

Ten Reasons NOT To Reject Word-of-Faith Teachings
A Response to the tract written by Tricia Tillin Titled “Ten Reasons To Reject
Word-of-Faith Teachings” (Part One)

Reason 3: It Recognizes The Full Redemptive Work of Christ

Tillin’s third reason to reject Word-Faith teaching has been referred to as the Jesus-Died-Spiritually *doctrine* (or *heresy*, depending on who is making the reference). Often, the acronym JDS is used as a synonym or a summary of the teaching. Tillin correctly makes reference to some controversial aspects that should be addressed by concerned Christians. However, while addressing legitimate concerns she errs in several ways.

Her first error is her misrepresentation that JDS is exclusively a Word-Faith teaching. Different facets of this teaching have been held by a number of respected Christian leaders throughout church history. For example, the great reformer, Martin Luther wrote:

He found Himself in a state of condemnation and abandonment . . . He actually and in truth offered Himself to the eternal Father to be consigned to eternal damnation for us. His human nature did not behave differently from that of a man who is to be condemned eternally to hell. On account of this love of God, God at once raised Him from death and hell, and so He overcame hell.¹

Luther was not alone in his understanding of Christ’s redemptive work. Other historical church leaders have held similar views. Even some *Evangelical* leaders today who would be insulted to be identified with the Word-Faith Movement have embraced certain facets of JDS. Robert Boyd, in his *World’s Bible Handbook*, writes the following:

If punishment is not mere physical death, what is it? Christ received the same type of punishment the rich man in Luke 16 experienced, cut off from God and godly men, abandoned to the torments of hell fire, and gloated over by Satan.²

From the non-charismatic tone of this book, it is highly unlikely that Boyd had been influenced by Word-Faith doctrine.³

Another error is Tillin’s attempt to paint a picture to her readers that JDS teaching is a staple in the faith movement. This is a false picture. One must not forget that this is a “faith” movement and/or a “Word-Faith” or “Word-of-Faith” movement. These titles insinuate that the emphasis of the movement is upon the *faith* of the believer and the integrity of God’s Word. It is not the “Jesus Died Spiritually” movement, even if some of its advocates have taught on this perspective of Christ’s redemptive work.

¹ Luther, Martin **Commentary on Romans** (1515-1516); edition of J. Ficker, Leipzig: 1908, 218 ff). accessed at <http://ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ499.HTM>

² Boyd, Robert **World’s Bible Handbook** (Iowa Falls, Iowa:World Bible Publishers, Inc., 1991), p. 468

³ Boyd is more likely to have been influenced by Independent Baptists due to their own versions of JDS teaching. For example, Billy Graham and the late J. Sidlow Baxter have taught views similar to Boyd’s. For more on this see Evans, W. Glyn (Editor) **Christ is Victor** (Vally Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1977).

This brings us to yet another erroneous conclusion by Ms. Tillin's, which is the assumption that all Word-Faith advocates adhere to this teaching, or all aspects of it as presented by her. Michael Bruno, a Word-Faith teacher who wrote a book in response to Hanegraaff's *Christianity in Crisis*, clearly states his disagreement with JDS at some points:

Mr. Hanegraaff twists much regarding different teachers of faith sharing that Jesus indeed suffered in hell. As many, I do not advocate this position. However, I am not going to say that my position is necessarily correct. Those advocating this position have a definite rationale for their beliefs that certainly demands attention. They simply believe that Jesus continued to suffer before his being raised.⁴

One might argue that Bruno is not a well-known or prominent faith teacher. Regardless of such objections, Bruno's statement proves that one can be aligned with the Faith Movement, adhere to its core doctrines, and even defend them without embracing every single aspect.

One other error we need to address. Tillin seems opposed to some very Scriptural aspects of the teaching and assumes that hers is the *orthodox*, or accepted view. All opposed to her view is labeled "heresy." Though strongly disagreeing with the so-called "Word-Faith" view of JDS, Robert Bowman wrote concerning the criticisms of this doctrine: "While some of these criticisms have been helpful, it has usually been overlooked that at least some aspects of the Word-Faith doctrine are biblical."⁵

I have my own personal reservations with certain aspects of the JDS teaching, nevertheless, I believe that it's basic premise is derived from an understanding of the full redemptive work of Christ as related in Scripture. Many in the church believe that all that was needed to purchase our salvation was done at the cross. On the other hand, the faith teachers see Scripture as teaching that the cross was the beginning of the redemptive process.

The cross is where Christ died the death that we deserved, became sin and bore the curse for us (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13). However, the Bible is clear that He descended into Hades (Matt. 12:40; Eph. 4:8-10). The Scripture gives some implication that He may have suffered there (Acts 2:24-31), while other passages support an argument for merely preaching to the spirits that were there (1 Pet. 3:18, 19). He rose from the dead for our justifications (Rom. 4:25). Without His resurrection there is no basis for salvation (Rom. 10:9, 10). Some believe that due to having become sin for us, it was necessary for Him to undergo a new birth (Acts 13:33; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:18; 1 Pet. 3:18-19). He then ascended to the Father where He presented His blood into the Holy of Holies for our eternal redemption, which is in Heaven itself (Heb. 9:12-24).

Regardless of whether or not anyone accepts or rejects any facet of this teaching, one must accept this fact: **THE FAITH TEACHERS BELIEVE THAT OUR SALVATION IS A BLOOD-BOUGHT SALVATION.** Another Word-Faith apologist,

⁴ Bruno, Michael *Christianity in Power* (Slippery Rock, PA: Abba Ministries, 1994), p. 147. I share Rev. Bruno's perspective on this though I have sought to understand and defend the major Word-Faith view.

⁵ Bowman, Robert M. *The Word-Faith Controversy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), p. 163. In his critique of the faith teachers and JDS, Bowman also seems prejudiced by his own theology. For example, he does not take 2 Corinthians 5:21 or Matthew 27:46 literally and disputes with the faith teachers for doing so.

Ted Rouse, writes, “To say that Christ went to hell as the scriptures teach, does not take away from the precious Holy blood of the sin offering, the blood of the sacrifice.”⁶

Tillin and other Word-Faith critics claim that faith teachers teach that “When He died, His blood did not atone.” This is another false accusation by Ms. Tillin. While the faith teachers do not stop at the cross, they certainly believe that Christ purchased our eternal redemption when He presented His blood into the Holy of Holies (Heb. 9:12-24). Here are just a few statements from them:

All the ages of eternity will remember the heroic battle that Jesus wrought in order to prove to humanity that God was just and He could on legal grounds justify the ungodly, because His only Begotten Son had redeemed them with His own blood. (E. W. Kenyon)⁷

Now we can understand that we were Justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption God wrought in Christ, Whom He has set forth to be a sin substitute on the ground of Faith and His blood. (Kenyon)⁸

The New Covenant began functioning on the Day of Pentecost. It was not established in Heaven until Jesus carried His blood into the Holy of Holies and poured it out there as the red seal upon the document of our redemption. (Kenyon)⁹

... He was on His way to enter into the heavenly Holy of Holies to present His blood as eternal offering or sacrificing for our sins. (Kenneth E. Hagin)¹⁰

He entered in once and for all to obtain an eternal redemption for us. His blood is the guarantee, so to speak, of our redemption. (Hagin)¹¹

“... God has the only eraser of sins in the universe – the blood of Jesus.” (Frederick K. C. Price)¹²

A number of commentators agree that eternal redemption was purchased upon Christ’s ascension into Heaven. One the most prominent is the devotional writer, Andrew Murray:

We are apt to think only of the fulfillment of the type of Aaron, the blood-shedding on earth. The Epistle does not speak of it. Where it mentions the blood, it is in connection with the resurrection and entrance into Heaven, as it works in the power of an endless life.¹³

I suspect that Kenyon’s own understanding of Christ’s redemptive work was influenced in part by Andrew Murray’s writings. Regardless, one cannot justly accuse Kenyon or any of the faith teachers of denying that the blood purchased our salvation. Furthermore, the Bible has never made an understanding of what happened between

⁶ Rouse, Ted **Faith and the Pharisees** (Tulsa, OK: Insight Publishing Group, 1999), p. 196.

⁷ Kenyon, E. W. **New Creation Realities** (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society), p. 42

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 47

⁹ Kenyon, **What Happened Between the Cross and the Throne**, p. 51

¹⁰ Hagin, **The Present Day Ministry of Jesus Christ** (Tulsa, OK: Rhema Bible Church, 1983), p. 3

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 4

¹² Price, Frederick K.C. **The Victorious Overcoming Life** (Los Angeles, CA: Crenshaw Christian Center), p. 94

¹³ Murray, Andrew, **The Holiest of All** (Tarrytown, NY: Fleming H. Revell Co, 1894), p. 297

Christ's death and resurrection a prerequisite for salvation (Rom. 10:9, 10), therefore, this debate over JDS is nothing more than "majoring on the minors."