's letters.

The importance of Christ's death and resurrection for our salvation is best demonstrated by the way in which the apostle Paul esteems the two salvation acts with regard to the church's belief as well as to man's conduct. "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3,4). "And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (II Cor. 5:18).

Besides this combined appearance of the Cross and the resurrection, Paul often mentions the former separately, laying special stress on it, "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2); "The word of the Cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18); "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?" (Gal. 3:1); "Many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the Cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18).

On the other hand Paul also attaches great importance to the resurrection, "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9); "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (I Cor. 15:17). Further examination (see 4/below) will show that between the Cross and the resurrection there exists a close relation, being one of cause and effect.

2. The significance of the Cross for our salvation: the forgiveness of sins.

The apostle Paul once depicts the result of Christ's death on the Cross as the cancellation of an IOU, "And you, (who were dead in trespasses and the circumcision of your flesh), God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having cancelled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the Cross" (Col. 2:13,14).

The metaphor of the bond (IOU) Paul derives from the rabbinic thought that God registers all good and bad acts of men. The settlement of their deeds, then, results in an IOU on the part of man. The apostle can borrow the figure without falling into the rabbinic doctrine of merits, because the covenant relation between God and man obliges man to keep the rules of the covenant.

Thus the apostle is also able to say in terms of the New Covenant that the believer "owes" (Greek: *opheilein*) to love his neighbor (Rom. 13:8), to bear with the failing of the weak (Rom. 15:1), to love one's own wife as his body (Eph. 5:28), etc. Every shortcoming in the fulfilling of this obligation means an unpaid "debt" (cf. Matt. 6:12 "Forgive us our debts"), or, to stick to our metaphor, a bond, an IOU. Christ's death for the sins of man, then, means the cancellation of that bond. "This he set aside, nailing it to the Cross" (Col. 2:13,14).

Another time Paul describes Christ's salvation act as "redeeming us from the curse of the law" (Gal. 3:13). Back of this conception is the Old Testament thought that "cursed is every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them" (cf. Gal. 3:10 and Deut. 27:26). Christ has come to carry that curse away by bearing the divine wrath in the place of mankind.

In both instances Christ died a vicarious death for man. This is apparent from utterances like Gal. 3:13, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of law, having become a curse for us," and II Cor. 5:21, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

The idea of the vicarious death furthermore occurs with Paul in his conception of the expiation of sins by means of Christ's sacrifice. Compare Rom. 3:25 "(Christ Jesus), whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood," with Lev. 17:11 "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your sake; for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life." This expiation and atonement produces forgiveness of sins, justification for sinners (Rom. 3:23,24).

In short, regarding sin as a *guilt*, a *debt*, the apostle can say that Christ's death brings about the *forgiveness of sins*.

3. *The significance of the Cross for our salvation: the deliverance from the power of sin*

According to Paul, Christ not only delivers us from the guilt of sin, but also from the power of sin. Sin is like a power that dominates man's life and takes him in prison, so that he does not do the good he wants, but the evil he does not want is what he does (Rom. 7:19). Paul bears witness to this situation in the following words, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:24,25).

So it is Christ who delivers man from the power of sin. How? He had the power of sin destroyed the flesh, he bore as a representative of man. "For God had done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us . . ." (Rom. 8:3,4). It means that Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh, but he fulfilled the will of his Father during his whole life. Such a life in obedience to God runs counter to the strivings of sinful flesh and can only mean a continuous annihilation of the latter. A definite extermination of the sinful flesh took place on the Cross, where Christ underwent the wrath of God. Through this life

of obedience God exterminated the power of sin in the flesh which Jesus bore for mankind (the Greek word for "condemned," viz. "*katekrinen*," does not so much mean the condemnation as the execution of this condemnation that is to say the punishment (cf. Mark 16:16; I Cor. 11:32; II Pet. 2:6). By this act the power of sin has been put to an end.

To this fact Rom. 6:6 also reminds, "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin." It is clear from these words that in Christ the sinful body of man had been destroyed so that it no longer could enslave man (cf. Rom. 7:24,25). Man has been delivered from the power of sin.

4. *The genetic relation between the Cross and the resurrection*

Christ was not raised from the dead because he finished his task on earth and was allowed to "return home." For that purpose he might return "in the spirit" and need not be raised from the dead. For is God not spirit? (cf. John 4:24). There must, therefore, be another ground.

Rom. 4:25 mentions, "(Jesus our Lord), who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification." Both times the preposition "for" (in Greek "*dia*" with the accusative) should, in fact, be rendered "because of." So Christ was put to death because of our trespasses and was raised because of our justification. The latter means that Christ was raised because he accomplished the righteousness for us.

The idea "trespasses lead to death and righteousness to resurrection" finds its parallel in Rom. 5:18, "Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to . . . life for all men." The idea has its background in the Old Testament. God gave his commandments in order that, by fulfilling them, man should have life (cf. Lev. 26). Quoting Lev. 18:5, Paul also says, "He who does them (i.e. the commandments) shall live by them" (Gal. 3:12). The life, in Old Testament times described in this-worldly terms (see Lev. 26), receives in the New Testament eschatological fullness. It includes resurrection and eternal life.

So Christ's resurrection was brought about by his fulfillment of the law. The Cross as the summit of this fulfillment was the reason of his resurrection. In other words: the Cross stands in a genetic relation to the resurrection.

This thought makes us understand an earlier mentioned text, I Cor. 15:17, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (see 1 above). It should be interpreted as follows: Christ's resurrection is the logical consequence, the proof of your justification; if Christ has not been raised, then it is evident that he failed in accomplishing righteousness for you, and in that case, you are still in your sins.

5. *The "inclusive representative" character of Christ's death and resurrection*

Christ died and was raised as the representative of mankind. Mankind is understood as a corporate unity. The fate of those who are represented is decided in their representative. Paul does not see representation as an "as-if," but as a reality. This is clear from II Cor. 5:14

"... one has died for all; therefore all have died." The expression "all have died" must not be interpreted as "all are regarded as dead," but as a *reality in Christ*. Those who are represented are *really included* in his death and resurrection. They all *have* died and *have* been raised to such a realistic extent, that Paul draws far-reaching consequences from it.

First of all, He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him "who for their sake died and was raised" (II Cor. 5:15). The words "therefore all have died" and "those who live" are meant as a parallel to "who for their sake (better: in their place) died and was raised." All men have died and have been raised, because they were really included in the representative Jesus Christ. It is therefore impossible that they still live for themselves. The only logical possibility is "that they live for him" according to the new pattern of life (note: "*Might* live" is too weak a rendering of the Greek word).

The same idea is found in Rom. 8:3,4, "...sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh (which represents our flesh), in order that the just requirement of the law (might) be fulfilled in us." Here again, Paul draws consequences from the inclusive representative death in Christ for our life: the requirement of the law be fulfilled in us. Furthermore, Paul shows the way, in which the new pattern of life is realized in our existence, "... in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." It is the Spirit, who effects the death and resurrection reality-in-the-representative into our existence.

Another instance is Rom. 6:4, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too (might) walk in newness of life." Here our being included in Christ's death and resurrection is symbolized by and effectualized through baptism.

A second, far-reaching consequence of the inclusive representative character of Christ's death and resurrection is drawn by Paul with regard to the Christian's missionary attitude (II Cor. 5:16), "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view." The believer does not judge his fellowman any longer with worldly standards as if he is "an ordinary man," but he respects him as a person, who also died and was raised in Christ. That man has the right to know this truth. To keep it from him is a sin. This explains Paul's missionary zeal, "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16). The Christian should also behave in his life according to this missionary attitude, "Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died" (Rom. 14:15). Moving in its simplicity is Paul's utterance, "The love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all "therefore all have died" (II Cor. 5:14). Here again, Paul's missionary passion is caused by the above idea of all men being included in Christ's death.

6. *The renewal of man through the effectualization of the Cross and the resurrection in his life*

The blessings of Christ's death and resurrection are not confined to the forgiveness of sins. They also comprise the renewal of man's life.

This renewal is brought about by the effectualization of the death and the resurrection in his life. What has been done by Christ — once for all — through his inclusive representation is now *effectualized* in our life *by the Holy Spirit through faith*. The following texts testify to this.

First of all, the Spirit works — through faith — Christ's dwelling is us, (cf. Eph. 3:16,17) "that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith . . ." (see for the idea of "faith - Christ dwelling in us" also Gal. 2:20, II Cor. 13:5, and 8 below).

After Christ dwells in our hearts, something new happens to our life. The old flesh cannot bear his presence. Either Christ has to leave our heart, because our sinful existence cannot stand his holy presence (as happened to the Galatians, to whom Paul writes, "My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!", Gal. 4:19), or our flesh will be put to death. The same process we perceive in Rom. 8. After Christ dwells in us (cf. vs. 10, "If Christ is in you"), we put our flesh to death in order that we may live (cf. vs. 13), "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live." This process is described as effectualizing the Cross and the resurrection in our existence (cf. vs. 17, "provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him").

Another instance is Phil. 3. After Paul says "that I may gain Christ and be found in him" (vss. 8,9), he continues, "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead" (vss. 10,11). Only through sharing his sufferings shall we experience the new life in Christ.

A third example is II Cor. 4. First comes the in-dwelling of Christ; cf. vss. 6,7; "For it is the God who said 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us." Then follow the sufferings in the fellowship of Christ (vs. 8), "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed," which sufferings Paul describes as (vs. 10) "always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh." Here also the death and resurrection of Christ is effectualized in our existence.

God uses sufferings to bring about the dying of our flesh and the beginning of the new life. These sufferings may be caused by our active combating of sins (cf. Rom. 8:13 "put to death the deeds of the body"), by an illness inflicted upon us for the sake of our sanctification (compare II Cor. 12:9 "but he said to me: My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" with II Cor. 13:4 "For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we shall live with him by the power of

God") or by afflictions in the service of the kingdom of God (cf. II Cor. 4:8-10 "we are afflicted in every way . . . perplexed . . . struck down . . . always carrying in the body the death of Jesus"). Anyhow, the above sufferings are considered by Paul as sharing Christ's sufferings to attain the resurrection in our life.

The effectualizing is, according to Paul, also symbolized by baptism, of Rom. 6:4, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life," and Col. 2:12: "and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead."

7. The importance of sharing Christ's death and resurrection for evangelism

This sharing in Christ's death and resurrection not only has its impact on the renewal of man's life, but also on evangelism. The following exposition will prove it.

We start with II Cor. 1:5, "As we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too." The word "comfort" has no ordinary meaning here. Already in Old Testament times the word has an eschatological depth, comprising the messianic salvation, cf. Isa. 40:1, 49:13, 51:3, 61:2, 66:11,13. In Luke 2:25ff. we find Simon "looking for the consolation of Israel" in the coming of the Messiah. Paul gives christological contents to "comfort," when he in II Cor. 1:3 crosswise connects the sentence, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" with "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort." Here "the God of Jesus Christ" covers "the God of all comfort," so that the comfort is Jesus Christ himself.

It is striking to see that, according to the apostle, this comfort comes into being through sharing in Christ's sufferings (II Cor. 1:5). This corresponds with the earlier stated genetic relation between the Cross and the resurrection (see 4). If we ask whereto the comfort is brought about in the life of the believer, the apostle's answer is: not to keep it for himself. "If we are afflicted, it is for *your* comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for *your* comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same suffering that we suffer" (II Cor. 1:6). This comfort keeps the Corinthians not away from sufferings, but enables them to endure sufferings. Their afflictions bring about new comfort and in their turn they will pass it on to others. So the messianic comfort or salvation is passed on from one to another.

The same situation we encounter in II Cor. 4:11,12, "For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in *our* mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you." In a terse style Paul mentions here that the life of Jesus, experienced by the apostle (after having suffered) is passed on to the Corinthians. In their turn they will continue the process towards others. Paul pictures the course of events as follows: "For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to *more and more people* it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God" (II Cor. 4:15). It is a continuous action, going through to the end of the world. More and more people will praise the Lord for his salvation, the salvation through his

death and his resurrection, accomplished centuries ago and ever since effectualized in the lives of millions of people, who love him and surrender their lives to him.

Not only does "sharing Christ's suffering" play an important role in the renewal of the convert's life. This also does the power of Christ's resurrection. This should be stated clearly, for otherwise the impression is made, as if the only renewing force in the Christian's life is his fellowship with Christ's sufferings.

Paul mentions it clearly in Col. 2:12,13, "You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him. . ." This is good news for all men who are in despair because of their wretched lives: there is the power of Christ's resurrection which renews their lives!

As a matter of fact fellowship with Christ's sufferings and the power of his resurrection go hand in hand and work simultaneously in the believer's life. On the one hand the resurrection power gives new life to man; on the other hand that very life brings the believer into sharing Christ's sufferings. For this reason Paul can place each of the two prior to the other in Phil. 3:10,11, "That I may know him and the power of his *resurrection*, and may share his *sufferings*, becoming like him in his *death*, that if possible, I may attain the *resurrection* from the dead."

In evangelism the church should always keep two aspects of the reconciliation in mind: the *objective aspect* (God's salvation act in the past) cf. Rom. 5:8, "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us"; and the *subjective aspect*, viz., the effectualization of reconciliation in human existence. The Bible sees both aspects as a unity, see, e.g., Phil. 3:9, 10 "that I may gain Christ, and be found *in him*, not having righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the *righteousness from God* that depends on faith (objective aspect), that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, etc. (subjective aspect)." Reducing the reconciliation to one of these aspects would impoverish the richness of our unique salvation in Christ.

8. Appendix

There are a few things in the above exposition which may cause misunderstanding and therefore must be clarified. One of them is the idea of Christ dwelling in us (see 6). This may be misinterpreted as a kind of mysticism, whereby the mystic presumes to be one with God to the extent that he is like God. It is certainly not the intention of Paul to teach this!

When he says, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20), he does not mean that the believer ceased to exist and is replaced by Christ, for presently he adds, "And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." The believer still exists! He only surrenders to Christ and from now on lets the Lord rule all his doings.

Far from teaching mysticism, Paul tries to make Christians every-

where realize that faith is not simply a matter of intellectual knowledge of salvation facts, but in the first place an existential experiencing of salvation. Through faith Christ dwells in our hearts. When one realizes this, many things in his life will change. The holy presence of the Lord does not bear sinful habits and acts. When Christians manifest offensive behavior, Paul urges; "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" (II Cor. 13:5). Faith is to Paul *existential faith*, a surrender to Christ with one's whole existence.

Second to be cleared is the thought that we have to share in Christ's sufferings in order that we may share in his resurrection; that we have to die to the old man in order that we may partake of the new man. It gives the impression of stressing man's efforts at the expense of the saving grace of God. Does it not contradict Paul's own device of "sola gratia"?

Paul is no doubt the great champion of "sola gratia" and "sola fide." This is evident from utterances like Rom. 3:20,24, "No human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law . . . they are justified by his grace as a gift," and Gal. 2:16, "A man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ." On the other hand Paul stresses man's active part in this salvation process: "If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live" (Rom. 8:13); "I say, walk by the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

This contradiction is not understood until we see Paul's view of the inclusive representative character of Christ's death and resurrection. An illustration of it is Rom. 6:10,11, "The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." It is an impossibility that man who is really included in Christ's death and resurrection still lives his own way of life. So Paul continues, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions" (Rom. 6:12), and, "By the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body" (Rom. 8:13), while resuming, "We suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." According to the apostle, our sharing in Christ's sufferings and resurrection is nothing other than the effectualizing of both through the Spirit into our existence, thereby utilizing our own activity.

The same process (viz., inclusive representation — effectualizing through the Spirit) we perceive in Gal. 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me;" Gal. 5:16,17, "Walk by the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh, for the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit;" Gal. 5:24, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

This conception does not rob the glory of God's saving grace; on the contrary, it brings that grace to its summit. Every theology that confines the significance of the Cross and the resurrection to the forgiveness of sins without including the renewal of life, does not do full justice to the saving grace of God.

This view also has its implications for mission and evangelism. Paul does not know a style of evangelism that limits the proclamation to the verbal form. To him the proclamation is an *existential proclamation* (an existential kerygma), i.e., a proclamation through the whole (renewed and changed) existence of the believer. We have seen it (cf. 7) in II Cor. 4:11,12, "For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you" (also II Cor. 1:6).

We may conclude with II Cor. 3:2,3, "You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on your hearts, to be known and read by all men; and you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tables of stone but on tables of human hearts." The message of Christ's death and resurrection is first written by the Spirit in Paul's heart, and through Paul in the hearts of the Corinthians. So is it now also in our hearts and through us in those of others. May our lives, therefore, be a real letter from the Lord, who died and was raised for us.