

ETHICAL SATISFACTION THEORY "JESUS MADE UP FOR OUR SINS BY LOVING GOD IN OUR PLACE"

Jesus paid the debt we owed to God for our sins. This is the Bible doctrine.

Some say he endured divine wrath for our sins. That is the penal theory of the atonement. In other words Jesus was punished for our sins - he was punished instead of us.

Others say he suffered for our sins and suffering for sin does not necessarily mean you are being punished for sin. The argument is that Jesus was without sin so he could not be punished for his own sins or anybody else's. Punishment and personal responsibility for what you are being punished for go together. Jesus simply did the loving of God for us so that God could give us a fresh start for we have sinned against him. That is the ethical satisfaction theory.

At this point let us say that either atonement cannot deter you from sin. Nothing can be called justice that does not care about that. If you pay a fine for x you still hope and say the experience should make x that bit wiser. Though both atonements are useless the ethical one is, as it were, even more useless. Jesus gives us an atonement that rewards sin in the sense that it does nothing to deter.

The Roman Catholic Church favours the ethical satisfaction theory of the atonement for she rightly considers the penal theory to be a ludicrous blasphemy. However it still allows for that ludicrous blasphemy for it is morally bankrupt religion. Satisfaction means satisfying the demands of divine justice, the demand of God that the scales be balanced. According to this doctrine, Jesus did not take our punishment like somebody being whipped in your place for your crime but merely made up for our sins by obeying God. It is like you doing some harm and somebody else putting things right by doing kindnesses but that person is not being punished for you even if he or she finds it difficult. She says that Jesus offered his whole obedient life to God. His dreadful death for the love of God was his supreme offering of obedience. It was his greatest act of love.

Somebody else doing good for the bad you have done is not the same as rectifying things yourself. Strictly speaking nobody else can make amends for you. You did the damage and you have to make the repairs. That is justice. If a person feels that A making up for what B did to her is great that person does not understand that this attitude is wrong and amends have nothing to do with it. In us they are often defective. If I owe C ten pounds I still owe it if C is not worried about it and I owe it until I give it back or until C tells me to keep it.

Human beings are satisfied when they get compensation even if it is not obtained from those who hurt them. But that is because they just care about the money and not justice. A perfect God could not be as myopic as that.

The ethical satisfaction theory purports to deny that Jesus was punished for sins he hadn't done. But it just sneakily affirms it. God has no need of compensation or making amends for he is the most powerful being there is. If he asks me for it must be for my benefit as in healing my tendencies to sin. Somebody sinless like Jesus doing it is no good. It cannot be demanded for compensation for there is no such thing as compensation that does not and cannot make amends. It seems as if when God demands needless compensation then it is really the punishment of sinners that he is after. But it is not. It is revenge. You can take revenge on people by hurting an innocent person for it is impossible to punish that person in their place. Jack the Ripper took revenge on women by killing five prostitutes. Punishment, in Christianity, is a necessary evil and Jesus' so-called punishment was not necessary because he was not the cause of our sins so revenge is the right word. God wants to avenge. He has abused his son in our place.

The theory has Jesus coming to earth to die on the cross for no reason, an excuse yes, but no reason. It makes him out to have been a suicide of the most horrific kind.

All Christians say that Jesus had to be God made man to suffer and die for our sins. They say our sins insult a God of unlimited goodness and so are unlimitedly that is infinitely evil. Anything God does is infinitely good so God needed to pay the price. We couldn't save ourselves and we needed to pay the price. So God became man to pay the price himself for us. Why couldn't we pay? Because we are not God our good works are not of great value – they would not pay for the infinite seriousness of sin. Only God made man can do good works with infinite merit to cancel out the debt.

If Jesus was God then he already made full atonement when he was circumcised as a baby for then he suffered and shed blood. The sacrifice then was enough to atone for an infinity of sins (page 102, Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine, Summa III, q, 46, a.6, ad, 6). Anything a man who is God does is infinite in value because God is infinitely good. The Church says it was superfluous in the sense that all was paid by the first suffering of Christ but says it was not superfluous in the sense that we needed the example (Question 733, Radio Replies 3). You might as well believe it was only an example with a

doctrine like that. The trouble then is, the example was a bad one. We have a saviour who didn't need to go to his death that cruel way and who knew it was coming and seemed to want to be arrested and crucified. His death was an act of bravado, foolishness. It was unnecessary. God could not accept any further sacrifice for sin if the sin of the world had already been atoned by Jesus before. If a judge fines you in five pounds and you pay him fifty the fifty is not your payment for your crime. The five is payment, and the forty-five is simply a gift. If Jesus was God there was no divine justification for the crucifixion. The cross would speak of Christ as mad or stupid or it would speak of God as an evil blood-drinker.

Was the death of Jesus his crowning act of love? If he was so perfect he could have done better. He could have suffered the fires of Hell for a thousand years in somebody's place. He was miserly to the God he said loved him infinitely. He put a limit on his love for God so he was unjust to God. If Jesus had to be glorified in the resurrection God could have miraculously given him another body besides the risen one so that he would suffer forever in one body and be happy in the other. If God could be one in three or if Jesus could be fully God and fully man then he could make a being who was two bodies but one person. The notion that there are actions over and above the call of duty is a hoax concocted by religionists who don't want to do a lot for others. It is your duty not to hit a beggar but it is not your duty to help him with money. The beggar would rather be hit. Does such a doctrine really make sense – of course not! The ethical satisfaction theory advances the outrageous hypocrisy. How? For it implies that there are good actions above and beyond the call of duty. The penal theory is bad enough but this ethical satisfaction one is not so ethical either. It too makes Jesus a sinner for wanting to be unjust. It also offers God an unacceptable sacrifice, an unholy of unholies. Instead of a lamb it offers a blemished goat, a possible caricature of the true Jesus. This is the sacrifice that Catholics offer in the Mass. They say it is the same sacrifice as that of Calvary. Their Masses are satanic.

How could Jesus have saved us by his death when it was an expression of the sinister doctrine of supererogation that duty is not doing what is best?

We abhor this theory of the ethical satisfaction. It conceals its inner core. This core is the penal theory. That being so means that it is all the more likely that the Bible means to teach the penal theory. Perhaps it did not mean to but it did not understand what it was saying fully? But it taught it! When a doctrine is taught and it could be understood right by the teacher then it is most likely that it is understood right. That is an assumption we have to make.

Some say that the ethical satisfaction theory is wrong for even if Jesus restores God's honour by making up for our sins our sins still insult God. Christianity naturally says this is wrong (page 28, Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy). The insult would not matter as long as Jesus did enough to cancel the dishonour out.

It is horrendous to hold that the cross was enough for Jesus if he were God when the whole world is in pain. God decided to make all things out of nothing. It was his decision and we have to endure the pain not him so if he became man to atone for sins he should have went to Hell to endure the extremities of suffering forever and ever.

Protestants say that you have to have explicit faith in Jesus to be saved. But belief in Jesus cannot be any good unless you have the right beliefs. If, as in the penal theory, God took vengeance on Jesus the innocent for our sins it follows that any nicer theory will mean that our faith in Jesus will be fruitless and will lead us only to damnation. If the ethical satisfaction theory is true then what happens is that the penal theory becomes an insult to God and means you adore an evil God. You cannot accept Jesus as saviour when your image of God is one of evil for that would mean he was not a real saviour. The pernicky and pedantic traits of Christianity are well forgotten and hidden these days.

Jesus did not love God in your place and the doctrine is full of contradictions and absurdities. It is just an attempt to find an excuse for believing that Jesus saved us from sin.

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