

Bruised (Crushed) for Our Iniquities

“But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 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.” (Isaiah 53:5-6, KJV)

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but Adonai has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.” (Isaiah 53:5-6, NASB)

Introduction

Most educated people I have ever met, even those who are not Believers, understand that there was a Creator and that do not really believe we evolved from monkeys or are a result of random collisions eons ago in the universe. Most believe there is (a) God, but have not put their faith (trusted) in Him. I look at many of you who are young and see similar characteristics – you are just like many of us were when we were young. By our actions we should be able to prove to ourselves that we are skeptical beings.

As I was walking to an exam earlier yesterday morning I saw a sign asking questions about people’s belief in God. Why would a loving God condemn people? Why did a loving God let things happen? Do you think you are going to hell? Does it matter? Each sign that had a question also had a “tear off” portion with an answer. ‘Nice idea,’ I thought as I hurried to my exam.

We all know the story of Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis. “Then Elohim said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ Elohim created man in His own image, in the image of Elohim He created him; male and female He created them.” (Gen. 1:26-27) We are made in the image and likeness of God and we were given dominion over all the created beings, including dominion over ourselves. This is confirmed in chapter 2: “Then Adonai Elohim took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. Adonai Elohim commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.’” God gave Adam (Eve was not yet created) a command, but left Adam with free moral agency, that is, the ability to choose for himself whether to do right or to do wrong. This was a sovereign decree, irrevocable and forever binding. Yes Virginia, you and I are always free to make our own choice when it comes to God, when it comes to life, and when it comes to death. He created human life for fellowship with him (Adam walked with God in the garden in the cool of the evening), and as such He desired to be loved and cherished by choice, not by force. If He is God, He could have chosen differently, but He didn’t. We, as humans, make the choice.

The Psalmist states: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin my mother conceived me” (יְחַמְתִּי אִמִּי וְיָצַאתִי בַּחַטָּא הֵן-בְּעֹוֹן חוֹלַלְתִּי וּבְחַטָּא, Ps. 51:5, NASB). The Hebrew word translated *iniquity* is the word *avón* (עֲוֹן) and the Hebrew word translated *sin* is the word *chet* (חַטָּא). Obviously these are two different Hebrew words, yet Bible translations, such as the NIV, translate them both as sin. Is it likely that both words mean the same exact thing (to be sinful)? In *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, *avón* is translated as an activity that is crooked or wrong, a **conscious and intentional** offense. On the other hand *chet* means to miss the goal, i.e., to sin against God. The Artscroll TNK uses the word ‘fashioned’. How were you and I “fashioned in an activity that is crooked or wrong with a conscious and intentional offense so we might miss the mark?”

Isaiah 53:6 has the answer: “each of us has turned to his own way.” Adam and Eve did, you and I certainly do. It is all about us, all the time. It is ‘how I see it,’ ‘how I interpret it,’ ‘how I believe it,’ and ‘what is relevant to me right now.’ Our actions, especially when we are young, are based on I, I, I, and Me, Me, Me.

Fashioned in Iniquity

We were given free moral agency at creation but we were asked to trade it for fellowship with the Creator by doing what He asked. The definition of iniquity is made clear in Matthew 7:21-23: “*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, only those who do what my Father in heaven wants. On that Day, many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord! Didn’t we prophesy in your name? Didn’t we expel demons in your name? Didn’t we perform many miracles in your name?’ Then I will tell them to their faces, ‘I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of iniquity (lawlessness)!’*” We must ask, ‘When is preaching or prophesying iniquity? When is casting out demons iniquity? And when is doing wonderful works iniquity?’ The answer is in the verse: **when we do these activities in our own will rather than according to the Father’s will.** It is the same story as in Genesis.

As Believers, we are called to follow in the steps of our Lord and Savior, Messiah *Yeshua*. It is significant that *Yeshua* did **nothing** of His own will, but **only the will** of His Heavenly Father. (John 6:38.) *Yeshua*’s refusal to follow His own will is lauded in Hebrews 1:9: “*You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity (lawlessness/wickedness.) Therefore, O God, your God has anointed you with the oil of joy in preference to your companions.*”

In a sovereign act our Creator endowed us with free moral agency, the right to choose between good and evil, between His Will and our will, between His Way and our way. But we collectively as humans have and continue to choose our own way, so a loving God and Father laid upon *Yeshua* the iniquity, self-will, and free moral agency taken to the extreme of us all.

Let Us Make Application as Passover Beckons

If we use the definition of personal willfulness for *iniquity*, Scripture s burst out with new clarity, meaning and application: “*Order Establish my footsteps in Your Word, and do not let my own willfulness (iniquity) have dominion over me*” (Psalm 119:133). If every one of our decisions is not based on Scripture, we will fall into destructive habits that come by exercising our own willfulness.

Scripture distinguishes *uncleanness* from *iniquity*: “*...For just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness (impurity) and to iniquity (lawlessness), resulting in further iniquity (lawlessness), so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness*” (Romans 6:19-20). Uncleanness involves a violation of God’s physical or moral laws. Once again, however, iniquity can involve doing good deeds, but by our own willfulness—not by God’s direction. Self-willed actions tend to produce more self-willed actions; thus, we go from what the KJV states “*iniquity unto iniquity.*”

The mystery of iniquity (“*For the mystery of iniquity is already at work...because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved...they will believe the lie*” See 2 Thess. 2:7-11) is that we will follow our own faulty reasoning when we have available to us the infinite wisdom of God. When we persist in doing our own will, God turns us over to a *reprobate* mind, and we believe the lie that we are equal with God. In reality, we have placed ourselves above God by deciding what our will is in each matter rather than determining the will of God.

‘*Departing from iniquity*’ (“*Get away from me, you workers of iniquity*” Matthew 7:23) means to stop doing what we want to do and to begin to do the will of God—which will be good works—acts of faith and righteousness. Only as we depart from the iniquity of works that are initiated by our own will, will we be able to recognize and achieve the good works that are initiated by the Will of God. Works that are directed by God fit into His bigger picture and His greater plan for the world.

Every good deed must be motivated by God’s love—not by our own self-will. Rabbi *Sha’ul* (Paul) was motivated by the love of Messiah in his ministry among Believers—not by his own self-will. (2 Corinthians 5:14.)

How we do as we prepare for Passover? I would suggest that we examine ourselves, consider our ways, and scrutinize our self-will. Is it possible that you are rejecting the *Messiah* in your heart because of self-will? But, *he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and the Lord has laid upon him the iniquity of us all.* Shabbat Shalom! Let us pray...