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The Astounding Work of Christ

Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger is known as the pilot who successfully landed a commercial airliner in the Hudson River after both engines were disabled by a bird strike. The actions he took in this most perilous of situations saved the lives of 155 persons aboard. Because of his actions that day, Capt. Sullenberger merits our respect and admiration. He is rightfully treated as an American hero. His bravery is extolled by many, from school children to presidents. No one can claim the honor Capt. Sullenberger receives is without merit. However, it is important to remember that on that fateful winter day, January 15, 2009, not a single person was saved by Capt. Sullenberger's merit. All 155 persons aboard US Airways Flight 1549 were saved by his actions.

Ever since Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) introduced his satisfaction theory of atonement, church theologians have been infatuated by a supposed salvation brought to us through the merit of Christ's sufferings. It seems they believe that God demanded satisfaction, which he could not have unless he saw his own son suffer and die upon the cross. The satisfaction theories basically present that Christ honored God so greatly though sacrificing himself upon the cross that the merit of his great honor offsets the dishonor to God we have caused through disobedience and transgression. We are thereby restored to God

through the merit of Christ's sacrifice. This all sounds wonderful, but it is just not found in the scriptures. If fact, such teaching blinds the hearts of multitudes to the true work of Christ upon the cross. The freedom from sin and Satan that his shed blood provided is lost in the fog of a meritorious based human philosophy.

Jesus Christ gave himself upon the cross to accomplish one fundamental work. He died *"to destroy the works of the devil!"* I John 3:8. Satan brought about the entrance of sin through Adam's transgression. Christ came to destroy Satan and his works. In doing so, he delivered us from sin and restored us back to God. This was not accomplished by the "merit" of his actions, but by his actions themselves. Jesus' actions in going to the cross were a "violent act of warfare" Matthew 11:12 that completely cast down and destroyed Satan and his works. Let us consider what the Bible clearly says about the work Christ accomplished upon the cross.

He destroyed the devil! *"…that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;"* Hebrews 2:14. Just as the Nazi regime was destroyed by the Allies in World War II, Jesus Christ destroyed Satan and his power through the death of the cross.

He destroyed sin! *"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."* Romans 6:6. Sin may be rampant in the world around us, but it has no power, presence, or place in those who abide in Christ.

He took away our sin! *"And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."* I John 3:5. Just as the crimson dye became

one with the fabric, sin could not be separated from the heart and nature of humanity …that is until Christ took our sin away!

He delivered us from Satan's domain! *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"* Colossians 1:13. The child of God abides in Christ where there is neither sin nor Satan. It is a place of victory over every power of darkness.

These and many other passages in the Bible clearly tell us the reason for the sufferings of Christ. None of these things are based upon the merit of Christ's work, but rather upon the power of what he accomplished that day. We are free from sin and Satan because Jesus Christ destroyed our adversary and broke every shackle of darkness.

Now let's consider the difference between the testimony of the scripture and how we hear the gospel presented by many today. We are told that God only sees us as righteous based upon the merit of Christ, but the scripture says Christ actually **made us righteous**. Romans 5:19. Calvary did not change the way God sees things, it changes who and what we are. We are also told that Christ only took away the guilt or penalty of our sin based upon the merit of Christ' sufferings, but the Bible says Christ actually **took away our sin!** His work upon the cross makes us free from even the presence of sin in our heart and life!

Does Christ have great merit? Absolutely! His praises shall be proclaimed throughout all ages. *"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."* Revelation 5:12. Yet

we are not saved by his merit. We are saved by the blood that flowed from his wounded side.