

From the December 4, 2008, Issue

## Is Satan Reconciled to God in Jesus?

Yes, I asked it! But I asked it because it is a popular question that I get and inquiring minds want to know more about it. I think it is a valid and answerable question that the Gospel addresses, but a question that at first appears to run where angels fear to tip-toe!

In all honesty, I believe that the answer to this question is NECESSARY for reinforcing the Gospel in the hearts of humanity in our present and sinful weakness!

It is also highly relevant in the light of the Christmas season which we are about to celebrate. What is it that the Son of God was sent into the world to accomplish? Does the Son's mission as the incarnate man Jesus Christ include all of creation or only some parts of it? And if it only includes some parts of creation, what are those parts and how are they defined?

In some ways, by answering this question regarding Satan, we are really answering the question of why Christmas exists at all and what it is that we are celebrating.

I intend to develop a Christian response to this question based on three ideas:

Answering the foundational "Who is Jesus?" question again.

Looking at scriptures in the bible in that Light

Hitting at the root of the real principle and relational dynamics involved in our main question.

Let's begin with our most non-negotiable Christian question and answer... **"Who is Jesus, and what does scripture, fundamentally, have to say about Him?"**

Jesus is the Word of God, the Son of the Triune God, made flesh (John 1) – he is God with us (Matthew 1:23). Jesus is also the one that created ALL THINGS and sustains ALL THINGS (Colossians 1). Jesus is a Man forever (Hebrews 7:23-25).

With these bible basics in hand about who Jesus is, we are well on the way to seeing our question addressed in the Jesus of the bible.

First, we see that Jesus is the Son of the Triune God as Man, and the one who created and sustains all things forever. However, if we ONLY see Jesus as a man, we would be missing another important but not always obvious point.

It is HIGHLY IMPORTANT that the Son of God be seen not only as a man in Jesus, but also as a creature, part of His Total creation! In other words, as Man, the Son of God has identified with all creatures and things in His Creation.

If we get too high minded and literalistic with thinking of Jesus as a man ONLY, then we would have to ask the question "do women and female children have a reason for personal hope in Jesus' humanity, too?" If our answer is yes, how is it that women and children could have the same hope as men in Jesus UNLESS the importance of the Son of God in flesh goes deeper than the gender he took on in flesh?!

And, if women and children do have a hope in Jesus because of his creatureliness, then what about all of the other creatures that exist? Do they have hope in His humanity - His creatureliness, too? And why would ALL THINGS have a reason for hope in His creatureliness? Isn't it because of the Revelation of Jesus Christ in the scriptures noted above? Scriptures that help us see and know that Jesus, as a man, is not only with us (with all creaturely things forever), BUT, sustains all things forever in his creatureliness?

In other words, if Jesus is alive forever as a creature, then everything he created is somehow literally and mysteriously impacted by him in the same creaturely way he is! If he lives forever as a creature, all creatures will live forever! If he dies, all creaturely things will die. If he is the New Creation, then every creature associated with him is a new creation – IN HIM!!! It must be so!

Do you see the Good News and hear scripture proclaiming it to and with us?! **For good or for worse, whatever happens to Jesus in his creatureliness, must necessarily happen to humanity and ALL the creatures in whom He is identified and in union with, literally!!** This is the explanation behind Paul saying that when Jesus died, ALL died, and that we are to look at NO ONE from a purely human, or fallen, point of view (2 Co 5:14-16)!

This is why Paul wrote that as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive (1 Cor 15:22)! This is also why Paul wrote that if anyone is in Christ (and we have observed in scripture that all things are in Him!), He is a new creation and the old has passed away (2 Cor 5:18-21)!

These are the critical insights we glean from taking the Spirit's instruction through Paul to take the Person of Jesus more seriously than our fallen, human reasoning, philosophy, empty deceit and tradition (Colossian 2:8,9!)

By becoming a creature, being baptized in the Spirit (Matt 1:13-17), and sharing that baptism with all of humanity in fallen flesh (Acts 2:17), Jesus has revealed to us the truth about the Triune God, and graciously made a way for creatures to share in His REAL knowledge of all things!

Now, and only now, do we have a real basis for getting at a Christ-centered response to this article's question! And that answer is...

... **“Yes, Satan is Redeemed and Reconciled to God in Jesus Christ!”**

Jesus, being Who he is, God in the flesh, and Satan being who he is, A CREATURE, how could it otherwise be??? Isn't it OBVIOUS through the eyes of Jesus' faith???

Now, I am sure some of you are still struggling with this response, so let's keep plodding forward in Jesus, and in the scriptures, and answer some possible objections!

To be frank, I think most struggles you would have with my response comes from the habit of putting second things first! Second things are things like looking at Satan first, and judging him by his actions and/or behavior, first, to determine who he really is! To be even more frank, that is not only bad theology, that is completely backwards Christian theology! To begin addressing the subjects of Satan, sin, behavior, hell, punishment, reconciliation, redemption, or any other subject before addressing Christ and putting him FIRST, is to commit the greatest and gravest of interpretive sin!!

Beginning with any subject other than Jesus Christ is to put second, third, or even fourth things first! It's like trying to build a house by using the slanted roof as the foundation and the cement foundation as the roof - completely upside down and unstable! It is also tantamount to being blind but thinking you can see!

Only Jesus is the Light of the World (Cosmos = everything)! So how are we going to see anything without first seeing HIM??? And how are we going to see and believe him unless he first becomes a creature and shares His creaturely believing with us (which is what he was doing in the Incarnation – Matt 11:27!)

Okay, let's answer the main objections you might have.

**Objection One:** Where does the bible say that Satan is reconciled to God in Jesus!?

**Answer:** (2 Cor 5:16-21! Col 1:19-20! Romans 5:6-11). Keep the basics in mind! Satan is a creature with whom Christ identified in His creatureliness, and one who is also sustained in Jesus!! Don't you believe (know!) inwardly that he is ungodly, sinful, and in need of redemption, too?

*Probing question:* What is it about the word ALL that YOU don't understand, hate or want to believe entails everyone and everything in existence? How do you think it is truly possible to "love your enemies" without having such a view? Do you think Jesus loves Satan with a different love than the love with which he loves you? Where is that in scripture!?

**Objection Two:** Well, just because God reconciles and redeems sinners does not mean he has to reconcile and redeem angels and everything, too, does it? Couldn't Jesus reconcile and redeem humanity ONLY and get rid of everyone and everything else, including Satan? (after all he is evil and we're not, right?)

**Answer: NO, Jesus could not reconcile and redeem some people and things and not others!** Reconciliation and redemption are not forensic and external things done outside of humanity and creation!! Jesus IS the fullness of God Himself - Reconciling and Redeeming humanity and creation from within creation! God the Father, Son and Spirit has decided from the foundation of the world to live as Sustainer from within His Creation, in Jesus Christ, from the Inside Out, for good or for ill (Eph 1!)

Reconciliation, redemption and forgiveness are not just theological concepts! In other words, God hasn't simply designed a game with a few arbitrary rules called "heads or tails", or "Reconciliation or Redemption", tossing a coin in the air in order to decide what to do (with the option of changing the rules at his own whim!)

**NO! God the Father, Son and Spirit IS REEDEMER, RECONCILER, FORGIVER, and UNCONDITIONAL, INDISCRIMINATING, SELF-GIVING LOVE within His own Eternal Relationship!**

Jesus is the actual Revelation of Who God is and what God is REALLY like! His creation will NOT disappear but will be renewed and in eternal union with him as he has decided it in eternity past! ALL of creation was/is waiting on this Jesus to be known for who he is, so that all of it can be who and what it really is in Him – Adopted and Included in His Sovereign Kingdom (Romans 8:18-

25)!

When I think of biblical words describing the Good News, a good rule of thumb I use is to immediately substitute Jesus as “The Answer”, literally. Adoption = Jesus! Salvation = Jesus! Heaven = Jesus! Wisdom = Jesus! Sanctification = Jesus! Reconciliation = Jesus! Redemption = Jesus! There are good scriptural reasons for doing so (1 Cor 1:30, 31, Luke 2:28-30).

*Probing question:* Why is it that you usually define things and people by something or someone other than Who Jesus is? Is that Christian – Christ-ian? What difference would it make, if any, in the life of your friends and family, if you started defining people and things from Who Jesus is and who they are in Him? What if you began defining your own life and identity in Jesus, rather than beginning with your sins, your skin color, your race, your job, your intellect, etc.?

**Objection Three:** #&@! I’m just mad at this answer period, and I HATE the thought of Satan being reconciled and redeemed in Jesus!!! Satan has caused me and the world, AND JESUS, so much trouble!!! Aaaarrgh!!! Tell me it ain’t so!

**Answer:** That’s keeping it real and I’m feeling you on that one! After all, Satan is called the FATHER of lies, isn’t he? If it weren’t for him...blah, blah, blah, #&%@\*!&

Although I am FEELING you on that one, I have to share in his humility and go with Jesus on this one! I aim to share in as much gratefulness as I can about Who God is TRULY revealed to be in Jesus (being even MORE grateful for His gratefulness on my sinful behalf!!)

When I am not being beat up too badly by Satan, or someone/something influenced by Him, I can be grateful he is included in Jesus, too! Think about it! When are you, when am I, TRULY more secure in someone’s supposed unconditional love than when they love on someone worse than us!?? Isn’t the fact that Jesus will go and find the lost ONE, and unhesitatingly serve the least of these, that really proclaims to you and I His unconditional and ALL EMBRACING love?!!

Let there be no doubt or misunderstanding! It is how God the Holy Spirit treats the worst of us that demonstrates to us how he REALLY feels about the rest of us!

If the Father only loves those persons who act good, then God stands condemned as having conditional love, doesn’t He, which would mean he is not the God we hoped he was at all!!

It is how Jesus treats the child who acts the worst in his family that demonstrates to all of the other family members how loved, or unloved, they really are in Him! God IS Love! Unconditional Love! And isn’t that what we, personally, really want from God? From our parents? From our spouse? From our children?

Also, don’t mistake this for some liberal view of God’s love that says, “God wuvs evewybody cuz he is so wuvving and good like a big ol Teddy behw!”

Jesus Christ IS the Revelation of God, and our fallen human reasoning is not! The appearance of God with us in Jesus reveals that the Love of God is at once Reconciling and Redeeming, and at the same time ferociously INTOLERANT OF SIN IN THE LEAST!!

The Revelation of God in Jesus Christ IS God’s Wrath from inside fallen creation opposing that

which would destroy us, and YET, without destroying US, His good creation!!!

Jesus doesn't approve sin, he gets rid of it as doctor removes cancer from a body so the person can still live!! Isn't that creative and marvelous? Passionately and Fiercely Loving!?

I suggest you read any of Dr. Baxter Kruger's books to get a better handle on this crucial understanding of God's love in our darkness, and I especially recommend *Jesus and the Undoing of Adam*, or *Across All World's!* You will find them of immense help in thinking this through in a Christ-centered way!!

In conclusion, please note that I have ONLY addressed the Truth of who Satan is, and must be, in Jesus!! I DID NOT say whether or not he would ever embrace and experience his Redemption and Reconciliation as he has it, graciously, in Jesus!

Like you, in his distinction Satan can try to refuse Jesus all eternity long, and experience horrible consequences and relational problems, potentially forever! Yikes! I also didn't even begin to broach "why" Satan is evil, or why he made up the first lie. You can feel free to write articles about those, and I'd be happy to read some of them. Ha-Ha!

As Thomas Torrance warned in *The Mediation of Christ* (and in my own words), the moment you begin to find logic in evil is the moment you begin to make evil logical (denying evil's inherent illogic!) After all, how could something come only from God, who is good, and do evil!? It's illogical!! In one real sense, evil cannot ever make sense and that is why it is called evil, it is the opposite of sense!

But thank the Father, Son and Spirit, in Jesus Christ, that God found a way to overcome and trump evil (Colossians 2:15!) Personally, I sure hope that after having seen all of his attempts to oppose God go down the drain of God's creativity in using it for the good of His Creation, Satan will repent, believe the Good News and experience it along with all the rest of creation!! Who knows, he may repent in Jesus' repentance before some of us!! Ha-Ha!! Glory to Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

This what we celebrate at Christmas. The good news that Jesus has indeed gone into the very depths of creation's blindness so that those in darkness have seen a great light (Matt. 4:16).

*Final Probing question:* How secure and assured can you truly be in the Father's Love for you if you do not believe that Jesus has gone down into the total depths of evil and darkness to redeem and reconcile all of creation?

~ *Tim Brassell*