

The Hardest Decision

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It is not easy to make a difficult decision, especially when it costs something. The higher the cost, the harder the decision.

In 1973, Peter Simmons worked for the London Railroad. His responsibilities included diverting trains to other tracks to give clear passage, especially express trains. (The story is true, but details of name, railway and train are added)

One afternoon as he awaited the approach of the 4.00pm express to London, he suddenly saw his four-year-old son on the tracks. He had walked across the yard from his home to see his Daddy.

As Peter watched in horror, he realised there was nothing he could do to save his son from certain death. He could *not divert* the express as another train was due on that track.

If he did his duty, his son would die.

If he saved his son and diverted the express, hundreds of passengers would be killed or maimed in a horrible crash.

What would he do?

How could God possibly understand the heart-wrenching decision Peter made that day?

But the God of the universe did understand, not simply because He is God, but because He had to make the same decision.

In the "council of peace", God's Son volunteered to give His life as a sacrifice should sin arise on planet earth. The Father and Son with "clasped hands... entered into the solemn pledge that Christ would become the substitute and surety for the human race if they were overcome by Satan's sophistry." The Faith I Live By 76.

When Adam and Eve committed their first sin, the Father struggled to allow His Son to fulfil the covenant they had pledged in eternity.

"Sorrow filled heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and the world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die." Early Writings 149.

Michael the Prince of heaven approached the bright light surrounding the Father and entered into His presence. Together they communed with deep conviction. The angels watched with a sense of anxiety.

“Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father, His person could be seen. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and doubt, and shone with benevolence and loveliness, such as words cannot express.

He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that He had been pleading with His Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom to take the sentence of death upon Himself, that through Him man might find pardon; that through the merits of His blood, and obedience to the law of God, they could have the favor of God and be brought into the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life.” Early Writings 149.

It was LOVE that made the Father’s decision so difficult.

Love for His Son was beyond human understanding. He also loved the “man whom He had created...” Signs of the Times Dec 12.1878.

Imagine God’s dilemma --- should He save His Son or should He save the human race?

“Said the angel, ‘Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no.’ It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His darling Son to die for them.” Early Writings 127.

“The Eternal Father, the unchangeable one, gave His only begotten Son, tore from His bosom Him who was made in the express image of His person, and sent Him down to earth to reveal how greatly He loved mankind.” Review & Herald. Jul 9. 1895.

Did the Father really lose His Son?

God did in a very real sense lose His Son. Prior to the Incarnation, Michael was “in the form of God.” (Philippians 2:5) He was “the brightness of His (Father’s) glory, and the express image of His person.” Hebrews 1:3. God’s Son had His Father’s divine nature, His omnipresent Spirit, *and His divine form.*

When Michael became part of the human race, He “made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” Philippians 2:7.

This means that when God’s Son took humanity, He lost His divine form, and for eternity. “To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God *gave* His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature.” Desire of Ages 25

Like any of us, we recognise our loved ones largely by their appearance. Certainly we recognise voices and mannerisms, but a change in appearance can deceive us. When Michael left heaven to take on humanity, He gave up His divine form, and when He returned to heaven, He came back with a human form.

It is true there was a similarity, as we were made in the likeness of God, however the difference between the divine form and the human form might have been very

marked. His humanity was not just a shell; Christ was fully human as well as fully divine.

Jesus took humanity with “no form nor comeliness... that we should desire Him...” Isaiah 53:2. His appearance was that of a typical Jew. On the other hand, His divine form was almost identical with His Father and beautiful to behold. Youth’s Instructor. Dec 16, 1897.

Perhaps this was one of the heavy trials the Father had to bear.

Michael was the Son of the supreme God of the universe, a child begotten of His own body. He was “daily His delight”, always rejoicing before His Father. Proverbs 8:30. The bond between the Father and the Son was as close as between any earthly father and son, and probably to a far greater extent, as their characters are infinitely superior to ours.

The Father knew His Son’s suffering would begin with His birth, perhaps earlier.

“Christ, at an infinite cost, by a painful process, mysterious to angels as well as to men, assumed humanity. Hiding His divinity, laying aside His glory, He was born a babe in Bethlehem.” Manuscript 29.1899. 7 Bible Commentary 915.

The incarnation is a mystery, but in this quote we are given a little glimpse of the suffering God’s Son endured to become part of the human race. Our minds cannot even begin to imagine it. All we know is that the prophet said it was a “painful process” to take on humanity.

When our children suffer, we feel it intensely.

Let us always remember that the Father’s suffering began long before the Incarnation, and how much He suffered, we will never know.

“The Father gave all His divine resources into the hands of Christ in order that the richest blessings of heaven might be poured out upon a fallen race. God could not express greater love than He has expressed in giving the Son of His bosom to this world.” Lift Him Up. 232.

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