



# Awakenings

"Only by love is love awakened."

::::: The Official Newsletter of Renewed Heart Ministries :::::: Volume 6 :::::: Issue 4 ::::::

## ***The Victorious Christ – Part 1*** by Herb Montgomery

**"Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out." — John 12.31**

I have gotten so much positive feedback from last month's Awakenings article! I'm so humbled by the encouraging emails that have come in. Also, I've gotten a lot of really good and very thoughtful questions. Most of the questions, I have noticed, have one thing in common: they are rooted and grounded in Anselm's paradigm of defining the Atonement (Penal Substitutionary Atonement) by contrast to the paradigm I was writing from (*Christus Victor*), hence the questions. Let me quickly and simply explain what I mean by all of this. Within Christianity today, there are actually three acceptable paradigms in which to interpret the purpose of Jesus' death and resurrection on our behalf. The oldest paradigm, going all the way back to Jesus, the Apostles, and the first few centuries of Christianity, is the paradigm of *Christus Victor*. (Latin for Christ is "Victor", I'll explain what this is at the end of this article.) The second paradigm appeared in its fully developed form in 1097 in a book written by Anselm of Canterbury, a Benedictine monk, *Cur Dues Homo?*



It must be noted that, although he was a latecomer to the party (a thousand years after Christ and the Apostles), his views regarding the purpose of Christ's atoning work would become the central belief in medieval Christianity and much of the theology of the Protestant Reformation. His teaching regarding the purpose of Christ's death is the paradigm many Christians are raised in. Many mistakenly believe that Anselm's way of interpreting the purpose of the Cross is their only option and, in all fairness, Anselm's views are not all bad. Many have come to a deep abiding love and appreciation for Christ and His Cross through Anselm's paradigm. However, in an effort to be very honest as well, many have been driven to atheism by Anselm's views, too. Anselm's view came to be known as penal substitutionary atonement (I'll explain this a little more in a moment too). It is important to realize that Anselm's theories are not the only acceptable Christian option when it comes to interpreting the purpose of Christ's death and resurrection. Finally, in the seventeenth century, a reformer named Hugo Grotius developed a view that interpreted Christ's suffering as being for the purpose of God revealing to us the consequences

of sin with the hope of inspiring holiness in living. The cross, according to Grotius, preserved God's moral government. Therefore, this paradigm is called the moral government theory. Other views have existed in Christian history (such as Abelard's moral influence theory) but these three (*Christus Victor*, penal substitutionary atonement, and the moral government theory) are acceptable ways today of interpreting Jesus' death and resurrection within Western Christianity.

Again, most of the questions that came in to RHM last month were a result of trying to understand many of my statements from within Anselm's penal substitutionary model rather than

from within the paradigm I myself subscribe to, which is the early Christian *Christus Victor* model. I want to be clear: I do not think Anselm is all wrong. And I do not believe that those who subscribe to Anselm's model are any less in love with Jesus or any less committed to Him. I do deeply believe that our fellowship with one another should be based, first and foremost, on our common love for Jesus and our commitment to love and serve Him and others. Doctrinal agreement is secondary and something we

are all in the process of reaching. On a personal level, I have what I consider fundamental and philosophical questions concerning some of the presuppositions that Anselm's views are based on. If the presuppositions are true then I could go along with Anselm all the way, but I don't believe this to be the case. I vowed years ago never to teach or preach something if I did not, at the very minimum, first have my own questions answered concerning it. I feel most at home understanding the statements made by the New Testament authors (including Paul) when I read them from within the *Christus Victor* paradigm. However, many of you have sincerely shared that you are not familiar with this model, having been raised, much like I was, with Anselm's theory as the only explanation available. Therefore, I have written a four part eSight series on this topic of which this article is part 1. In these eSights I have endeavored to share what the *Christus Victor* paradigm actually is and some of the truly revolutionary and heartwarming reasons that I feel it most eloquently brings

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forth the beauty of God's character of love. It has been kept simple rather than involving the complexity that is usually associated with atonement theory comparisons. I also want to say that, although careful consideration to an appeal to reason and intellectual honesty was given, the eSights address this topic from the point of view of why-it-matters, a "heart" level of discussion, rather than strictly the typical dry, cerebral, and intellectual one that puts many of us to sleep within the first few sentences. So buckle your seat belts; here is a brief introduction, to what is continued in Parts 2-4 online. This is simply Part 1.

First, Jesus saw Himself going to the cross primarily to confront the Devil. He saw His mission to destroy Satan and his works.

John 12.31 — Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

John 14.30 — I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me.

Luke 11.21,22 — When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder.

I want to be very clear here. I know the problems that this view produces for many of our post-modern, naturalistic thinkers in today's society. As a follower of Jesus, I continue to revisit the historical evidence that I myself have come to base the intellectual foundation of my own faith in Jesus upon. And although I will be the first to agree that, yes, a belief in the devil or Satan has been grossly abused. Many accuse Christians of inventing the devil to absolve themselves of guilt ("the Devil made me do it.") However, as a follower of Jesus, I cannot deny that Jesus Himself taught that there actually is an Enemy, and it was defeating this Enemy that His entire ministry was centered on and that His death and resurrection would climax in. This is the *Christus Victor* paradigm. By contrast, Andselm's model focuses exclusively on the theory that Jesus' death was a payment to satisfy God's penalty for sin (sin that I couldn't help but participate in – no one can go from birth to the grave without sinning at least once – a situation I didn't ask to be born into; a situation that I can't save myself from, and yet a situation that somehow I am supposed to be punished for. This is probably my most significant question personally concerning what Anselm taught). The *Christus Victor* paradigm, on the other hand, takes very seriously the claims and accusations of the "Accuser" and presents the death and resurrection of Jesus as God's means of overthrowing both (Revelation 12.10). In Anselm's view, the purpose of Jesus' death was to satisfy God. In the *Christus Victor* paradigm, the purpose Jesus' death *and resurrection* was to overthrow and destroy the work of the Devil. This is how the Apostles put it:

Hebrews 2.14 — Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil.

1 John 3.8 — The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Colossians 2.15 — And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

1 John 5.19 — We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

Ephesians 6.12 — For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

This understanding of the purpose of Jesus' death and resurrection goes all the way back to the beginning in the Genesis narrative:

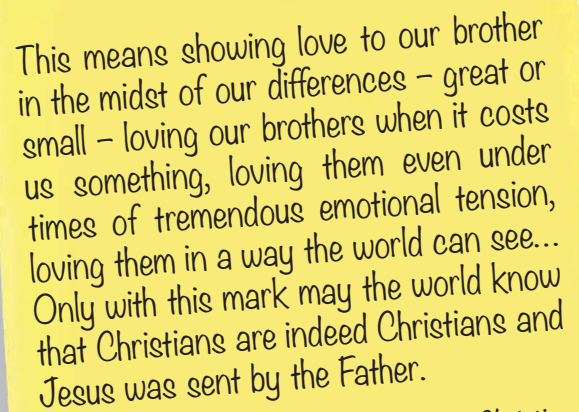
Genesis 3.14, 15 — So the LORD God said to the serpent, "... He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

This, again is the purpose, in Jesus' and the Disciples' view, of Jesus' ministry:

Luke 13.10-15 — On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

Acts 10.38 — How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Again, this, in Jesus' view, was the purpose of His death and resurrection:



This means showing love to our brother in the midst of our differences – great or small – loving our brothers when it costs us something, loving them even under times of tremendous emotional tension, loving them in a way the world can see... Only with this mark may the world know that Christians are indeed Christians and Jesus was sent by the Father.

- Francis Schaeffer, *The Mark of the Christian*

Luke 13.32 — He said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I complete my mission.’”

To be completely honest, we must note that throughout the centuries, those who have held this view (Christus Victor) have always been united in the notion that defeating the Devil was the purpose of Jesus’ birth, life, death, and resurrection. But HOW Jesus was victorious over the enemy has not always met with such a unified understanding by those who hold this view. In my personal understanding, there are two ways in which Jesus destroyed the work of the Devil. *On one hand*, Jesus’ life and death centered on revealing the character of the Father in opposition to the lies that had been propagated concerning Him by the Enemy (the Accuser). *On the other hand*, Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection also revealed something very significant about you and I that would prove the accusations of the Enemy and his claims over us as false as well. In both of these facets, the accuser was disarmed and made a public spectacle of (Colossians 2:15). Both of these facets of defeating the accuser contain radically life-transforming insights into God’s radical, self-sacrificial, and other-centered love. Both

of these leave the human heart in awe, saying, “Behold what manner of love the Father has for me.” Both of these facets awaken in the believer the deeply profound longing to “no longer live for ourselves but for Him who died for us and rose again” (1 John 3.1; 2 Corinthians 5.14).

It is to the first of these two facets that I put forth effort to explain in Part 2 of this series that you will find on our website. I pray you will take advantage of these there.\*\*

Remember this month, above all, that YOU are loved far more than you will ever fathom. And in the light of God’s radical, indiscriminate, selfless, humble, and other-centered love, love like this.

Keep building the kingdom.

I love you guys,

*Herb*

\*\*For parts 2-4, please read the eSights on our website dated February 22 – March 12, 2012 at <http://www.renewedheartministries.com/esights.aspx> or you can listen to the audio versions of the podcasts at <http://www.renewedheartministries.com/Podcasts.aspx>

# MINISTRY UPDATE

**The following is taken from the news page on our website. For more up to date news on each event involving Herb and RHM, please see [www.renewedheartministries.com](http://www.renewedheartministries.com) and look under the “News” tab.**

## **The Jesus Dialogue The Plaza Theater, Calgary, AB Feb 24 - March 3, 2012**

I think I set another personal record last week. What started out as an outreach effort in the surrounding Calgary community quickly developed into an additional week of spiritual emphasis for the students at the nearby Chinook Winds Academy, and it culminated in a Calgary-wide Youth Event over the final weekend. Although we began with 14 presentations at one venue, we ultimately gave 26 presentations in three venues over the course of one week.

Would I do it again? Absolutely!

The original evening event was held in the local Plaza Theater, a downtown art house/foreign film theater. The audience was a unique mixture of atheists, agnostics, anti-Christians, those who have been hurt by Christianity, and the more traditional “attend church every weekend” folks. It was a unique audience, and none of us—me included—left without being challenged on one level or another.

Although I would love to share many personal life-transforming testimonies from this event, for the sake of confidentiality, I cannot. I can say, with great gladness, that around 20 folks, some previous atheists, embraced God—not as He has been represented by the religion of Christianity, but as he has been revealed through the person of Jesus Christ. A majority of attendees, including the 20-or-so folks from the community, embraced the idea of following Jesus as a community, in

small groups of 15-20 people—first-century style. Their first “following Jesus together” event will occur this Saturday afternoon, from 3 to 5. Please keep these precious ones in your prayers as they continue to endeavor to live like Jesus, think like Jesus, love like Jesus, and serve the world around them, like Jesus.

The week of spiritual emphasis at the local Academy was, in my estimation, a great success too. Many students experienced a paradigm shift in their views of God and began to believe what was truly in His heart for them. The week, as mentioned previously, culminated in a Calgary-wide event for youths and young adults. We talked about feeling let down when our prayers seem unanswered or ignored. We considered the historical evidence for believing that Jesus really is the decisive clue, the one that must be given the greatest weight, in shaping our picture of God. Lastly, we pondered the supreme sacrifice of God Himself on the Cross, as an act of warfare against our Accuser, which revealed His radical, self-sacrificial, indiscriminate, other-centered, non-condemning love for each of us. It was an amazing event.

To those of you who prayed for last week’s meetings, thank you. I’m convinced that these meetings would not have been as successful if you had not been engaging the “powers” (Ephesians 6.12), on my behalf, through your prayers. Thank you

Keep living in love, reflecting the radical love of our God, and building the Kingdom.



# Testimonials

Thanks for the many sacrifices you have made to share this truth with others and for making these presentations available for everyone! - **HL**

Herb, been listening to the Jesus Dialogue. I have listened to most of your stuff over time. This is God's best use of your ministry so far I think. Hard to name a favorite part, but the line about "God forgives you, sin doesn't" that's a good one. I also appreciate your strong stand on how homosexuals, women who have had abortions should be treated! - **LB**

The change that is happening in my life right now is incredible. I've spent my life trying to be a good witness for God never knowing how wrong I was in my thinking and therefore not making much of a difference. Your book "Finding the Father" was given to me by a friend and now I want to share this message with everyone I know. I thank you for allowing God to work through you so His love reaches us all. He is so good to us! - **JV**

Thank you for the sacrifice you make to share God's love. - **SF**

Thanks for all you do! The Lord is working through you to His glory!! - **S**

## Sermon of the Month



One of the most challenging teachings in "Christianity" is the doctrine of an eternally burning hell. Some have said, "Theologically, anyone who does not feel cognitive dissonance between the profession of a God who is Love and the teaching that this God makes or lets his creatures suffer everlasting torment is failing to take one or the other idea seriously." If you have felt a desire in the past to be a follower of Jesus, but could not bring yourself to embrace the doctrine of eternal torment, please know you are not alone. And in all reality, you don't have to. Allow your heart to be "Renewed" this month as you listen to this month's featured presentation -

*What If There Were No Hell?* — by Herb Montgomery

# Schedule

## **MARCH 30-31, 2012**

Lee's Summit  
Adventist Church  
Lee's Summit, MO  
816-697-3772

## **APRIL 19-21, 2012**

Princeton University  
Princeton, NJ  
203-521-1603

## **APRIL 30 - MAY 4, 2012**

Valley View School  
Bluefield, WV  
336-707-0077

## **MAY 18-19, 2012**

Palo Cedro Adventist Church  
Palo Cedro, CA  
530-547-4777

## **MAY 27 - JUNE 2, 2012**

North Carolina  
Camp Meeting  
Lake Junaluska, NC  
704-596-3200

## **JUNE 5-6, 2012**

Dakota Camp Meeting  
Bismark, ND  
605-224-8868

## **JUNE 8-16, 2012**

Heavenly Valley  
Adventist Church  
South Lake Tahoe, CA  
530-544-3525

## **JUNE 30, 2012**

Miracle Meadows School  
Salem, WV  
304-782-3628

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