

CONCERNING THE JUDICIAL AND SUBSTITUTIONARY NATURE OF SALVATION

AFFIRMATIONS AND DENIALS (Topic No. 7)

I. **We affirm** that the Christian gospel is indispensably a message about the saving work of the historical individual, Jesus Christ,¹ who was fully God² and fully man,³ whose substitutionary death upon the cross secured justification for believers against the judicial condemnation of God which rests upon sin and sinners.⁴

We deny that Christianity is merely a metaphysical abstraction, ethical program, or social movement.

1. Luke 2:1-7; Romans 5:18-19; 1 Cor. 15:1-8; Heb. 13:12
2. John 1:1-3; 20:27-28; 1 Tim. 3:16; Titus 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:1
3. Mat. 26:45; 28:9,17; Luke 1:35; John 6:53; 14:7-11; 1 Tim. 2:5
4. Mat. 1:1,21; Luke 24:39; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:13,14,22; Heb 9:26, 28; 10:10; 1 Pet. 3:18

II. **We affirm** that the Bible presents salvation as salvation from sin's guilt and power¹ and that the measuring rod for sin is God's holy and unchanging character² as disclosed through the created order and man's heart,³ but verbally revealed in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.⁴

We deny that sin is defined by divinely fluctuating feeling, simply a failure in cultural standards, or a failure in man's attitudes or projects, such as self-esteem, positive perspective, affirmation of others, etc.

1. Mat. 1:21; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:22; Heb 9:26, 28; 10:10; 1 Pet. 3:18
2. Lev. 11:44-45; 20:7; Joel 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:14-17; 1 John 3:5-6
3. Psa. 19:1-4; Rom. 1:18-21; 2:1,14-16; Acts 14:17:17:28-31
4. Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 6:1-7; Isa. 1:10; Hosea 1:1; Amos 7:16; John 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rev. 22:18-19; etc.

III. **We affirm** that as an affront to God's righteousness, sin fully deserves the wrath of God, who imposes the just recompense and inescapable condemnation of death either upon sinners¹ or upon an innocent Substitute who satisfies the justice of God in their place.²

We deny that the divine, wrathful, and just sentence of death upon sinners can be mitigated or set aside at the discretion of a holy and righteous God without the infliction of His announced penal sanction.³

1. Eze. 18:4; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Heb. 10:26-31; Rev. 20:10-15; 21:8; 22:15

2. Lev. 1:4; 3:2; Mat. 1:21; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:20-22; Heb 9:26, 28; 10:10; 1 Pet. 3:18
3. Psa. 49:7-9; Isa. 40:27; Eze. 18:4; Heb. 10:26-31

IV. **We affirm** that Jesus Christ, by His death, offered a substitutionary atonement, rescuing His people from the judicial condemnation of God upon their sin by fully bearing the penalty of their sin upon the cross, the righteous dying as a sacrifice for the unrighteous and being cursed in their behalf.¹

We deny that the death of Christ was merely a utilitarian public example of sin's ugliness and suffering, intended by God to deter others from immoral living, rather than being retributive in character.

1. Mat. 1:21; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:20-22; Heb 9:26, 28; 10:10; 1 Pet. 3:18

V. **We affirm** that the reconciling work of Christ removes God's enmity and alienation against sinners who believe in Christ by paying the prescribed penalty which rests upon their objective, legal guilt before God.¹

We deny that Christ's saving work was merely an act of mediation or a compelling gesture of good will intended to restore communication between God and men as parties who do not trust each other.

1. Isa. 53:4-6; Mark 16:16; John 3:18; 5:24; 1 Cor. 15:3; Eph. 1:7; 2:13-22; 3:12; Col. 2:13-14; Heb. 9:28; 1Pet. 2:24-25

VI. **We affirm** that justification is a forensic transaction in which God not only acquits or pardons the sinner in consideration of Christ's self-sacrifice for sins, but also imputes the positive righteousness of Christ to the legal account of the sinner, this righteousness being both alien and yet constitutive, thus serving as the basis in truth of God's declared verdict of a righteous status for the believer.¹

We deny that the atonement was merely a pathos-evoking example of God's love, intended to have a subjective moral influence in the heart of believers and leading them to live self-sacrificially by imitation. We further deny that in the teaching of the Bible God's justification of the wicked has a causative quality, that it replaces, elevates, or infuses the Adamic nature of the believer with the actual righteousness of Christ as sanctifying grace, and that it is in any way a divine assessment based upon the inward character of the believer.

1. Rom. 3:21-24; 4:1-8; 5:19; 7:18-25; 8:1-4; 10:3-10; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:21

VII. **We affirm** that the judicial concerns of substitutionary atonement and forensic justification are indispensable to the rich and comprehensive work of God's gracious salvation, which extends beyond the guilt of sin to its power, pollution, and consequences as well.

We deny that God's saving work of sinners is restricted to the judicial concerns of substitutionary atonement and forensic justification. We deny any claim that God's saving work fails to encompass also the breaking of sin's power¹ and the reversing of sin's consequences in the regeneration and sanctification of men² and subduing of creation,³ and in the ultimate glorification of believers⁴ and re-creation of the world.⁵

1. Mat. 1:21; Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 6:12-18; Col. 1:20-23; Rev. 1:5
2. 1 Cor. 1:2,30; 6:11; Eph. 2:1-10; 5:26; Col. 3:5; Titus 3:3-8; 1 Pet. 1:22-23
3. Gen. 1:28; Rom. 8:19-22; Heb. 2:6-9
4. Rom. 8:17,30; Eph. 1:18; 3:6; Col. 3:24; 2 Thess. 2:14; Titus 3:7; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:7
5. 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1