

## 1 Engaging the Powers 5 Victory of the Cross

### **Engaging the Powers 5 Victory of the Cross**

Braking the spiral of Violence

#### **The victory of the cross breaking the spiral of violence**

The Domination system when seeing or even suspecting the New Order of God's system, triggers an automatic reflex, and mobilises all its power and might to suppress that New Order.

The powers are so great and the opposition so weak, every attempt at fundamental change seems doomed to failure. The powers are not content with just winning, they must completely overwhelm and demoralize all opposition. There must be violence and division intimidation, brutality and then execution.

In the case of Jesus, they scourged him, but with each stroke of the lash their own illegitimacy was laid open. They mocked him, spit on him, and struck him, ridiculed him with an ironic version of 'Hail king of the Jews'. They stripped him naked and crucified him in humiliation, not realising that this very act stripped the powers of the last coverings that disguised the wrongness of the whole way of living that their violence defended.

What killed Jesus was not irreligion, but religion itself. It was not lawlessness but precisely the law. Not Anarchy but the upholder of order that Condemned him.

The law by which Jesus was judged, itself was being judged, set aside and nailed to the cross. The authorities that publicly shamed him, stripping him naked, have been stripped of their protective covering and exposed them as agents of death. The Very power that led Jesus out to Golgotha, is now led in God's triumphal procession, vanquished by the cross.

The cross marks the failure not of God, but of violence.

To understand what all this means one has to ask a question just who is Jesus? What is he?

Jesus is the God-man who saves us from our sins and pride. It is precisely because he is God and human at once, that he is able to save. Humans can not come to God, so God has to come to humanity, by making himself human. God's ecstatic love for Humanity, United himself to his creation in the closest of all possible unions, by himself becoming that which he has created. Jesus our saviour is a Bridge for the abyss between God and humanity, because he is both at once. The incarnation then is God's supreme act of Deliverance enabling us into Communion with himself.

The incarnation is is part of God's eternal purpose.

We should not make the mistake that God, taking on our humanity is only an act of restoration, as a response to the Fallen nature of humanity. More fundamentally, it should be understood as an act of love and an expression of God's nature.

When we see and understand the incarnation of Jesus, as an act of love, it affects more than a reversal of The Fall. When God became human, it was the beginning of an essentially new stage in the history of humanity. The incarnation raises humans to a new level. In the incarnation, Jesus is the first perfect human, in the sense of he is completely the realised likeness of God. It is an essential stage upon the human journey from the Divine image to the Divine likeness. The true Image and likeness of God, is Christ himself. So the incarnation of God as a human, was in some way already implied from the very first moment of human creation. The true reason for the incarnation, then lies not in man sinfulness but in his nature as a being made in the Divine image and capable of Union with God.

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At the third council of Ephesus in the year 431AD, it was stated that the Virgin Mary is Theotokos, God bearer. This title is an affirmation not primarily about the Virgin, but about Christ. God was born of a human mother. The Virgin mother give birth to a unique and undivided person, who is both God and human. The fourth council of Chalcedon 451AD, Proclaimed that there are in Jesus Christ two natures, the one divine and the other human. According to this divine nature Christ is one in essence with God the Father, according to His human nature he is one with humanity. According to His Divine nature Jesus is fully and completely God. He is the second person of the Trinity, the unique only begotten and eternal son of the Eternal Father, born from the father before all ages. According to His human nature he is fully and completely human, born in Bethlehem as a human child from the Virgin Mary. He has not only a human body like ours but human soul and intellect. Yet though the incarnate Christ exists in two natures, he is one Person, single and undivided and not two persons coexisting in the same body.

The fifth council of Constantinople in 553AD, developed what was said by the 3rd, and taught that one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh. God made human died.

6<sup>th</sup> council of Constantinople 680AD, developed what was said by the 4<sup>th</sup>, Just as there is in Christ two nature's divine and human, so there is in Christ not only a divine will but also a human will, for if Christ is not have a human will like ours, he would not be truly man as we are. These two Wills are not contrary and opposed to each other, for the human will is at all times freely obedient to the Divine.

There are two basic principles concerning our salvation, Common to all the decrees defining Christ as God and human.

First only God can save us. If Christ is to be our saviour he must be fully and completely God.

Second, Salvation must reach the point of human need only if Christ is fully and completely human, as we are. Only then can we humans share in what he has done for us.

We should not think of Christ as half and half, meaning that he is not 50% God and 50% human he is 100% God and 100% human.

The Christian message of Salvation can be best summed up in terms of sharing of solidarity and identification. The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that just as humanity is only authentically personal, when it shares with others, so it is with God who is not a single person dwelling alone but three persons who share each other's life in perfect love. The incarnation equally is a doctrine of sharing or participation. Christ, shares to the full in what we are, and so he makes it possible for us to share in what he is in His Divine life and Glory. The second letter to the Corinthians 8:9, Phil.2;5-9.

For thousands of years, the delusional system has taught that domination was a given in the nature of things. Now the cross revealed evil where one had always looked for good, in the Guardians of the faith of the people. The religious elites rejected him and delivered him to the Romans for execution. It is precisely because the rule of God that he was establishing would eventually abolish the moral order that they had believed to be from God, and that they were safeguarding that system by using Roman violence.

The cross exposed humanity's complicity with the powers. It shows up our willingness to trade away our freedom bit by bit, in the belief that bit by bit one would gain an advantage over others.

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The cross shows us that we are now free to resist the claim of any finite thing as absolute or of any subsystem to be the whole. Meaning laws, Customs, and rituals etc. that are regarded as the be all and end of all. The powers are exposed by the cross, as unable to make Jesus become what they want him to be, or to stop being who he was.

Here was a person able to live out to the fullest what he felt was God's will. He chose to die rather than compromise with violence. The powers threw at him every weapon in their Arsenal. but they could not deflect him from the path that he and God were blazing. Since Jesus lived this way and being a fully human being we also can find our own path by following him.

Because they could not kill what was alive in Jesus, the cross also revealed the impotence of death. Death is the final sanction of the powers. At his crucifixion Jesus neither fights the darkness nor tries to escape from it. He enters the darkness, voluntarily, The darkness is not lit up, it remains vast untamed and void, but Jesus somehow encompasses it. until it becomes the darkness of God. It now becomes possible to enter into any darkness and not to be afraid or overwhelmed. It is now possible to trust God to make sense of it and to find resurrection.

Jesus' truth could not be killed. In spite of the massive forces set against the truth, the forces and powers are shown to be weak against a free human being.

Those who are freed from the fear of death are as a consequence able to break the spiral of violence. On the cross, Jesus voluntarily took upon himself the violence of the entire system. 1Peter 2:23 . Jesus' non-violent response mirrored the very nature of God, who reaches out to a rebellious humanity through the cross in the only way that would not destroy our freedom. But in these acts of self emptying, Jesus meets us not as the apex of the pyramid of power but at it's base, despised and rejected by others as a common criminal.

Jesus crucified, identifies with every victim of torture, incest or rape with every peasant caught in the Crossfire of enemy guns with every single one of the 40,000 children who die each day of starvation, in his cry from the cross 'my god my god why have you forsaken me'. He is one with all the doubters whose sense of Justice overwhelms their capacity to believe in God.

In Jesus we see the suffering of God, with and in suffering people. The cross is God's victory in another unexpected way. In the act of exposing the powers for what they are, Jesus nevertheless submitted to their authority as instituted by God. Jesus' way of non-violence reserves respect for the rule of law, even in the act of resisting oppressive laws. By submitting to the authority of the powers, Jesus acknowledged the necessity, but rejected the legitimacy, of their pretentious claims. Jesus submitted to their power to execute him, but in so doing relativised de-absolutised them, de-idolised them. Showing the powers to be subject to the one who subjected himself to them. According to the epistle to the Ephesians 1:20-23, God has enthroned Jesus at God's right hand in the Heavenly realms far above all government and authority all power and Dominion and any title of sovereignty that commands allegiance not only in this age but also in the age to come God has put everything in subjection beneath his feet.

Col.1:15-20 He is the image of the unseen God and the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible, Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignties, Powers - all things were created through him and for him.

## 4 Engaging the Powers 5 Victory of the Cross

Before anything was created, he existed, and he holds all things in unity. Now the Church is his body, he is its head.

As he is the Beginning, he was first to be born from the dead, so that he should be first in every way; because God wanted all perfection to be found in him and all things to be reconciled through him and for him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, when he made peace by his death on the cross.

The New Testament exposed the true nature of violence and scapegoat system, and rejects it. It is from the perspective of the victim that the NT is written. God is revealed as not wanting sacrifice but takes the part of the sacrificial victim. From the beginning of history to the present the cry for justice and deliverance from the evil system created out of myths, is vindicated on the cross.

The gospel of Christ denounces the miscarriage of justice inflicted by the powers. Jesus seen as an enemy of state and religion, is shown to be the victim of the powers of state and religion and its myth of redemptive violence.

Unfortunately there are periods of Christian history that try to reverse the exposing of injustice. And try to make God, an angry God, demanding a sacrifice in order to be placated. As St. Basil complains, Jesus must cease to be a victim killed for his integrity to the truth and become a Godman, who can placate God for all our sins by his death.

The God that Jesus reveals is not vengeful, or a threat to our existence, but a Father full of unconditional love and forgiveness. The God of Jesus, demands no revenge.

1Peter 2:21-24. This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow the way he took.

He had not done anything wrong, and there had been no perjury in his mouth.

He was insulted and did not retaliate with insults; when he was tortured he made no threats but he put his trust in the righteous judge. He was bearing our faults in his own body on the cross, so that we might die to our faults and live for holiness; through his wounds you have been healed. You had gone astray like sheep but now you have come back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Jesus died not to reconcile God to Humanity but to reconcile humanity to God. The sacrifice was not to god, but to the human powers controlled by Satan.

The Cross understood as victory, sets before us the paradox of love's omnipotence. The death of Jesus on the cross is not a failure, that somehow was corrected at the resurrection.

His death is a victory, a victory of suffering love. The cross shows us a love that is stronger than death.

John 19:30 (*tetelestai*) 'It is Finished', it is completed, it is accomplished. Love's Victory over violence and hatred.

In his love Jesus has identified himself with me, his victory is my victory.

The Crucifixion is itself a victory, but hidden. Easter morning it is fully revealed.

Christ rises from the dead and frees us from all fear of death. Now there is no need to be afraid of any evil in the Kosmos. Christ has overcome the system of domination.