What stands behind the sacrifice of Christ? Why the cross? Why did the author and the creator of the whole universe choose to come and die in such a way?

There are many scriptures that describe the cross and the sacrifice of Christ starting even from the old testament. But now we will have a look on a passage found in Isaiah 65, so that we can understand the character and the personality of God.

“I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, ‘Here I am, here I am,’ to a nation that was not called by My name. I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts; a people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face; who sacrifice in gardens, and burn incense on altars of brick; Who sit among the graves, and spend the night in the tombs; who eat swine’s flesh, and the broth of abominable things is in their vessels; who say, ‘Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am holier than you!’ These are smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.“

Isaiah 65:1-7

In these verses we can see listed some of the sins of the nation of Israel. Sins that we can apply to ourselves in today’s days, because everything was written as an admonition for us. “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” 1 Corinthians 10:11

From all of these verses in Isaiah 65, we can see v. 5 saying: “Who say, ‘Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am holier than you!’ **These are smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.”**

So we see that God says in His word that these sins are like smoke in His nostrils and a fire that burns all the day. It means that is something that comes to Him and He can not bear it. What would you do if there is a smoke coming to your nostrils, or some horrible smell? You will turn your head away, because you won’t be able to bear it. The same is what God does with the sin.

Have you heard that there is actually pleasant aroma that goes to God and He is please by it? Often this is a pleasant aroma that was coming out of the sacrifices offered to Him. Well, in todays days He is not satisfied with sacrifices, but there is one sacrifice that pleases Him and this is the sacrifice of the Son. We see anyway that as we can not bear something horrible to us, as that horrible smell for example, so God does with the sin. It is His natural reaction to turn away from the sin, as it is your natural reaction to turn away when you see something horrible. **Sin is not a part of Him. It is not a part of His nature.**

 What do we do as a solution when we’ve got something horrible in front of us that we can not bear? We take it away. He can do the same with the sin and with us as sinners, because this is what we are in our nature. But here is where His love is shown. His justice, by which I mean that He can prosecute this sin together with us is a natural reaction. He doesn’t just decide it or He doesn’t just choose to do so, because He likes it. It is in Him. This order is in Him and it is His nature. The same order that we find in the universe and in the nature. Everything is placed in order from the smallest particle to the greatest star. We see that this is in Him. We are the only ones that are out of this order and balance. And He by nature needs to bring this order. Here is where we see His love. **That instead of letting us pay, He decided to pay by Himself, by punishing His son.** That’s why the sacrifice of Golgotha occurred. Because by nature He had to let someone pay. And He didn’t want that to be us. He could not just go over our sins and forget them, because He can’t. But instead He could do something else. **There had to be a cross. The sin had to be paid in the suffering of the Son.** And there wasn’t any other way that could go in our favor. It was painful for Him, but He did it. We have to know that God could’ve let us pay for our sins, without sending His son and without giving us opportunity, but that’s why we describe what happened on the cross with love.

We can say in a way that when is about justice, it is something that is not entirely up to Him. I mean that He is all justice and righteousness. He can not avoid it. This is something that comes out naturally from Him. It is like this natural reaction as we said, like the one when we have in front of us something that we can not bear. Not just because we don’t like it, but because it is completely against our nature. Like a rotten smell or smoke in our nostrils. We have to take it away.

But when we speak about love, it is entirely His decision. Why? Because He could’ve avoid it. He could’ve decide not to do it. He wouldn’t lose anything. He is God and He doesn’t actually need us. He wants us instead.

In that case we were going to pay for our sins and in this way justice and order were going to be served anyway. But instead He decided to pour that justice and wrath on the Son. The one that never sinned. In this way it was paid. It had to be paid for the sins. There is where we see love. That’s why it is a love. Because it is willingly given.

 By this we see that the justice and the order wasn’t a question of something that He liked or not. It wasn’t at all for a whim, if we can say so or because He just played. It is diabolical to think that God does His works or anything just to play or just because He decided by some reason to do so. God is very serious and does everything with a purpose and never just for the sake of doing it. He is serious when it comes to His principles. He is actually submitted to them. He is submitted to Himself if we can say so. There was a lots of love and a lots of justice in the cross. **The cross is the center of all. The most complete and perfect work of God was done there. It was where truth and mercy met, it was where justice and love came together.** And He did this to offer us opportunity. We enter in the promises of the cross into eternal life, if we believe in Him. Otherwise we will have to pay for our sins. Or one or another way, the sins must be paid. That’s why we need to decide to follow and submit to the cross so that He can take our sins and weaknesses.

God punishes sin and sinners, but this is not actually something that He likes to do, if we can say it in this way. **We can say that He punishes with tears in His eyes.** God never does anything just for the sake of doing it. Especially what He is doing concerning His love, sending His Son and working in our life, so that we can come to believe. We are persons that one day like one thing and another day – something else. He is different instead. He does everything with a purpose. A purpose that most of the times we won’t understand now, but is for our good. He is doing many things for a good purpose. It is the people that don’t understand and accept it.

As we said before, God does everything with a purpose. With a purpose for the eternity. He’s got His sight placed there. He better understands its value. It is not the same with us. We give more value to the earthly things. We look more for our own comfort here on earth while in this life. **God instead does everything possible to get our attention, so that we can focus more on the eternal life.** Just imagine how long is the eternity. We can’t even describe it. We can’t measure it. For us hundred years might be a lot, but they go away. Thousand years look too much in our sight, but it can not be compared to eternity. Where are we going to be in this eternity? Saved in heaven or condemned? Just imagine how precious is it and that can not be compared with anything else on this earth. That’s why it is so dangerous not to believe in it or to overlook it. God is more interested than us in our own salvation. As soon as we get a bit better, we forget quickly about our need. He instead is always there to keep on reminding us.

We as human kind in itself look always to be comfortable here in our earthly life and when we have achieved our goals we just relax, but there is something more and that’s why we are here, so that we can find out the difference and show the way to the others as well.

“Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops? So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul , “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Luke 12:16

Generally this is what the natural man lives for. It will be a miracle for him to be interested in his eternal destiny. And this is what he needs – a miracle. He needs to be touched by God and to convert to the gospel and its truth. In this way he will start to consider the eternity. Many persons seek for God or are scared about their eternity in a time of trouble, but as soon as they get comfortable and things are going right, they forget their need. But this is how the nature of a man is.

And the same can happen with believers too. Even though they are new creatures in Christ, they can still set their sight on earthly things. That’s why Paul exhorted the church of Colossians saying:

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:1-3

They were believers, why then he told them that? Why did he tell them to set their mind on things above and not on things on earth? Because as we said, the same thing happens to each natural man can happen to them too. The believers have obviously an advantage to know the truth, but they have the tendency to forget it sometimes or better said, not to give it the due importance and value. As soon as we get comfortable, we tend to forget a bit.

“You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you ask amiss, that you may spend it in your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”? James 4:2-5

We see v.3 from this passage saying: “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss that you may spend it in your pleasures.”

We always heard that if we ask something from God, we need to ask according to His will. And many times we do not receive because we ask according to our will. According to this world. This is where our desire goes. To what belongs to this earth for this life only. I am not saying that we need to reject everything. Obviously we need to and we have to use from this world and all of us like certain things. Important is those things not to be sinful and we mustn’t be dominated by them. But these verses explain exactly where our natural desire goes. On what belongs to this earth. And it says that a friendship with this world is an enmity with God. But what actually needs to happen is that He needs to help us and teach us how to pray. It is not a question of just changing our words when we pray, but to change the desire of our heart. Because a prayer needs to be guided by the recognition of our need and our desire. And only He can change the desire of our heart. The prayer needs to be done with a desire and with a direction. The new nature that God gives us when we are reborn from Him, desires what comes from above, from heaven and the old nature desires what is on the earth. We will always have a struggle with this, even living in our new nature and being Christians, but with His help we can overcome.

V. 5 in James 4 says that “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously.” God is jealous for us and He is going to discipline His children and to work and treat our life so that we can come to desire what belongs to Him and His salvation. He is so focused and determined on this and does everything possible for that purpose to happen. People don’t agree with God and don’t understand Him. They love more the world and that’s why what He is doing is in contrast with their desires. Many of the things happening around us are with that purpose. Things happen with a purpose that goes in our favor. That we can seek for Him and desire what is eternal. Not in our favor here on earth, but in our favor for the eternity, so that we can accept Him and get saved. God looks always at the eternal. Many times we blame Him, because we don’t understand. And many times we won’t be able to understand now what happens around us. People are getting upset and angry with God, not understanding His purposes and not understanding the eternity. What are 20 or 30 years of suffering a bit compared to what comes next in the eternity. We need to pray so that He can open our eyes to see that. We demand things from Him, but He doesn’t answer them, because our purpose even though being something good in our sight, it is not in His.

“Woe to those who call evil for good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight. Isaiah 5:20

This is the way people see good many times. According to what they assume good is. We need His wisdom, not ours, so that we can be able to really discern. Remember that He really wants something good for us and that is to be with Him in eternity and we instead go after things that vanish. We give more value to what belongs to this earth, because we don’t see or believe to what is eternal.

We can go again to Isaiah 65 and see v.1

“I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, ‘Here I am, here I am,’ to a nation that was not called by My name.”

It refers to us as people who don’t belong to the nation of Israel. We as gentiles were not looking for God and neither we knew Him. He was the one that was interested first in our salvation. As we said before, we as people don’t understand really the value of it. Even if we know the truth for us many times is more important to be just fine with our surroundings. But here it says that He was sought by those who did not ask for Him. We never asked, but He still died for us, because He loved us. It doesn’t mean that He does everything and we mustn’t seek Him or do anything else, because here in this verse it says as well that He was sought. The verse refers more to the fact that He did the first step without receiving anything. When no one was thinking about Him or considering Him, He died. And even if most of the people will never respond to His love and invitation, He still died for them to give them opportunity. This is love and this love stirred us to seek Him. Now that we know the truth, we have to look for Him and seek Him.

This verse is for us gentiles that we don’t belong to the nation of Israel, but in part is also for them, because they are also not seeking or asking for Him in the right way, so time will come when He will accomplish His work in them as well, so that they can accept and seek the Son as well.