

PAUL'S OT

CRUCIFIED LORD | WEEK 4: OCTOBER 4, 2015

God is Cruciform

We learn from Paul that the cross of Christ is not only *initiated* by God, it *reveals* God. Christ crucified is the power and wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

So long has the cross been a centerpiece in churches that Christians can easily forget the same and offensiveness it represented in the ancient world. Only criminals and recalcitrant slaves were crucified. Indeed, Matthew's gospel portrays Jesus' death as that of a slave worth thirty pieces of silver (Mt 26:15; cf. Ex 21:32), and Paul draws a connection between Jesus' taking the form of a slave and dying the death of the cross (Phil 2:7-8).

To assert that God himself accepted death in the form of a crucified Jewish manual worker from Galilee in order to break the power of death and bring salvation to all men could only seem folly and madness to people of ancient times.

Isaiah 29

Paul supports his thesis from the LXX, Is 29:14. The wise in Isaiah 29 are the complacent priests and prophets who had no idea that God would perform amazing deeds of judgment and salvation in their day. Those people drew near to God with their mouths and honored him with their lips, while their hearts were far from him (Is 29:13).

Psalms 32:10

In recalling Ps 32:10, through the verb "I will reject"), Paul drives home the point that the Lord will act in judgment to shatter the plans of the nations and reject the thoughts of peoples and the plans of rulers (cf. Ps 2).

Cruciformity: The Law of Christ

For Paul the death of Jesus is not only revelatory, representative and redemptive, but also paradigmatic. The essence of believing existence is conformity to the crucified Christ, or cruciformity. Though cruciformity may involve suffering, it is much more comprehensive than that. Paul twice refers to it as the "law of Christ," or the narrative pattern of the crucified Messiah.

Galatians 6:2

1 Corinthians 9:21

This narrative pattern refers specifically to the kind of faith working through love" that is rooted in the cross, where the Son of God expressed his faith (faithfulness, obedience) by giving himself in love.

Not a replacement of Moses' law. But a new law of love.

Galatians 2:19-20

Galatians 5:6

He did not seek his own welfare but that of others. This is the pattern of live for all believers: faith toward God, love toward others. Faith oriented toward the future is hope; thus Paul summarizes believing existence as a life of faith, hope and love.

For Paul the choice is absolute. You cannot have it both ways. If you want to come with the Messiah, you cannot cling to the law. If you do cling to it, you are declaring that you don't want to belong to the Messiah's people.

Crucified Lord

Philippians 2:1-11

This is a stark contrast between the pagan gods and heroes and Jesus of Nazareth. Think it through against the background of the OT. Who was it who arrogantly grasped at the chance to be 'like God, knowing good and evil'? Adam in Genesis 3.

In the OT God's people Israel are the servant-people, whose suffering obedience to God's saving plan will be the unexpected way of dealing with sin's effects on the world. But Israel, too, is in slavery; Israel, too, has gone the way of Adam.

In his incarnation and on the cross Jesus has done *what only God can do*.

Isaiah 52:13

Isaiah 53:13

In Philippians 2:9-11 the hymn outlines the two-stage response to Christ's voluntary, obedient death: exaltation by God and acclamation by creation. The word "therefore" stresses God's exaltation as a direct consequence of Christ's obedience. There is a clear echo here of the hymn of the suffering servant.

In these Isaiah texts God rewards and exalts the servant for fulfilling his mission in dying.

Isaiah 45:23

Paul is quite clear that he's not moving away from Jewish monotheism. In verse 11 he quotes Isaiah 45:23, a fiercely monotheistic OT passage.

References:

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