

THEOLOGY 101 – FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

The AFES Doctrinal Basis

The AFES upholds the fundamental truths of the Christian faith, including...

- * **Redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death, as our representative and substitute, of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God.**

5. The doctrine of Christ's saving work

- A. Note how this doctrine is built on the previous statement concerning Jesus Christ being the incarnation of God's eternal Son. Incarnation and redemption form a "seamless robe" (with also resurrection) and cannot be played off against each other.
- B. Without the incarnation Jesus cannot truly be our representative and substitute. What Jesus did in his sacrificial death was in total solidarity with the human race (Heb. 2:17.) He stood with us and for us where we could not stand and still live – before the holiness of God. But we are not saved simply by the fact of his incarnation – identification with a situation is not the same as saving a person from it. The incarnation was with a view to his sacrificial death. Each of the gospels trace the steady and certain movement of Jesus to Jerusalem for his necessary death (Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:32–34.)
- C. Redemption refers to the transaction that takes place to buy a slave back from another owner. Here it speaks of being bought back to belong to God from being slaves to sin, death and Satan. Satan keeps humanity in slavery through the fear of death (Heb. 2:15.) Death has power through sin and condemnation (1Cor. 15:56, Rom. 6:23) – we fear death because of the judgment that follows (Heb. 9:27.) For Satan and death to lose their dread grip on humanity, the issue of sin and judgment must be settled finally and forever. (Our consciences will never be at peace truly until we are sure about this matter. Assurance of salvation is settled by the apprehension of the truth of atonement.)
- D. The *slavery* of sin is in its guilt, penalty and power. The *guilt* of sin is its wrongness before the holiness of God. There are no small sins – each is as large as the truth of God that it opposes. The guilt of sin is not primarily our "guilt feelings" (although that is linked) but the objective reality that God Himself opposes what we do. The *penalty* of sin is God's righteous pronouncement against it – death and eternal judgment. The *power* of sin comes through guilt and judgment, and works so that we can no longer simply decide to have nothing to do with it, but rather will follow it and even seek it out (Rom. 6:16–23.)
- E. On the cross Jesus died a sacrificial death. This primarily means he bore the penalty and judgment that is due to us (Rom. 3:25, 1John 4:10, John 1:29.) He did this as he fully represented us, bearing our sins in his body. (1Pet. 2:24, 2Cor. 5:21.) When Christ was crucified, the world (personally) was crucified with him (John 12:32, Gal. 2:20.) In his body he also bore the judgment of God on our sins (Isa. 53:4–6.) All those who have faith in Jesus Christ – that is, who trust in him as their sin-bearer and sacrifice – receive the wonderful fruit of his suffering and death, the redemption that is in him.