



STATEMENT DP078

## Questions And Answers On The Bible, the Cults, the Occult, and Aberrant Christian Teachings

This column is based on questions and answers excerpted from “The Bible Answer Man,” CRI’s live call-in radio broadcast. In this issue of the Newsletter, Craig Hawkins answers questions on how faith teachers view the death of Christ.

(1) *Where did Jesus pay the price of atonement for our sins on the cross or in hades as the “faith teachers” contend?*

John 19:30 tells us that it was on the cross that Christ *paid in full* or finished His redeeming and atoning work for humankind. The phrase, “it is finished” (which Jesus uttered just before His death on the cross), is a translation of the Greek word *tetelestai*. This word was stamped on receipts in first-century Greece when an individual had *paid in full* the price of a given article. The word was also stamped on any list of charges that had been brought against a convicted criminal after they had served or *paid in full* the debt and/or prison sentence.

In Colossians 2:13-15, Paul uses this imagery as he expounds upon the great truth of Christ’s finished work on the cross. In verse 14 he says that Christ on the cross “cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us,” for He “took it away, nailing it to the cross.” From this passage, we see that it was on the cross and *not* in hades that Christ completed His redemptive and atoning sacrifice and triumphed over the hordes of hell.

(2) *What about the contention of the “faith teachers” that Christ died spiritually and took upon Himself the sinful nature of Satan and had to be born-again in hell?*

First, we must stress that if Christ died spiritually He would have ceased being God. This is an impossibility, as one of God’s attributes is *eternality* — that is, He has always existed and will never cease to exist (Isa. 9:6; Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58; Heb. 13:5).

Second, when Paul said that God made Christ “who knew no sin *to be sin on our behalf*” (2 Cor. 5:21), he clearly did not mean literal sin, but rather that Christ became identified with *our* sins in order to pay the penalty for them (cf. Rom. 8:3; 2; Cor. 5:2; Heb. 4:15). To illustrate this, suppose that you were arrested and convicted for speeding on the freeway. If your father agreed to pay the penalty (the price of your speeding ticket), this would not mean that He was actually guilty of speeding as you were. It simply means that He paid the *penalty* for your transgression. This is analogous to what Christ did for us on the cross.

Third, it is utter blasphemy to say that Christ took upon Himself the nature of Satan and had to be born again in hell. Christ’s nature — His *eternal* nature — is deity (Col. 2:9; Phil. 2:6-8; Heb. 1:3). The only thing born in hell was this pernicious doctrine of the “faith teachers” — for Christ never died spiritually, never took upon Himself Satan’s nature (or a sin nature), and never had to be born again since He never sinned.

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