

Chronicles of Diversity

Your leadership weekly



A winter bridge

Fractured Rapture Tales

Propitiation

3 March 2004; Volume 6, Issue 9

Tale 10 Propitiation

Why - - Therefore

Why - The Passion of the Christ - Therefore

Propitiation - The Passion of the Christ - New Life

propitiation

\Pro*pi'ti*a'tion\, n. [L. propitiatio: cf. F. propitiation.] 1. The act of appeasing the wrath and conciliating the favor of an offended person; the act of making propitious.

2. (Theol.) That which propitiates; atonement or atoning sacrifice; specifically, the influence or effects of the death of Christ in appeasing the divine justice, and conciliating the divine favor.

He [Jesus Christ] is the propitiation for our sins. —1 John ii. 2.

Source: Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, © 1996, 1998 MICRA, Inc

Why - propitiation requires atonement, but not all atonements are propitiatory. The Passion of the Christ was, and is unique in its propitiation for the sin of all mankind.

Before time began there was propitiation. Propitiation is not a politically correct term. In the Biblical context it is too bloody. It offends our sense of a suburban God that gives us milk in plastic jugs, and hamburger in hygienically sealed containers. Propitiation is not something you discuss over a "Happy Meal" at the Golden Arches.

We are not happy campers when something upsets our plans and vision of our present and our future. In its legal truth, propitiation makes us nauseous with its requirements, because the terms of its

©2003; non-commercial education & forwarding encouraged, all other rights reserved

Jerry Bannon

Wonder Springs

7950 Seward Park Avenue South

Seattle, Washington USA 98118

phone: 206.723.7433

eFax: 425.675.8022

email: bannon@createleaders.org or chronicles@createleaders.org

Please forward prayer requests to: prayer@createleaders.org

Washington State Charity Number: 7529

Visit our web site at: www.createleaders.org

To subscribe to these free weekly messages please send us an email

acceptance lie beyond our sensibilities. All these same descriptions can be said for "The Passion of the Christ."

The Reason the NIV (and similar modern Bible translations) are nearly inspired, is because they don't require a propitiatory sacrifice for my sins, an atoning sacrifice is sufficient, like recycling my glass, cans, and paper, to save Mother Earth. We love the earth, God is love, if we all just meditate in love, the karma of the world will be changed. Satan is just a creation of man's intellect, demons are not for today. Life is not supposed to be upsetting. Reality is what I see on television.

Can you see some similarity between the movie "The Passion of the Christ" and propitiation?

That is because they are linked in a way we do not find in our culture. They are linked in absolute, eternal truth. Propitiation required the passion, and the resurrection, to demonstrate God's love. The whole Bible tells the story, not just the New Testament. The Passion takes one of these steps and focuses on that last twelve hours of Christ's fully human life on this world. For if during this time, if Jesus would not be sacrificed as a sinless fully human personality, propitiation would not be possible. That is a reason the movie doesn't answer the why and the therefore very well. Through God's love, flows our redemption and our justification, which is not that easy to understand from the movie.

From the time I knew I was going to be seeing a preview showing of "The Passion of the Christ" the word propitiation kept running through my mind. Notice you can use propitiation on either end of the "why" and the "therefore." Just use an adjective you want like God's love and it works both ways. God's love (the why) - The Passion - (Therefore) propitiation.

How do you make a movie about propitiation?

I've been struggling with that concept since I saw The Passion movie. A propitiation sacrifice is foreign to the concept of asking "Jesus into my heart." My heart can't answer those disturbing questions. My heart felt Jesus, comes directly into conflict with the heart described in Jeremiah 17:9, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"*

Just as contrary as propitiation is to modern evangelicalism is the fact that we are not saved by relationship, but by faith. But by faith alone can relationship with God be established. Faith was, is, and shall be an intellectual process, brought about by the grace of God alone. The burning bosom concept is the doctrine of cults. Especially Christian cults.

The Passion destroys warm fuzzies and replaces it with gut wrenching violence and emotion that must be intellectually processed in order to be overcome, have wisdom gained, or eliminated. God liberally gives gifts to His children as long as they ask. Asking for intellectual wisdom is not something high on the evangelical warm fuzzy hit parade. If The Passion gives millions of Christians and non Christians billions of sleepless nights, my comment is, "Praise the Lord!"

There is an epitaph about the life of Martin Luther that goes something like: "Martin Luther took on the temporal powers of his world, the state and the church, and died in his sleep." That is however, more than a human epitaph, but a statement about the grace of God.

The movie "Propitiation" must be an intellectual presentation of just what propitiation is in words and snapshots. The same could be said for the passion and the crucifixion. They have been portrayed in various ways sometimes quite successfully. The Passion brought that to a new level that could only be done at this time because of the technology. But these, Propitiation - Crucifixion concepts could be something similar to what we would call a Power Point presentation, with slides and music.

The Resurrection is also not something that can be easily handled artistically. Jesus came back to life. He chilled around for a time. He ascended into heaven, where He reigns beside the Father until His Second coming.

Resurrection can and must be portrayed in the lives of His followers today and throughout history. Like a yellow bus full of Christian youth and a few aging men traveling half way across a continent, from Seattle to Bemidji, Minnesota, to share that Resurrection truth with another locality. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

I didn't have any problem sleeping after seeing the movie, but as I said last week, I was amazed by the grace of God in my own life. Sort of like Martin Luther, I am well versed in all the aspects of The Passion, with little of it actually touching my life.

That is especially true relating to the gift that led to the replacement of my ascending aorta and aortic valve last year. I have experienced the grace of God that allows you to be able to handle increasing physical stress and truly appreciate that grace that brings peace to your soul.

I can remember two instances in my life when either physical pain or emotional pain was so severe, I wished I could die. I knew I wouldn't.

However, early in the morning on February 26, 2003. I willingly climbed on a sheet covered gurney to be wheeled into the operating theater where I might truly die. This followed the previously scheduled day, the 25th, when I got bumped from surgery by a heart transplant, so there was another day of waiting and stress.

I knew the odds, that I might never wake up in this world again. But I also knew there was something going on, that I didn't understand, and I knew that this was a step in that direction. The peace passed human understanding. What a spiritual gift that ride turned out to be. To have the opportunity to face death as a choice and not be afraid, has changed my perspective forever. 1 Corinthians 15:54,55 is true.

So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." [1]

"O Death, where is your sting? [2]

O Hades, where is your victory?"

1. 15:54 Isaiah 25:8
2. 15:55 Hosea 13:14

The challenge is now how do you live as incorruptible in a body of corruption? The thought that I have oft heard, "God isn't through with me yet." still embraces the sting of death. I suppose the Isaiah quotation seems to fit better. Paraphrased into modern, "Death! Been there, done that, got the scar to prove it.

So other than having a desire to make a movie about propitiation, what were my thoughts about "The Passion of the Christ"?

The violence done to Jesus depicted in the Bible (especially Isaiah 53) was really much worse than displayed on the screen. Most evangelicals think of the crucifixion as their suburban atonement for their environmental sins. They have no concept of war, death, and violence. Consequently, many were shaken to the very core of their personality. "Praise the Lord, again!"

Looking for any sign of Mary worship or idolatry, as we conservative Protestants like to pile on Roman Catholics, I found none. Mary was the second major figure in the movie. However, she was portrayed as a loving mother, knowing that she was about to see her son killed, for reasons she but vaguely understood. The only petty point I might have seen, is that the character I associated with the Apostle John, called Mary mother, before the episode on the cross in John 19:26,27. But that was definitely within artistic license and I am not sure that the character really was John.

I also liked the portrayal of the devil as a very attractive, almost timeless real person, dressed in the habit of a religious monk, and I liked demons portrayed as children, those innocent little devils.

As the movie vividly showed, Roman Catholic dogma is quite good at understanding the sufferings of Christ on the way and on the cross. Roman Catholic doctrine is a little less vivid on the why and the therefore. The Passion also represented that paradox. But in that context I also learned that there is a reason to see the Christ on a crucifix, to remember the price of that sacrifice. But I still can see that the cross has occurred in history, and the Good News is that the grave is now empty.

Going back to the grace of God in my life, I had the opportunity while in the Army to see the most famous Passion Play in the world. In Oberammergau, Germany every ten years is presented an all day event, first presented in 1634. At that time, the Black Death was killing thousands across Europe, the village prayed that they be spared from the plague, and if so blessed they would present the Passion of the Christ periodically until the end of time. God answered their prayers and the village as also been true to its word.

From it's first presentation until I saw it, the man who played Jesus had never lived to see the subsequent decade's performance. Sitting in an open air theater trying to follow an English translation

with about 5000 other people, has a tendency to give you a foretaste of that passion of Jesus in many ways similar to the movie. The Passion gives you that taste in its reality, the Passion Play gives you that feeling in its duration. Both are highly prized life experiences. However, my guess is considerably more people saw The Passion in the first week, perhaps the first day, than ever saw the Oberammergau Passion Play in its entire history.

Seeds for Prayer

I go later this week to look at another potential adventure property in North Central Washington. Located on Palmer Lake, this property has the potential to serve as a base for either a church plant or supporting a church plant in Canada, which has been on my heart since the first one of these I looked at seriously some years ago. That Canadian town is Osoyoos population 4500, nine churches counting the cults. The adjacent USA city, Oroville, about 1500 people, 13 similar religious organizations. This area is relatively close to my ancestral homestead and was also the center of precious metals mining in this state a hundred or more years ago.

The major problem is how to fund this type endeavor and maintain a positive cash flow in an area where jobs are few and low paying. Please intercede for this trip as I look not only at the facility but also at the opportunity to proceed with God's work, with the financing to bring this dream into reality. Wonder Springs Adventures needs your support.