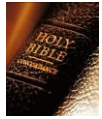


The DEFENDER— June 2025



“... defending the faith once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)

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IN DEFENSE OF TRUTH radio broadcast
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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S Desk: Who's in the Box?

Human beings, Americans in particular, love to dot the I's, cross the t's, and wrap everything up with a tidy little bow. Many of us, Christians included, think we can do that with God. But God doesn't fit in a box. That doesn't deter us though. Being finite creatures brings a stubborn streak with it. Because we can only comprehend so much, we reason that there's nothing else to be said about a particular matter, so we make that a hill on which to fight and sometimes die. Curiosity may have killed the cat, but obstinance has kept multitudes from knowing the truth because they believe what they want to believe. Sadly, more often than not, the truth becomes a casualty.

The truth about God is that He is the infinite Sovereign Creator. Simply put, He is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. That means He knows everything, is all-powerful, and is everywhere—past, present, and future—at once. As mere humans, at best we can only marvel at that. At worst, we can't even begin to comprehend what that means.

God wasn't kidding when He said “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways ... for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9). Or when He asked Job “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth” (Job 38:4)? Through the benefit of current technology from the Hubble Space Telescope, we're able to look in awe at pictures being transmitted to us from the great depths of our Milky Way galaxy, just one of billions of other galaxies in the ever-expanding universe. Theoretical physicists use mathematical models and abstractions to explain and predict natural phenomena, while they focus on developing and refining theories about the universe. I choose to do my research in the Word of God, which tells me that “eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

I readily admit that what you believe comes down to a matter of faith. Either a supernatural, sovereign Being created it all by speaking it into existence (Genesis 1:3, Psalm 33:6), or all that we see in the heavens above created itself out of nothing. You decide. But I'm forever grateful that while I was lost in my sins God came to me, as I could never approach Him. Don't sell God short by thinking that He's just like us. And don't think that you're more than you are by lowering His standards to the level of humanity. He won't change the rules to accommodate our sin. Be grateful He has a plan of redemption and has offered it to you. He paid the price because we couldn't.

Don't try to understand that. Just humble yourself and confess your sins to Him. Do that and be freed from the box in which sin has held you in its grip.

Rev. David Lewis

America's Christian Heritage

Part II – America: Modern City of Refuge

By Robert Luthardt, Sr.

It is reasonable to classify 21st Century America as a Christian nation since the vast majority of the citizenry claim that faith. During the settlement period (1607-1774) it was nearly 100% because Pilgrims and Puritans were men and women of fervent Christian faith and the Bible was their primary text for worship and education. Their children at adulthood were found still following the same spiritual path of faith, keeping the commandments and principles they were taught.

By the time their grandchildren were grown, the colonies had been assailed by subversive waves of Deism and Rationalism from Europe. Yet only a small percentage of America's Founders (1774-1789) digressed at all from Trinitarian Christianity. Some in youthful exuberance, expressed deistic views (ex: Jefferson, Franklin) but this faded by their older years. There is abundant written historical evidence that nearly all settlers and founders were of an unequivocal Trinitarian Christian orientation.

The Great Awakening (1738-1770) nurtured by Anglican Evangelist George Whitfield, Congregationalist Jonathan Edwards, Presbyterian William Tennent and Dutch Reformed Theodore Frelinhuysen, reignited fervency of faith in the colonists and the founders. A greater cooperative spirit swept the churches as they recognized they all professed the same faith.

In God's providence this greater cooperation proved a critical necessity at the Continental Congress and when militia were needed for defense against enemies. Would we have had at all a Declaration of Independence or an Army of defense without that God-ordained cooperation?

The United States from its inception is unique in history in that every citizen is equal and free (there is no class of nobles). What governs Americans is a document – the Constitution – which grew out of the Compacts, Covenants, Confessions and Colonial Charters, each of which contained statements of humility and obeisance to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1954 Congress added to the Pledge of Allegiance the words, "under God." President Eisenhower signed the law saying, "our school children will daily proclaim ... dedication ... to the Almighty." In 1955 he also said, "Without God, there could be no American ... government ... with God's help it will continue." This should be the prayer of every American; today and for as long as the present era of God's watch care for us lasts.

What remains a blessing in our Country traces back to our original Judeo-Christian heritage. What is lacking in American culture has been a departure from that heritage.

In the late 1400's, God motivated Christopher Columbus to discover a "New World." Few know of Columbus' Christian witness. For seven years he defied ridicule and rejection to obtain funding. Once at sea, he defied mutiny and death in dangerous waters. He wrote later, "It was the Lord who impelled me to sail ... the Holy Spirit ... comforted me with ... illumination from ... scriptures" (taken from Colonel John Eidsmoe's book "Columbus & Cortez"). God swung wide open the door for colonization of America.

In 1607, an English landing party made shore in what was named Jamestown, VA. Their immediate official act was to plant a cross claiming the land for Jesus Christ. They had carried from England their Charter which stipulated, "... propagating the Christian religion to ... people ... in darkness and in miserable ignorance of the true knowledge ... of God."

The success of Jamestown lighted the way for the Pilgrims (Puritan separatists from England's State Church) to settle in Plymouth, Mass. (1620). They began their colony with their own written stipulations, "In the name of God" and ... "for the advancement of the Christian Faith." The later coming Puritans were those who had not separated but tried to "purify" the English Church from within. They saw and eventually acknowledged that the Pilgrims more truly followed scripture (2 Cor. 6:14-17). When the leadership becomes apostate, believers are to depart. Both groups were firmly committed to the God of the Bible. Both were persecuted for their "non-conformity" and thousands of these Bible-honoring Christians fled England for religious freedom.

When Civil War in England commenced (1640's – 1689) and only truly ended in 1689 with the signing of The Toleration Act which granted real freedom of worship, it yet generated more waves of Christians to America. They wanted no more of the oppression believers had endured since the death of Elizabeth in 1603.

Other providential events stirred Puritan Roger Williams to seek freedom of worship (1636) in his new settlement called "Providence," Rhode Island. He also strived to evangelize the Indian tribes. Queen Christiana of Sweden (1630-1640's) supported a colony in Delaware with certain stipulations, "all persons ... shall be instructed in the Christian Faith" and "wild nations [Indians] instructed in the ... worship of the Christian Religion."

Small groups of English Catholics were also seeking religious freedom and in 1632, Charles I granted George Calvert (Lord Baltimore) land which became Maryland. Before long Maryland was filled with protestants as well.

In the 1670-1680's, William Penn established a haven for Quakers but allowed his Pennsylvania to welcome all for religious freedom. He, too, made efforts to reach Indians with Biblical Truth.

In 1669, John Locke, author of the "Reasonableness of Christianity," was also the chief author of the "Charter of Carolina," which stipulated, "God is to be publicly and solemnly worshipped" and kindness is to be shown to the "Indians for Christianity's sake." He also charged that kindness be accorded all dissenters from Christ's teachings, nor any kept at a distance from His love meant for all peoples and races in the human family.

In 1773, when Georgia was founded by James Oglethorpe, that Charter stipulated that time and means be devoted to conversion of Indians, "through good discipline and example of just, moral, religious behavior." When Oglethorpe's settlers landed on Georgia's shore, their first official act was to kneel in prayer with thanksgiving to God.

In the 20th Century we witnessed the rise of anti-Christian bigotry from groups like, "Americans United for Separation of Church and State" (who falsely asserted this concept is in the Constitution) and the group of radical left-wing New York lawyers who formed the "American Civil Liberties Union" (ACLU).

These and other alt-left fundamentalists have been prime movers of unconstitutional hate-crime laws (Orwellian thought control) designed to shut down evangelism and to criminalize formerly lawful endeavors and enterprises (religious and secular) reclassifying them as being dangerous, terrorist or criminal in orientation. Christians have been prosecuted (and persecuted!) at law before tribunals because their faith forbids supporting open, aggressive sinfulness such as abortion and homosexuality. Christian florists, wedding photographers and bakers have been fined and threatened with jail time. It is George Orwell's "1984" in America. Such hate-crime laws in Sweden caused AKE-GREEN, a church pastor, to be sentenced to a month in prison for preaching in a Sunday sermon the Bible's condemnation of sin including homosexuality. Fortunately, a private American group, financed by Christians (Alliance Defense Fund) came to Sweden to Pastor Green's defense and won the case on appeal. Radical left-wing jurists that, "legislate from the bench" are not only festering in the United States. Pastor Green warned, "Be aware that our Faith is under Fire."

All Americans should thank God that He founded our nation for religious liberty first and foremost. We can still challenge the invented "facts" of "revisionist historians" infesting our colleges. Our weaponry to defend truth are found in the documents of the settlers (Compacts, Charters, Colonial Constitutions, State Constitutions) and acts of the Continental Congress (ex. Days of prayer and fasting, etc.) and of our founders (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, The Northwest Ordinance, the Constitution of the U.S. and Bill of Rights).

George Washington wrote that we could, "remain a free and happy people" so long as our citizens, "strived to live in imitation of Jesus Christ" (inscribed June 1783 in a letter to the governors of all the States).

Bill Federer, conservative author and speaker reported, "Tolerance is the unique Christian contribution to the world. Tolerance from Puritans first to other protestants, then to Catholics, then to liberal Christians and Jews. Finally, toleration was allowed to atheists, secular humanists and even hostile anti-Christians. Now, however, these last ones in, have decided to work against the advocates of toleration so that now anything and everything must be tolerated except those who extended the kindness in the first place. Everything is tolerable to extremists and radicals except Bible-based Christianity."

Bill Federer concluded by showing how America's Christian heritage counts greatly because it alone defines properly the United States at its core. Our future depends upon our beliefs and our actions. To forget or to hide America's true past history jeopardizes our future and our God-given liberty. Now's the time to fight and prayer is our armament. Keep looking up (Luke 21:28).



An Examination of I Corinthians 15:3b: “How That Christ Died For Our Sins, According to the Scriptures.” KJV

Part 1: Was Christ’s Death Also Spiritual?

By Joseph Burghauer

In Genesis 2:17, God told Adam that disobedience (sin) would result in death. Sin is disobedience to God’s Law. Romans 6:23a: “For the wages of sin is death.” Romans 5:12 reads: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.” Adam was our representative and the guilt and penalty of his first sin was “passed upon” or imputed to all of mankind (except the God-Man, Jesus Christ). All people also inherit Adam’s sinful nature and continue to sin against God. Death includes physical death, spiritual death (spiritual separation from God), and eternal death (punishment in a place of torment forever). Not only will we die physically, we are spiritually dead from conception (Psalm 51:5; Isaiah 59:2). If we do not believe (trust) in Christ alone for eternal life, we will be sentenced to eternal death (John 3:16-18; Revelation 20:11-15).

Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world through His Virgin Birth as the Holy One (Luke 1:35), and remained sinless (I Peter 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21) for His Righteous Life to be imputed to His people and to die a sacrificial death on the cross in order to “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21b). His sacrifice to pay the “wages of sin” for “our sins” was promised as early as Genesis 3:15, pictured in the animal sacrifices that God required, and was more explicitly set forth in passages such as Isaiah 53.

There have been many views of the death of Christ for our sins throughout church history. Most have had some truth to them, but not fully “according to the Scriptures”. Widely considered the dominant view is the Christus Victor theory that Christ died to defeat evil in order to free mankind from bondage. Although this is true, it is not complete. This theory does not adequately explain God’s holiness, justice, and wrath. Another view that was prominent in the early church is the Ransom to Satan theory that claims that Adam sold humanity over to Satan by his disobedience. Justice requires that God must pay Satan a ransom to free humanity. Christ’s death, they claim, was that ransom. This view is disturbing as it makes God a debtor to the devil (Psalm 49:7,8 are among the verses indicating that Christ paid the ransom to God the Father.) We hold to the Penal Substitutionary theory, that Jesus Christ died to satisfy God’s righteous wrath against sinners. Because God is holy, God’s justice must be satisfied before He can forgive sin. His Law must be kept and He must punish sinners for breaking His Law. Penal means punished. In the person of His Son, God Himself suffered His wrath as He was punished for us as our substitute. This fuller understanding of the atonement is clearly seen in I Peter 2:24 and 2 Corinthians 5:21.

As we examine the phrase “Christ died for our sins”, we find that most evangelicals believe that Christ as the Second or Last Adam had to die spiritually (which they usually define as temporary spiritual separation from the Father), as well as physically, to pay the full “wages of sin.” An extreme, and heretical, version of the spiritual death (and Ransom to Satan) view teaches that Christ actually became a sinner on the cross and descended into Hell after His spiritual and physical deaths to be punished by Satan, and had to be born again Himself! We are not considering this blasphemous view. We shall only consider the legitimate view that in Matthew 27:46, as temporary spiritual separation from the Father in His

Human nature. This temporary abandonment is also argued from verses such as Deuteronomy 31:17; Isaiah 53:9-12; Habakkuk 1:13; and Galatians 3:13. We will consider alternative interpretations.

The immediate fulfillment of Psalm 22, that Matthew 27:46 quotes, was in the life of David as he was surrounded by enemies and he felt abandoned by God. But David continued to trust in God and we read in Psalm 22:24, "For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard." So, although David initially felt abandoned by God, it is valid to deduce "according to the Scriptures" that he was not "forsaken," as we also see in verses 19-23. Psalm 22 found its ultimate fulfillment at the cross. Our Lord brought this messianic Psalm to the crowd's attention as He quoted the first verse. He wanted them to understand that prophecies were being fulfilled. We may interpret His cry as that, in His humanity, He felt abandoned. He, like David, was in fact not even temporarily abandoned. As the Father had not "hid His face" from David, why would He 'hide His face' from the One Greater Than David as He was doing His Father's will by going to the cross (Luke 22:42, Philippians 2:8)?

In Deuteronomy 31:17, God told Moses of a future generation, those who would not be part of God's remnant after Moses died: "Then My anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them..." (See also Isaiah 54:7,8) This was a temporary abandonment of the disobedient nation of Israel, but not His remnant. (See Jeremiah 51:5 and Romans chapter 11 for proof that it was only a temporary abandonment). Those who hold that Christ died spiritually on the cross often use such verses to support their belief that just as God temporarily abandoned the nation of Israel because of their sin, He likewise abandoned Christ as He took our sins upon Himself to redeem us. But this temporary forsaking of Israel does not necessarily mean that the Father temporarily forsook His Son. His Son was never disobedient (John 6:38). His punishment was for our sins. Isaiah 53:9 in the original Hebrew refers to "deaths," which can be taken as physical and spiritual death. This is a valid point, but in the Hebrew language, plurality can be used for emphasis, and the context is that of the "grave," being physical rather than spiritual death. Isaiah 53:10b: "when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin" is also used to assert that Christ died spiritually. Verses 11 and 12 also speak of "His soul." The word "soul" is most likely used in these verses to speak of Christ Himself as a living Person. Genesis 2:7 says, "man became a living soul." Ezekiel 18:20 also speaks of a soul as a person. Christ gave His life to pay for our sins, and was tormented in His soul/spirit but did not necessarily die spiritually.

Habakkuk 1:13 tells us that the Holy God "canst not look on iniquity," and this verse is used to assert that the Father could not look on Christ as "He hath made Him to be sin for us." But to not "look on iniquity" means that God cannot tolerate and must punish iniquity. As God is omnipresent and omniscient, He sees all sin (Proverbs 15:3). Christ was being punished for our sin that was imputed to Him. God looked upon Him as "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him" (Isaiah 53:10a). He did not 'turn His face away' from Him.

Galatians 3:13 says that Christ was "made a curse for us." This is taken to support that Christ had to be separated from the Father (spiritually dead) on the cross. But it may be taken to mean that Christ paid the penalty for the Law-breaking of His people, as our 'curse' was imputed to Him, and He willingly took the wrath of the Father for us.

To further see “how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures,” let us consider the sacrifices that pointed to His final perfect sacrifice. We see more evidence that God did not ‘turn away from’ Christ as He was sacrificed. Leviticus 1:3-4 says that the burnt offering is to be “male without blemish” and that it will “make atonement”, for reconciliation to God. Verse 13 says that: “it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.” We see how the animal had to be a “male without blemish”, as this pointed to Christ, Who was sacrificed as “a lamb without blemish” (1 Peter 1:19). As God did not ‘turn His face away’ from the burnt offering but found it to be a “sweet savour,” why would He not find the perfect and final sacrifice of Christ to be of much greater satisfaction? And let us not forget that Christ is not only “the Lamb of God” that was sacrificed for our sins, He is also our “Great High Priest” (Hebrews 4:14), Who did not offer “the blood of goats and calves but by His own blood” (Hebrews 9-12). He Himself was the offering as well as the High Priest Who made the offering! God did not ‘turn His face’ away from the merely human high priest or the animal offering, as this would mean that the sacrifice was not accepted. So why would He not look with approval upon the final perfect High Priest and His final and perfect offering as it was made?

Let us also look at a few verses that speak of His death in terms of His body and His shed blood rather than the death of His soul/spirit as the purchase price for the remission of “our sins”: Colossians 1:14: “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:20: “And having made peace through the blood of His cross...” Colossians 1:21b, 22a: “Ye now hath He reconciled In the body of His flesh through death.” See also 1 Peter 3:18. The death of His soul/ spirit is not mentioned in these verses.

Finally, let us turn to Chapter 8.4 Of Christ the Mediator of the Westminster Confession: He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul, and most painful sufferings in His body; was crucified, and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day He arose from the dead, with the same body in which He suffered...

This seems to teach that since Christ “remained under the power of death” for three days, His death did not include the death of His soul/spirit. His soul/spirit was in Heaven immediately after He died physically. (Luke 23:43,46).

Since Christ’s life and death had infinite value, He paid the equivalent of eternity in Hell for all of His people as He was tormented grievously on the cross in both body and soul/spirit.

To sum up our answer to the question, ‘Was Christ’s death also spiritual?’ It is probably best to conclude that the Scriptures do not teach this. Our Lord may have felt forsaken as He bore the Father’s infinite wrath in our place. But, in both His human and Divine natures, He was never separated from the Father. His Divine nature sustained His human nature, including His spiritual suffering, as well as His physical suffering, as He “died for our sins.” (See Westminster Larger Catechism Question and Answer 38). This is a great mystery that we cannot fully comprehend. May we humbly accept what the Scriptures clearly teach us, and not seek to “go beyond what is written” (1 Corinthians 4:6). See also Deuteronomy 29:29.

In part 2, Lord willing, we will further examine our verse and, “according to the Scriptures”, His death “for our sins”.

Our mission through the broadcast of In Defense of Truth and the publication of The Defender newsletter is to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Our vision today is just as strong as it was back in 1963 when Dr. John Dekker began this outreach. We pray that you will continue to stand with us as we hold true to God's holy Word.

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DEFENDER CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. David R. Lewis, MDiv., Director, IDOT
Robert Luthardt, Sr., Elder, CHBPC
Joseph Burghauser, Elder, CHBPC

WRITE TO US!

Rev. David Lewis &
In Defense of Truth
2927 Cub Hill Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21234

Upcoming Events!

If you are in or around the Baltimore area, we'd love to have you join us for these upcoming events!

Adult & Children's Sunday School	10:15 am
Sunday Morning Worship & Children's Church	11:00 am
Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study	12:30 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 pm
Outdoor Movie Night (June 6th)	8:30 pm