

ἀπολογία Apologetics 101

If Christ is God, did God die on the cross?

The physical body of God the Son did die, but **NOT** God the Father and **NOT** God the Holy Spirit. We believe in a singular God who is One in nature and essence, yet revealed in different forms (see handout on the Athanasian Creed). When God the Son was born of a woman, He took on the form of man without losing His divine essence, but laying aside some of His divine privileges (see Philippians 2; Hebrews 1 & 2). In John 14:6-14 and 17:21-23, Jesus describes how He and the Father are one, yet at the same time unique.

It was necessary for God the Son to die to satisfy the **JUSTICE** of God the Father and enable the reconciliation of man and God. A perfect sacrifice was needed. Not just any man would do. It took The God-Man, Jesus, to be the unblemished, perfect sacrifice – see Hebrews 9 and especially vs. 22. The penalty for sin is death – physical death. The body ceases to function and returns to the dust from which it was formed, but the **IMMATERIAL** part of a person – their spirit – continues to exist. This immaterial part can also experience death, but not in the sense that it ceases to exist as the body does, but in the form of **SEPERATION** from God. After physical death, the spirit of anyone who does not accept Christ as Lord and Savior exists eternally separated from God. Those who accept Christ as Lord and Savior during their physical earthly life and trust Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross as God's only means of reconciling a fallen, sinful people, are fully and completely reconciled to God the Father. At the end of the ages the bodies of all will have been resurrected and reunited with their spirits – some to eternal fellowship with God; some to eternal separation in the lake of fire. (Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:11-15)

Some have also asked if God the Father experienced death. The answer here is that while God the Father did not **EXPERIENCE** death, He had (and has) full knowledge of death. Knowledge, even full knowledge of something, is different than experience. Jesus **EXPERIENCED** death, while the Father and Holy Spirit had **FULL KNOWLEDGE** of what death entailed, but did not experience it firsthand. Thus, GOD's essence did not die, because God is after all... GOD!

On the cross we see the agony of the Father displayed as He places all the sins of the world on His Son, Jesus, and then pours out His wrath. On the cross we see the agony of the Son, taking on the sins of the world, and receiving the Father's wrath. How that is all carried out is not fully described. There are mysteries that God has not revealed to us this side of eternity. At some point for the first and only time, Jesus experienced separation from God the Father – the full details of how that happened are not described. We can only surmise from the exclamation of Jesus in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34 where Christ quoted Psalm 22:1 that it did.

We serve and worship a loving, Triune God. As only **PERFECTION** can cover all the sins, of all mankind, throughout all of history, and as only God is perfect, only the sacrifice of perfection in the form of Jesus Christ, can substitute the rightful penalty of God's judgment for those who accept Christ's intercession on our behalf.

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