

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Jesus Made To Be Sin

(Jerry Fite)

Paul writes, “*Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, because he committed no sin as He lived under the Law of Moses. He knew no sin because he committed none. But the inspired apostle Paul says God “*made Him to be sin.*” In what sense should we understand this statement about Jesus?

Some believe God took our sins and imputed them to Jesus. They believe God made Him to be sin in this sense. Is this true? Some might think so because of the laying on of hands in connection with the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament which serve as a type of Christ’s sacrifice.

On the annual Day of Atonement two sacrificial animals were chosen by casting lots before Jehovah. One was killed and offered unto Jehovah for a sin offering. The other was for “Azazel” or for “sending away” or “removal” into the wilderness. Upon the

head of this live goat, Aaron laid both his hands upon its head, confessed over him the sins of the people and the goat “*bear upon him all their iniquities unto a solitary land*” (Leviticus 16:22).

The laying on of hands certainly identifies the people’s sins with the sacrificial animal, but not by imputing sin to the animal. *Death* for their sin and the *sending away* of their sin is pictured in the dual animal sacrifice, not imputing to the animal the sins of the people.

Peter in referring to Jesus and His sacrifice for sins writes, “*who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we having died to sins, might live unto righteousness*” (1 Peter 2:24). The word translated “bare” is the Greek word “*anaphero*” emphasizing the bearing of the sacrifice “up” to place on the sacrificial altar. Our sins were definitely connected with Jesus’ body as it was born up and placed on the cross. But what He bore was not our literal sins through imputation, but the penalty of sin which demands death. Isaiah prophesies

as to what of ours Jesus bore on the cross: “*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*” (Isaiah 53:5). He bore up our sins on the cross in the sense he took on the penalty of sin. God would see His soul’s “*travail*” in suffering death as sin’s penalty and be satisfied (Isaiah 53:11).

The sin of Adam is not imputed to us through birth, or Paul would never have been once spiritually alive as he claims (Romans 7:9). The sins of our parents are not imputed to us - “*the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father*” (Ezekiel 18:20). Why then should we think that our sins were imputed to Jesus?

Jesus knew no sin, nor were our sins imputed to Him. He did not take upon himself the guilt of our sin. The Scripture is clear. He bore the penalty of our sin in His body on the cross: death! In this sense “*He was made to be sin*”, so as a sin offering we could be righteous before God.