

**The issue of crucifixion and redemption**  
**Episode 11**

**+Nahed** My dear viewers. You are most welcome to a new episode of our program “Questions About Faith”.

We are more than happy to answer all of your questions, and we have the pleasure to have with us Father Zakaria Botros. You are most welcome Father.

**+Father** Thank you.

**+Nahed** We have already spent two episodes on the issue of crucifixion. And we will continue with it today. Could you give a brief summary so that those who are watching us for the first time would be able to follow what we are saying? Please, go ahead.

**+Father** As a matter of fact this episode is not only related to the two previous ones. It is rather related to all the episodes series of “Questions About Faith” from the beginning. We have started off with a very important question which was God, our belief in God. We believe that God is One, or do we believe that He is three? We tackled the issue of the Trinity. We answered these questions and I believe we dedicated a whole episode to this topic. Then we moved on to the subject of Christ, Who is He? Is He God? And what the term "Son of God" means? We discussed that subject, and we talked about the inevitability of the incarnation of God in the form of a man, and why? We said in order to fulfill the redemption or the crucifixion. But why? And this question led us to narrating the story from the beginning. And for the sake of those among the viewers who may be watching us for the first time, who heard about the previous episodes and wanted to see for themselves, so I'll briefly give highlights about why Christ was incarnated, or what the story is from the beginning briefly.

It all starts with the creation of man. For in His love, God created man after He had provided for him all things that would

make for his happiness and comfort. He created the universe, the trees, the animals and all things. And then He created man, as a king over this creation, to enjoy God's creation. And God said "My delight is with the sons of man." And of all other creatures, God placed in man an intellect whereby he could discern. So it's a source of pleasure and happiness for man to be intelligent and to deal with God, to relate to God through love and with his full will not forced, like animals or like the birds, but an intellectual being, able to choose to live with God. And then it came about that the devil...

+Nahed Envied.

Father Envied. You know the devil is a fallen angel. He envied man for the abundance that he enjoyed, so he resorted to temptation and caused Eve and Adam to eat of the tree which was a test of the choice. He made them eat of it. Thereby disobeying God, and therefore they were kicked out of the garden as a punishment. And thus sin spread through Adam and Eve's blood to all mankind by heredity. Adam sinned and his descendents sinned. Adam disbelieved and so did his descendents. Just as through one man sin entered the world, and through sin death became to all men .

+**Nahed** There's a small point we would like to emphasize to our beloved Muslims that sin is hereditary.

+**Father** And we have already extensively clarified and proven that sin is hereditary. For example, in Surah 12 (**Yousef**) verse 53 which says that "The soul is prone to do evil all by itself." by nature.

And Al Razy commented on this verse saying that "The soul is inclined. Inclined to obscenities desirous of disobedience- And pay attention to this strong word - and human nature is eager for pleasures." The human nature. So this is the meaning. And therefore Al Turmuzy says "Adam disbelieved and thus his descendents disbelieved. And Adam sinned and thus sinned his

descendants.” We have also seen that all the prophets are said to have sinned and that’s before being sent as prophets they may even commit cardinal sins, and after being sent as prophets they may even commit minor sins inadvertently, and that means unintentionally. That means that there is sin. We also talked about the punishment. So after the creation and fall into sin we come to the area of punishment. The wages of sin is death. God is just. He is a just Judge. He sentenced whoever sins to death and His sentence is irreversible and His judgment is unchangeable.

**+Nahed** Could you please explain death and the 3 types of death which we spoke about last time?

**+Father** So the punishment of sin is death, spiritually which means being separated from God, or the preference to keep away from Him, separation from God. And *Moral death*, to be as good as dead morally on account of shame and disgrace. We have seen this also evident in Islam regarding shame and disgrace, God lets them taste shame and disgrace during this worldly life. But the punishment of the after life or the hereafter is even greater. In Surah 39 (**Al Zumur**) and Sheikh Abd Allah Youssef الشيخ عبدالله يوسف said “Sin, most likely bears the fruit of shame and disgrace in the worldly life. But the greater punishment is in the afterlife.” And what is that greater punishment?

**+Nahed** And this is far greater and more important..

**+Father** That is hell. That is the eternal separation. The sinner chose to be separated and he would be separated forever, and why? Because the death sentence is an eternal one. And hence arises the problem and the issue. And now come to your question..

**+Nahed** Yes, this is what I wanted to say. Because this is one of the most frequently asked questions especially from our

beloved Muslims, who ask us “Is the Almighty loving God helpless regarding the destiny of a sinful man?”

**+Father** Yes, that's right. God is loving because He created him out of love, but man sinned. Will He let him? This is an important question. No way. We have just said that God is a just Judge. His justice is absolute. But at the same time. God's attributes are all perfect and one of those is absolute mercy. He is just. He sentences the sinner to death, yet merciful, and He must show mercy. This additive, merciful is very clear in the Bible. In the book of Exodus chapter 34 verses 6 and 7 “The Lord God merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.”

**+Nahed** Let's pause here a bit Father. Forgiving iniquity. Our beloved Muslims hold on to this one and say ‘He has forgiven the iniquity...

**+Father** When he returned to Him.’

**+Nahed** Adam received words from his Lord and turned towards Him and God forgave his iniquity.

**+Father** You are right. This is a very important objection and we must clarify it, mustn't we? Now that God issued a death sentence, man wants to repent and he awaits from God to forgive. But what will become of the death sentence the Divine justice. What will become of it? Will God change His mind? Will He say Ok, Ok you have repented and I forgive you. I forgive you My son. God's judgments are irreversible. His words are unchangeable. He issued a judgment and it must stay valid. Isn't it? And herein lies the conflict between mercy and...

**+Nahed:** Justice..

**+Father:** Justice. If justice is applied by exercising punishment, then mercy will cease to be, and if mercy would

forgive and pardon then justice would be done away with, and God forbid that any of His attributes would be thus affected. And for this particular subject the whole story of redemption was ushered. In order for God to forgive and have mercy there needs to be a ransom to fulfill the requirements of justice. For example let me give you a simple illustration.

I borrowed a 1000 dollars from you

**Nahed** Return them.

**+Father** After taking those 1000 dollars, I spent them. My son was sick and I had debts to pay. So I paid them off and spent the money on my sick child. I gave you a deadline to return the money, and I didn't meet it. A year went by. No payment. 2 years went by and no payment. You keep badgering me "Give me the money." "I have none I have none. Where can I get you the money? I'm indebted to several other people not just you, so many debts." So being a just and fair person, you demand your money because it is yours and you need it for your children too. So you go to the magistrate and you lodge a complaint. So I go there and I stand before the judge. He asks "Have you taken a 1000 dollars from this lady?" I say "Yes, I did." "So you admit it." "Yes." "Well confession is the master of evidence." "Of course I don't deny it. I am a pastor I cannot deny it. I can't." The judge says "Pay her back her money." "Oh I wish I could your honor, I wish, I am a poor guy I'm indebted to this guy, to that one and to the other. My son is sick and I have this and that problem I am surrounded by trouble. Where can I get the money?" The man sees that I am sincere and he sees that I confessed but the courthouse represents justice, but that judge had mercy. He then faces a problem. He sees my predicament, he sees my need too. If he puts me in prison for the money nobody will benefit, and my problem will be aggravated, because my family needs me. So out of mercy this man

**+Nahed** Came up with a solution.

+Father: Because if he made me serve time nobody will benefit, and if he says “You are all clear go to your children.” Then he has wronged you. So what does the judge do? He asks me “How much are you indebted?” I'll say “1000 dollars.” And he asks you, "Does he owe you a 1000 dollars?" You say “Yes” So he takes his cheque book out of his pocket and he writes you a 1000 dollars cheque .

+Nahed Then I got my money back.

+Father You got your money back

+Nahed You have been shown mercy.

+Father I have not only been shown mercy, but he tells me ‘I know that you are a poor person and in need. Look, here is another cheque for a 1000 dollars in order to pay off your other debts, and cover your expenses.’ He is a father. He is merciful, and the same thing is with God. He issued a death sentence and God never takes back His words. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. If the judgments of kings are irreversible, how much more is the judgment of the King of kings? His words are irreversible. But He must find a solution in order to show mercy. And I believe this is also evident in the case of Abraham’s son. Of course there is a difference of opinion whether he was Isaac or Ishmael.

+Nahed But regardless of who.

+Father But regardless of all the conflicts involved in this matter it is still his son. God required him to offer up his son. He saw himself in a dream.

+Nahed Slaughtering.

+Father Slaughtering his son. So he took him away and when he had placed him face down, that is in order to slaughter

him and lifted up his knife. He heard a voice “Abraham. Do your son no harm.” He turned around and he was the..

+Nahed Ransom.

+Father The sacrifice ram. Was this sacrifice necessary?

+Nahed Of course.

+Father Why? God told him slaughter him and God can tell him not to slaughter him. End of the story.

+**Nahed** Well that’s the point, isn’t it? Well it would be chaos...

+**Father** Oh Yes, God can say something and then change His mind, say something and then change His mind ... Well, that would lead us to the state of anarchy, wouldn’t it? But in order to redeem or deliver this person from the judgment of sacrifice God says “And We have redeemed him or ransomed him..

+Nahed With a great sacrifice

+Father With a great sacrifice.”

+**Nahed** This way both were fulfilled; the judgment and the redemption.

+**Father** The ransom suffers the judgment and mercy for the sinner.

There’s nothing at all like God releasing a sinner after he repents with no ransom.

+Nahed: And tells him “You’re pardoned.”

+Father Now let us come back again to the attribute of mercy in God. We said God is merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity

and transgression and sin. He forgives. He is able to forgive. But He has to provide a ransom, a solution. In Islam, God forgives all offences. He is the forgiving, the merciful, Surah 39(**Al Zumar**) verse 53. He forgives but there must be a solution.

Al Imam Al Ghazaly الغزالي in his book “*Al Maqsed Al Asna Lesharh Asmaa' Allah Al Husna*” المقاصد الاسنى لشرح اسماء الله الحسنى page 23 says the following “God’s mercy is perfect and universal, perfect and universal.” So then God is merciful, He can forgive, He can pardon but under conditions. Ok. When God has mercy on man He should have mercy and save him. He should save him from all types of death, shouldn't He? The 3 types He must deliver him from all of them. So what did He do? He gave man His own righteousness in order to deal with the shame. He covered him with righteousness.

+**Nahed** Would you clarify this because this expression could be difficult for our beloved Muslims?

+**Father** All right. Shall I read a passage from the Bible to clarify that?

Nahed Yes.

+**Father** In the book of Ezekiel chapter 16. The book of Ezekiel chapter 16. Such a beautiful story that tells us what it means to cover shame and nakedness. He talks about the human soul. Let’s see what He tells us here:

“As for your nativity on the day you were born, your naval chord was not cut nor were you washed in water to cleanse you, you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.”

Any newborn is treated like that, you wrap up his naval, you put some salt on it in order to dry up, then wash him and clean him from the fluid he comes with. Isn't it? They wrap him up, they clothe him, but this newborn soul has received no such treatment which is..

+**Nahed** No one did this to her..



+Father Quite odd, very odd. “No eye pitied you to do any of these things for you to have compassion on you. No one pitied you, but you were thrown out into the open field when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born.”  
How could that happen? Would a woman give birth..

+Nahed Throw it..

+Father And then throw her new born into the street? Only under one circumstance, when the baby is born out of wedlock.

+Nahed A product of sin.

Father In sin. When the baby is an illegitimate child, when it's a bastard. The mother is eager to cover up her sin.

+Nahed So she takes the baby and throws it away.

Father Hide it, and that's the shame of sin, and so is humanity. The human nature by condition is born with hereditary sin, such a despicable condition no one to pity us. Now look at this

+Nahed Yes, the rest of the passage.

+Father “I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood – that's a castaway and people are trampling over your blood. I said to you in your blood ‘Live.’” And then what else did He do “I passed by you again and I looked upon you. Indeed your time was the time of love.” Such sweet words “I passed by you again and found you and looked upon you. Indeed your time was the time of love.”

What is He going to do now? That's what I would like to come to. So I spread my wings over you and covered your nakedness. You are still naked, you haven't been wrapped up so with the hem of my garment with my own clothing “I covered you. I

swore an oath to you and entered in a covenant with you, says the Lord, God. And you became Mine. What did I do to you? I washed you in water. Yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood and I anointed you with oil, I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin that's leather sandals for the feet, and clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists and a chain on your neck and I put a jewel in your nose. That's how adornment was in the past. Earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was fine linen, silk and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful and succeeded to royalty. From a foundling to a queen. Your fame went down among the nations because of your beauty for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you says the Lord God.”  
From shame to what? To honor.

**+Nahed** In order to get it across to our beloved Muslims, because this is of course difficult for them to understand. Will you please say in simple language what the Lord did to the wretched human soul?

**+Father** Well the application, you mean the application

**+Nahed** Yes, the application.

**+Father** In reality, the human soul sinned; and was born in sin, the shame of sin. Sin is the shame of the nations. But the Lord came to cover us and clothe us and cover up the shame of our nakedness, thus turning shame into honor. And He started to do all these things to us. He started to wash us clean, to cleanse us, to purify us. This is His work which if we apply, if we draw the spiritual significance from it, we would say to be baptized that's to be washed from one's sin.

**+Nahed:** That's where want to reach.

+Father “For he who believes and is baptized will be saved.” one must be baptized in order to be saved from one's sin and be washed clean from them, and become a new creation in Christ Jesus, and now the past can be buried. “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new.” Are you following? So that’s what I want to say. That God wants to cover up the shame of our nakedness and the shame of our sin. We inherited sin with its shame and disgrace, but Christ covered it with His righteousness. His Righteousness is His innocence, beauty and splendor. So then God will even restore us to the paradise we lost. What does He say here? “The gift of God is eternal life.” This is in Romans 6 verse 23. The gift of God is eternal life. “If the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.” Therefore on the cross Jesus said to the thief on His right He said: “Today you will be with me in paradise.” The restoration. After Adam was driven out because of sin God restored the repentant and the remorseful for the sake of His shed blood, and He accomplished redemption and the ram that was offered or the lamb that was sacrificed which is a type of Christ as the great Sacrifice, and now man could be admitted. What about in Islam?

+**Nahed** Yes, that’s the question

+**Father** Good. This is what Surah 61(**Al Saf**) verse 12 says “He will forgive you your offences and show you into gardens through which rivers flow.” And in Surah 3 (**Al Omran**) verse 103 it says “You were on the brink of a fiery pit and He saved you from it.” But there must be redemption, a great sacrifice and that’s what made incarnation necessary in order to achieve redemption. “And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice” That’s the solution to the conflict between justice and mercy. In His wisdom God took the judgment, the sentence upon Himself and gave us His mercy and hence the case was settled. And this is the issue of redemption in Christianity which was the cause

for Divine incarnation which is the whole point. But I want to tell you something. Now you are hosting me to ask me. Now I'll host you to ask you.

**+Nahed** Ask me an easy question then?

**+Father** The question is you come from a Muslim background, right?

**+Nahed** Yes.

**+Father** Now we want to know how you viewed these problems, and what are the changes that happened? Because I want the Muslim brothers and sisters to know what kind of thoughts you had. I heard you were a fanatic, and you were veiled

**+Nahed** Well, Father knows me well!

**+Father** I think the viewers know quite well that I know you.

**+Nahed** From A to Z.

**+Father** Ok, tell us what the story was?

**+Nahed** Well, I'll never forget that, Reverend Father. 15 years ago in 1988 after I saw the vision of the Lord Jesus and came to your office and your secretary had doubts about me regarding the reason why I came and what I wanted to do, because she was a student in the same school I used to work, if you remember!

**+Father** Yes, of course.

**+Nahed** And I asked you exactly the same question. God is forgiving and merciful, He has already forgiven our sins. Why is redemption necessary then? and I recall very well, when your holiness did this with your 2 hands, God's mercy and God's

justice are like the pans of a scale- if you remember the words you said to me - His mercy will not overrule His justice nor will His justice cancel out His mercy. So in order to achieve both there must be a way out, a mediator to keep them both in balance. As a matter of fact your answer was very convincing. I was persuaded. But the important thing for our beloved Muslims is that they be convinced. You know they themselves as you said that the words of kings are irreversible so how much more are the words of God who sentenced us to death? Could He ever say never mind I have forgiven you! That won't do. There must be an outlet, a way out of this predicament. And that's what we want to get across to them even clearer. So if you please try in 2 minutes to make it clear.

**+Father** Very well. What I did was answer you with a logical response. Logically, in the sense that I used verses by way of analogy and came up with certain conclusions. But faith can never come about out of logic. In order that one may understand, and be convinced, trust, and believe and have his heart touched, mere logical words won't do. I may speak to you with sound logic and you tell me "Yes, fine, you're making sense. But it doesn't concern me at all, isn't it?" But anyone who is willing to reach God and get to know Him and enjoy living with Him. That's the one who will ask God Saying *"Lord I have heard, I have heard of Your love which created me, I have heard of Your love which provided me with redemption from my sin. But I want You to touch my heart and illuminate my being from within. Those logical words, I heard with my ears I grasped with my mind, but I'm in need of something else, that those words would sink into my heart and turn into spirit and life. So now I beseech You God - And I would like the viewers to ask God with me. Tell Him- Lord You have loved me. Lord You Who have loved me, and created me out of love and placed me in the paradise of enjoyment because You have loved me. You Who have provided redemption to forgive my sins because You pitied my miserable condition. You provided my salvation and deliverance from shame, the shame*

*of sin which caught me up and from the everlasting fire, and from the destiny that awaits me. But I beseech You God today to make Your light shine in my heart and to let me know You, to let me enjoy You and to let me enjoy Your salvation of my soul. Amen. Please Lord, hear and answer. Amen.”*

**+Nahed** At the conclusion of our episode, we really thank you Reverend Father and the Lord willing, we'll have many more meetings together.

My dear viewers, God is a merciful Father Who loves you and is willing to forgive your sins. Come to Him. Come to Him open your hearts and He will forgive your sins because He is a merciful Father.

My dear viewers, now at the conclusion of the episode, an address will appear on the screen. If you would like a Bible or any religious books we will mail them to your address. Thank you, till we meet again.