

The Omnipresence of God and the Participatory Atonement

"For in Him (God the Father) we live and move and have our being." Acts 17:28

"He (the Christ) is before all things and in Him all things hold together." Colossians 1:17

"For in my inner being I delight in God's Law. But I see another law at work in my body, warring against the law of my mind and holding me captive to the law of sin that dwells within me." Romans 7:22-23

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:21

"Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." Romans 6:6

"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:6

Everything created by God remains a part of God. We were created from God's own essence, or spirit. We are all made of "God parts," or spirit. We are quite literally His Children, fashioned from His own spiritual DNA. We all have a "higher nature," which Paul called the "mind," and a "lower nature" which is to one degree or another captive to the flesh. While captive to the lower nature, we "falsely perceive" that we are separated from God. **God, however, is Omni-present!**

Living in the flesh is like experiencing a dream in which we think we are separated from God. The dream is technically not real and has no actual substance to it. This has been verified by modern physics. But our "experience" of our physical existence is very real and also very useful for teaching us many valuable lessons. You could say that we have two personalities, one real, and the other a useful illusion. When we wake up from the dream, we are awakened to who we really are. Christian salvation, in my view, is a waking up from the dream before we die, and experiencing oneness with God who has never ceased to be our loving heavenly Father. The Kingdom of God is not a physical place far in the future. It is already among us. Christian salvation is not being saved from God's wrath, but from our own sin and feelings of separation from God. It has nothing to do with living forever. It has everything to do with presently living in God's Kingdom in union with Him.

The message of Calvary is that God is present with us, and identifies with us, even in our sin. In a sense, God quite literally "became sin" for our benefit in order that we might be freed from it. Our identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, is, in a sense, a recapitulation of what happened at Calvary. On Calvary, Jesus died "for us" and "with us," not "instead of us." He died with us and for our benefit. I call this the "**participatory atonement.**" He carried us on his back, so to speak, on Calvary, and continues to carry us today, through all our sinning and dreadful experiences. He has never left us. We were with Him when He died on Calvary and rose

from the dead. He remains with us today as He participates with us and helps us die to our old nature and rise again to newness of life. Through this entire process of awakening, we are carried along by His Holy Spirit.

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