

The Apostles' Creed Week 8

(I believe in) the forgiveness of sins

This may need a definition of “sin” so that we understand what is being “forgiven”! A simple definition would be “doing what is wrong in the sight of God”.

The permanent attitude of the holy, righteous and just God when confronted by wrong-doing and evil is designated His “wrath” in the Bible. As in Romans 2, verse 5. the word occurs in the preaching of John the Baptist; Matthew 3, verse 7 and Luke 3, verse 7. Also in the discussion between John and his disciples, John 3, verses 25 – 35. The Book of Revelation has some graphic illustrations of the “Day of Wrath” e.g. Revelation 6, verses 15 – 17.

In telling the story of the “Wedding Feast” Jesus Himself describes the master / householder as being angry at the excuses of his invited guests. Luke 14, verse 21.

In describing “wrath of God” in human language, we do need to remember that it is not fitful or spasmodic as human anger always is. The justice, righteousness and holiness of Almighty God are as permanent and consistent elements of His character as is His love.

None of us can keep all the Commandments of God all the time! All of us have done wrong or thought wrong thoughts – see Matthew 15, verses 10 – 20. We all need the forgiveness that can only be found through faith in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, bearing our sins and guilt. Those who believe and trust in Him are now free from guilt and its penalty of death.

A key passage to read on “the forgiveness of sins” is Romans 3, verses 21 – 26.

The words of the Prayer of Consecration in the Prayer Book Service of Holy Communion are appropriate “*Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world;*”.

(Note that “Oblation” is a solemn offering or presentation to God.)

(I believe in) the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting

These words are based on the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ himself! John 5, verses 25 – 29; John 6, verses 35 – 40; John 6, verses 52 – 58 and John 14, verses 1 – 6.

In the Old Testament, belief in the resurrection of the dead can be found in Job chapter 19, verses 25 – 27 (read as an introduction to the Funeral Service), Isaiah 26, verses 19 and Daniel 12, verses 1 – 3.

The specific teaching on the resurrection of the body can be found in 1 Corinthians 15, verses 12 – 22 and verses 35 – 58. It may be that we need a resurrected body in order to worship the Lord God with all our senses intact. One thing is sure “*. . . if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.*” 1 John 1, verse 7 and “*Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*” 1 John 3, verse 2.

Because Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead and through faith in Him, “*we have been born anew to a living hope and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you*” 1 Peter 1, verses 3 – 4.

To which we can only reply **Amen** – so be it!

*And can it be that I should gain
An int'rest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, should die for me?*

*No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.*

Charles Wesley 1738

Next week will be the start of our studies on Jonah, Joel and Amos.

Terry Brighton 28 / 10/ 20