

Circumcision of the Heart (Is 'Death' the Savior?) Part 1

by Robert Wurtz II

The speaker argues that the concept of 'Death is Savior' is a misconception and that balance is necessary in theology to avoid error and have a holistic understanding of God's nature.

Scripture: Romans 7:18

Topics: "Original Sin", "Spiritual Liberation"

Description

Robert Wurtz II shares his journey of delving into the Jewishness of the Bible and finding a mentor in Rabbi Jerry Feldman, who challenged his understanding of circumcision and the concept of 'flesh' in relation to sin. Through intense study of Scripture, Wurtz grapples with the idea of original sin corrupting the human body and the need for liberation to serve God without depravity. He discusses the concept of 'Death is Savior' and warns against doctrines that lead to imbalance and error in Christian teachings.

Transcript

For several years I desired to understand the Jewishness of the bible and to place it into its original context. God set my path to cross with Rabbi Jerry Feldman; a man whom I regard very highly for the work he is doing. I also have been greatly influenced by this man. He was a God-send into my life.

I will never forget my first week at the Messianic Institute of Kansas City (now named the Jewish Roots Institute). This is the Instituts that Jerry moved from New York City- to Kansas City to start (along with the Adat Yeshua messianic Congregation and Radio show "For Zions Sake"). I arrived in the class a few weeks into the start of the semester and found certain discussion well progressed. I did not know Jerry very wee or I had not don what I was about to do. The question was asked "What is circumcision?" None raised their hand. Myself, wholly ignorant of the level of scholarly gentlemen that were present, and being quick to raise my hand and give an answer, gave this response: "Circumcision was an outward token of an inward work, in which Abraham had voluntarily decided to cooperate with God in allowing Him to circumcise His heart of the "flesh" so that He (God) could write his laws upon it. God gave him the sign of circumcision as an outward mark so that those who saw Abraham would see and know 'this is a man that feareth the Lord.'" Looking back at the Professor Rabbi Jerry Feldman, who had (among numerous other qualifications) a masters degree from Gordon Cromwell Theological Seminary, asked the class "What is wrong with what he just said?" When he got no response from the class he began to get a bit unsettled

and began to say he wished he had been taping the class for rebroadcast on his weekly radio program "For Zions Sake" on AM 760 in KC. He then began asking me questions about myself. What is your denomination? Answer: "I am Pentecostal Church of God." Are you a dispensationalist? Answer "I agree with some portions of dispensationalism, but not all." From that day forward I understood that he had a lot to say to me that I needed to know. And though he has a way with things, I always enjoyed his teaching. Jerry Feldman as I understand it, had some sympathy with Pentecostals as he was somewhat involved with the Assemblies of God in Springfield, MO. We seemed to get along quite well.

He then began tearing my statement to pieces it seemed and it was all over the use of this one word "flesh." I think he may have saw me, because of what I said, as a "poster child" for the Church and one of many reasons as to why the Jews, in general, don't believe (There are many who do by the way. this is not well known). And that, because, I understood the problem of sin to be with the BODY and not with the Sin Nature. Therefor he cast me into the "the flesh is evil" camp of Gnostic Dualism as if I were keenly aware of such mens teachings in the Nicene era. I knew nothing of these men and had not heard the teaching from anyone that I expressed. It was what I gathered from intense study of scripture. As green as I was at that time (and still am), I had gathered at least that iniquity had entered the human race through Adam and Eve and had corrupted the faculties of man- especially in terms of the senses. In my view the senses were all corrupt and were being used by "the flesh" in a fashion contrary to their intended purpose. For this cause they must be exercised to diecern good and evil. I saw the issue as being- Adam and Eve had a corrupt body and needed to be liberated from that body contaminated with Original Sin (I didn't know that doctrine as such then). I believed and still do, that if man was free from the "flesh" He or she was free to serve God without depravity in the new resurrected spiritual body that was governed by the law of God.

This is the whole "Death is Savior" concept that the Total (Entire) Sanctification camp would go to great length to rebuff. Adam Clark seemed to be almost a zealot against such a teaching. Death, of coarse, is not the savior; it is the means by which our Savior Jesus Christ accomplished many things including the atonement. Death is the enemy, and like Pharoah, God used that enemy to accomplish His purpose. The death of the First Born also set the wheels in motion for the Children of Israel to be liberated from Egypt. Did death save the Children out of the Land of Egypt? Of coarse not. Likewise 'death as savior' is a synical retort that is not helpful and ignores the means of God's working in the earth to prove the doctrine of immaculate Christianity this side of the first resurrection. If you read what they believe to be the reason Christ came- you see immediately why they arrived at such teachings. Passages cited are usually II Corinthians 7:1; 11:30; I Thessalonians 5:23; James 4:8, among others. If I might summerize it I would say "to bring man into such a state of holiness as to be as free from sin and its effects on holiness as was Adam and Jesus." This is an awesome concept to try to strive for- but in reality it is overlyrealized eschatology. Always remember; error begets error, and to launch a doctrine based almost exclusively on the holiness of God is no different than launching it from God's sovereignty or from His love (as does the modern church growth movement). There is no balance in this approach and all will lead to error in the end. Think on these results: Entire Santification is supposed to yield an "Immaculate Christian." Unconditional Election makes God "the author of Sin." Over emphasis on love leads to the doctrine of "Universalism" and rejects true repentance. The time would fail to tell of whole ministries built on the baptism in the Holy Spirit or healing or prosperity, etc. These types of niche doctrines lead to niche ministries and send the people of God wildly out of balance.

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