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What You Need to Know About the Death of Jesus: Part 1

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WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST: PART ONE

Today, February 25th, we begin a four-part series regarding what well may be the two most significant events in the history of man, namely, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Their importance and far reaching results simply cannot be overemphasized.

1. How important is the death of Jesus Christ?

Henry Thiessen writes:

The death of Christ has a prominent place in the New Testament. The last three days of our Lord's earthly life occupy about one-fifth of the narratives in the four Gospels. If all the three and a half years of his public ministry had been written out as fully as the last three days, we would have a Life of Christ of some 8,400 pages! Torrey claims that the death of Christ is mentioned directly in the New Testament more than 175 times. Since there are 7,959 verses in the New Testament, this would mean that one out of every 53 verses refers to this theme.

The death of Christ is the essential thing in Christianity. Other religions base their claim to recognition on the teaching of their founders; Christianity is distinguished from all of them by the importance it assigns to the death of its Founder. Take away the death of Christ as interpreted by the Scriptures, and you reduce Christianity to the level of the ethic religions. Though we would still have a higher system of ethics, were we to take away the cross of Christ, we would have no more salvation than these other religions. Napoleon said, when banished to St. Helena, that Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and he had founded mighty kingdoms on force, but that Jesus Christ had founded his on love. This is true, if we mean love expressed in his substitutionary death.

It is of Supreme Interest in Heaven. The death of Christ is the subject of supreme interest in heaven. We may expect those who have gone to heaven to have a fuller and truer conception of life's values than those who are still limited in their vision by their existence in the body. We are told that when Moses and Elijah appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, they conversed with Christ about the de cease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9:30-31). We also find that the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sang the song of redemption through the death of Christ (Rev. 5:8-10). Even the multitude of angels around the throne, though not in need of redemption themselves, joined in the song of the Lamb that was slain (Rev. 5:11-12). Since those who have the veil of human limitations completely removed from their eyes—those who have entered into the fuller fruits of

redemption through the blood of Christ—extol Christ's death above everything else, we mortals ought to study into the true meaning of that death.

(*Systematic Theology*, pp. 313-314)

Consider the importance of Jesus' death as viewed from another perspective.

- A. There is a total of 89 chapters in the four-fold accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
 - B. Of these 89 chapters, only 4 are given over in recording the first thirty years (Luke 3:23) of Jesus' earthly life (Matt. 1, 2; Luke 1, 2).
 - C. Of these 89 chapters, no less than 13 describe (in detail) those events surrounding His death (Matt. 26, 27; Mark 14, 15; Luke 22, 23; John 13-19).
 - D. We may thus correctly conclude that, according to the space afforded it in the divine record, the death of Jesus Christ was considered more than three times as important than the first thirty years of His life!
 - E. Unlike any other person in history, Jesus' greatest gift to humanity was not His life, but rather His death! Thus, He was born in Bethlehem that He might die at Calvary. The manger would become the door leading to the cross!
2. What were the Old Testament messianic prophecies fulfilled by Jesus Christ at Calvary?

There were at least 15 such prophecies.

- A. That His friend would betray Him for 30 pieces of silver (compare Psa. 41:9; 55:12-14; Zech. 11:12, 13 with Matt. 26:14-16, 21-25)
- B. That He would be a man of sorrows (compare Isa. 53:3 with Matt. 26:37, 38)
- C. That He would be forsaken by His disciples (compare Zech. 13:7 with Matt. 26:31, 56)
- D. That He would be scourged and spat upon (compare Isa. 50:6 with Matt. 26:67; 27:26)
- E. That His price money would be used to buy a potter's field (compare Zech. 11:12, 13; Jer. 18:1-4; 19:14 with Matt. 27:9, 10)

- F. That He would be crucified between two thieves (compare Isa. 53:12 with Matt. 27:38; Mark 15:27, 28; Luke 22:37)
- G. That He would be given vinegar to drink (compare Psa. 69:21 with Matt. 27:34, 48; John 19:28-30)
- H. That He would suffer the piercing of His hands and feet (compare Psa. 22:16; Zech. 12:10 with Mark 15:25; John 19:34, 37; 20:25-27)
- I. That His garments would be parted and gambled for (compare Psa. 22:18 with Luke 23:34; John 19:23-24)
- J. That He would be surrounded and ridiculed by His enemies (compare Psa. 22:7, 8 with Matt 27:39-44; Mark 15:29-32)
- K. That He would thirst (compare Psa. 22:15 with John 19:28)
- L. That He would commend His spirit to the Father (compare Psa. 31:5 with Luke 23:46)
- M. That His bones would not be broken (compare Psa. 34:20; Exod. 12:46; Num. 9:12 with John 19:33-36)
- N. That He would be stared at in death (compare Zech. 12:10 with John 19:37; Matt. 27:36)
- O. That He would be buried with the rich (compare Isa. 53:9 with Matt. 27:57-60)

Our risen Lord no doubt referred to these Old Testament Calvary predictions as He spoke with the two disciples en route to Emmaus on that first Easter Sunday afternoon. Note the account:

"And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done ... Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the

prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:13-21, 25-27).

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