

DID WE DIE WITH CHRIST ON THE CROSS?

His Eminence Metropolitan Bishoy recently published in Al-Keraza 3 Arabic articles in which he argues the following:

لو كنا متنا مع المسيح يوم صلبه فى يوم الفداء فما هو لزوم الفداء؟ أننا فى هذه الحالة نكون قد دفعنا ثمن الخلاص بأنفسنا يوم الصليب. (الموت النيايى 1)

If we died with Christ on the day of His crucifixion; the day of redemption, then what was the need for redemption? In this case we would have paid the price of salvation ourselves on the day of the crucifixion.

نحن كنا فى صلب آدم حينما أخطأ آدم فى الفردوس لأننا من نسله بحسب طبيعتنا البشرية لكننا لسنا من نسل السيد المسيح بحسب طبيعتنا البشرية (الموت النيايى 2)

We were in the loins of Adam when he sinned in Paradise for we are his seed according to our human nature, but we are not the seed of the Lord Christ according to our human nature.

The sad thing is that His eminence cannot accept the doctrine that the fathers taught; that in the incarnation Christ summed up or recapitulated the whole of humanity in Himself and that when he died, humanity died with Him on the cross. Here are some of the sayings of the fathers concerning this:

Wherefore Luke points out that the pedigree which traces the generation of our Lord back to Adam contains seventy-two generations, connecting the end with the beginning, and implying that it is He who has summed up in Himself all nations dispersed from Adam downwards, and all languages and generations of men, together with Adam himself. Hence also was Adam himself termed by Paul "the figure of Him that was to come."

IRENÆUS AGAINST HERESIES -- BOOK III CHAP. XXI, 3

For He would not have been one truly possessing flesh and blood, by which He redeemed us, unless He had summed up in Himself the ancient formation of Adam.

IRENÆUS AGAINST HERESIES -- BOOK V CHAP. I, 2

For by summing up in Himself the whole human race from the beginning to the end, He has also summed up its death.

IRENÆUS AGAINST HERESIES -- BOOK V CHAP. XXIII 2

God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man.

IRENÆUS AGAINST HERESIES -- BOOK III Chap. XVIII 7

This, therefore, the Word of God was made, recapitulating in Himself His own handiwork; and on this account does He confess Himself the Son of man

IRENÆUS AGAINST HERESIES -- BOOK III Chap. XXII 1

For the Lord, taking dust from the earth, moulded man; and it was upon his behalf that all the dispensation of the Lord's advent took place. He had Himself, therefore, flesh and blood, recapitulating in Himself not a certain other, but that original handiwork of the Father, seeking out that thing which had perished.

IRENAEUS AGAINST HERESIES -- BOOK V CHAP. XIV 2

This is what St. Irenaeus repeats, that in the incarnation Christ has

- summed up in Himself all nations dispersed from Adam downwards
- The redemption could not have happened *unless He had summed up in Himself the ancient formation of Adam.*
- *by summing up in Himself the whole human race from the beginning to the end, He has also summed up its death.*

This is a very strong statement! In the act of redemption the whole human race died in Christ according to St. Irenaeus but not according to His Eminence.

St. Irenaeus further explains this by saying that *God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man.* How else could sin be killed and death be deprived of its power unless the sinless Word had summed up or recapitulated in Himself the totality of sinful humanity so that when He dies on the Cross He also sums up the death of this sinful humanity ridding it of sin and death.

St. Cyril the Great tells us the same thing:

For we were all in Christ ... in order that having all in Himself, He might reconcile all in one body unto the Father.

ST. CYRIL: COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN BOOK 1 pg 111 (65)

For we were all in Christ, Who on account of us and for us died and rose again.

ST. CYRIL: COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN BOOK 2 pg 132 (2)

His Eminence tells us: *we are not the seed of the Lord Christ according to our human nature.*

His eminence does not understand that our human nature was in Christ as St. Cyril tells us:

For the whole human nature was in Christ, in that He was Man

ST. CYRIL: COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN Book 5 pg 548 (22)

Therefore the Word of God made one with Himself human nature in its entirety, that so He might save the entire man. For that which has not been taken into His Nature, has not been saved.

ST. CYRIL: COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN Book 8 pg 152 (9)

Here is what St. Athanasius says about this doctrine:

And thus taking from our bodies one of like nature, because all were under penalty of the corruption of death He gave 'it over to death in the stead of all, and offered it to the Father — doing this, moreover, of His loving-kindness, to the end that, firstly, all being held to have died in Him, the law involving the ruin of men might be undone.

ST. ATHANASIUS ON THE INCARNATION 8, 4

His Eminence quotes this in his articles but he omits the part italicised and underlined since it would have contradicted his thesis!

And once again:

Since then the Word, being the Image of the Father and immortal, took the form of the servant, and as man underwent for us death in His flesh, that thereby He might offer Himself for us through death to the Father; therefore also, as man, He is said because of us and for us to be highly exalted, that as by His death we all died in Christ, so again in the Christ Himself we might be highly exalted, being raised from the dead, and ascending into heaven.

ST. ATHANASIUS: FOUR DISCOURSES AGAINST THE ARIANS, DISCOURSE I, 41

According to St. Athanasius, that as by His death we all died in Christ, so again in the Christ Himself we might be highly exalted. To paraphrase: if we all did not die in Christ then we will not be exalted with Christ!

He becomes Son of Man, by taking created flesh; that, since all were under sentence of death, He, being other than them all, might Himself for all offer to death His own body; and that henceforth, as if all had died through Him, the word of that sentence might be accomplished (for 'all died' in Christ), and all through Him might thereupon become free from sin and from the curse which came upon it.

ST. ATHANASIUS: FOUR DISCOURSES AGAINST THE ARIANS, DISCOURSE II, 69

Once again St. Athanasius tells us that we all died through Him.

These sayings of the fathers agree with what St. Paul tells us in Romans 6:6-8:

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

They also agree with what he tells us in Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.