

Guilt and Salvation, Part II

by Fr Reed K. Merino

Recap of part one:

1. Scripture is saturated with the theme of guilt: revealing man as inherently full of guilt, how that guilt began and what to do about that guilt... (Here is a VERY small sample)
 - Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was guilty of sin from birth, a sinner the moment my mother conceived me. (NET)
 - Isaiah 64:6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. 7 There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you;
2. The other man-made religions of the world do not have ANYWHERE near the focus upon guilt that GOD's revealed religion has.
3. As I have frequently said, to understand what we were created to be and what we are now, we must always go to the Garden of Eden. Guilt began in the Garden. It is more than just the failures that you and I have accumulated during the course of our lives. As Psalm 51 states: it is the condition into which we were all born. We are BORN disconnected from God (in the way that Adam was connected by nature). And before we can be connected to God, and be restored to our original innocency, we must deal with the natural and accumulated guilt that is within us.
4. Galatians 3:23 "But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our tutor [*to bring us*] to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."
 - In other words, Paul is teaching us that the Law and its system of dealing with sin, was designed from the beginning to prepare people for the time when He WOULD be bringing the true solution to the overpowering nature of sin and to bring something more than mere forgiveness to those whose fallen nature must keep them falling back into sin.
 - [Moving on from part one:] God also told us in the Old Testament itself that it was going to be necessary to have a guilt offering deeper than that which was created through Moses. More than 700 years before Jesus, He told us through Isaiah that a sacrifice greater than that of

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cattle and sheep was needed to deal with the guilt existing in our corrupted human natures:

53 ³ He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief..

⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He [*was*] wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace [*was*] upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;

And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ...

For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

¹⁰ ...When You make His soul an offering for sin,... ¹¹ He shall see the labor of His soul, [*and*] be satisfied. ... My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities."

1 Corinthians 5:7 "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed in our place"

Hebrews 7:24-25 "He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore He is able to save absolutely those who come to God through Him, since He always lives and can intercede on their behalf."

Hebrews 9:8 "the way into the Most Holy Place was not yet open to the public while the first tabernacle was still in existence. ⁹ It was a figure during the time then present, a time when both gifts and sacrifices were being offered that were incapable of clearing the conscience of the worshipper" [NOTE the reason for the inadequacy of the Mosaic sacrifice: doesn't change your nature]

9:26 "but now, once for all at the end of the ages, He has been revealed to nullify sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

If you have been going to church for years, all of what I have been saying is probably familiar to you, as it had been for me. But it was not until the summer of

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1972 that I began to FEEL the guilt we have been reading about, and began to sense a NEED for the kind of guilt offering that is described in the New Testament.

Until that time I had actually been deceived by my church experience without knowing it. There is an old saying, going back to at least the time of Chaucer (late 14th century), that "familiarity breeds contempt." One of the derived meanings of that worldly proverb is that you can think you are buddies with someone just because you hang around in their company. And yet you DON'T really know them personally: you just THINK you do.

I had gotten so used to reading about the sacrifice of Jesus, and about its marvelous effects upon us that I actually assumed I was partaking of its blessings. And I was deceived. I had a hand in deceiving myself, but I was also deceived by the preachers and teachers who were undoubtedly passing on their own deception.

What do I mean by this as "deception"? The guilt offering provided by God is given to the person who has become aware and ashamed by their guilt. It is given to the person who actually EXPERIENCES that guilt, and therefore experiences the NEED to have that guilt removed.

My deception was that I did not know that experience or state of mind that Paul called "godly sorrow". He describes it in 2 Corinthians 7: "**8** If I made you sad with my letter, I do not regret it, although I did regret it then. I see that the letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while. **9** Now I am happy, not because you had such sorrow, but because your sorrow led you to repent. For you were sorry in a godly way, and so you were not hurt by us in any way. **10** For having sorrow in a godly way results in repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regrets. But the sorrow of the world produces death. **11** See what great earnestness godly sorrow has produced in you! How ready you are to clear yourselves, how indignant, how alarmed, how full of longing and enthusiasm, how eager to seek justice! In every way you have demonstrated that you are innocent in this matter."

"GODLY sorrow" is the necessary foundation for the fruitful offering of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. "Godly sorrow" is the necessary foundation for the ACTUAL removal of "Godly guilt". Without that foundation, I was in deception. Without that foundation YOU are in deception.

GOD's way of salvation is full of rich and fruitful experience, or it is nothing at all. Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control: these are the fruits of the ACTUAL presence of the Holy Spirit in your life.

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Surely, almost EVERY human being can find some good feelings within themselves and THINK that they possess those fruits of the Spirit, and have some hope for heaven for themselves. But that is deception.

Before GOD's building can be built within you, we have to let Him take us through "the valley of the shadow of guilt" (as it were). It is as if He were saying to you: "If you want Me to truly accept you into my presence and my heaven, you must FIRST let me show you WHY you need my salvation, and from WHAT that is within you that you need to be saved."

A certain kind of guilt is one of those preliminary "fruits of the Spirit." Jesus did indeed awaken hope within those who came under His influence. But if you read the Gospels carefully, you see that He also awakened within them a certain kind of guilt, that would prove to be fruitful in bringing them into His salvation.

Only a fool just starts throwing up bricks on the ground to build a house that is worthy of living in. If he wants a house that will last, he first removes what is unstable, and pours a foundation of that which cannot be shaken.

The guilt offering of the Son of God is given to those who have become His FRIENDS:

John 15:8 "9 Just as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 I have spoken these things to you so that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be made full. 12 This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, that someone should lay down his life for HIS FRIENDS".

You BECOME His friend; you are not BORN His friend. The way you BECOME His friend is by openly attaching yourself to Him as His disciple: letting Him become your Guru, your drill sergeant, your Coach, your Master. He said that He abided in His Father's love by surrendering Himself to His Father's will, correct. You are invited into His forgiveness and into His power to transform you by CHOOSING to become His friend.

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I made that choice in 1972. I accepted His accusation against me, based upon HIS insight about who I was apart from Him. I then confessed Him OPENLY as my Master and my Savior, and pledged Him my obedience. And a covenant relationship with Him was begun.

And the wonderful part of that covenant is that, as His disciple, you have given up the right to judge yourself. When you are reminded of the failures of your past and present, Satan makes sure that you come under HIS accusation and condemnation. But, because you now have God's Son as your guilt offering, and as your judge, you have no RIGHT to condemn yourself. The sinless Son stands in your place of judgment, and has taken your guilt upon Himself. Alleluia!

You have that choice right now, to become His disciple and child!