

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

The Lord Will Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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The Love of Christ For The Unsaved

Introduction

When we humans are considering and speaking about divine truths, there is a great need for careful observation on how the Spirit of God caused things to be written. Let me illustrate:

- a) I would never intentionally make a man an erroneous teacher for a word, yet it must be stated (a fact we all know) God never died for sinners and Christ never loved the world. That which the scriptures teach is, it was God who loved the world (Jn. 3:16) and “Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6). “While we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).
- b) Again, while we read that God loved the world, we never read “Christ loved the world”, but rather, “Christ loved the church” (Eph. 5:25); but we never read that God loved the church.

In considering the love of divine Persons, there are few passages which show how totally undeserving man is of love than Rom. 5:6-10. While the love of God who gave His “Son” is the background theme and distinctly mentioned, yet the major focus is manifestation of the sacrificial love of Christ who “Died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6); “Died for us” (Rom. 5:8); “Saved us from wrath” (Rom. 5:9); and “By whose death we are reconciled” (Rom. 5:10). It was for the very ones whom God describes as ungodly, enemies, sinners (Rom. 5:6, 8, 10), for those who have an unrepentant heart and are building the increasing of the wrath of God against them (paraphrase Rom. 2:5). God’s declaration of all humanity is, “There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10-12). This is speaking about each of us as individuals, yet, you and I are the individuals God loved and Christ offered Himself to suffer the penalty of the sins of each individual.

Divine Love To The Most Undeserving

When the Holy Spirit graciously causes one to muse on the clauses, “Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom 5:6), “died for us” (Rom. 5:8), and “gave himself for me” as an individual (Gal. 2:20), it becomes so overwhelming, especially when seen against the background of what we are naturally. I recall some years ago when I was having meetings up in northern Canada, it was the time of the canola harvest. During the day I went out to help in whatever way I could. I was given the job of standing beside a very large bowl (about 6 feet wide) having a fast turning auger in it which elevated the canola up into a truck. Standing there I saw the most ugly little insect crawling around the canola. It was unknowingly being drawn down toward the fast turning auger in danger of certain death. The thought came to mind, “What sort of love would it take in me, knowing the danger of the little insect, to become like it, to deliver it and give it my life”? Then a second thought was brought to me. For me to take its place it would only be the exchanging of creature with creature but Christ was God, and God the Creator came down and took my place. That is something much higher. Furthermore, the little

insect never did anything against me but I was without merit, utterly undeserving of the slightest iota of God's grace, mercy and love. Profound is the truth that such was His love that He died for me! True are the words of the hymn:

Amazing love how can it be,
That Thou my God should'st die for me.

When we speak of the death of our Lord it must be understood that it is not His physical death alone. The context must determine what is being spoken of. When God created Adam, he was told not to eat the fruit of the tree for in the day that he did, he would surely die (Gen. 2:17). God did not say, "If you eat of the tree", for He knew man would eat it thus, He said, "For in the day thou eatest". God knew man would be a rebel and when he ate it he died spiritually, that is, his fellowship with God was severed and nothing man could do would restore it. Man had become ungodly, a sinner, an enemy, and without strength. For Christ to provide reconciliation and peace with God, Christ had to know what it was to be forsaken by God, to be judged as one who was ungodly, a sinner and an enemy. It must be clear that Christ never became a sinner, ungodly or an enemy. It was during the three hours of darkness when the Lord was forsaken by God (Matt. 27:46), made a curse (Gal. 3:13), and shed His blood (Lk. 22:20) that He did all that was necessary for my salvation, bearing the hell I deserved, and in love offers each salvation.

Love produced pity and pity was shown in grace when God condescended to come to our aid when we were, "without strength". Being without strength indicates more than being weak. In this context it carries the truth of being incapable of providing a personal righteousness befitting to God. This is emphasized by Paul when he writes, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh" (Rom. 8:3), that is, no matter how hard a person tries they will break the law. The law was not meant to show us how to be right before God, but it is like a mirror. When I look in the mirror after I have worked in the garden it shows my dirtiness. It does not inform me how to get clean but only that I need something to make me clean. So with salvation and the law. The law shows me my sinfulness and then applying the precious blood of the Lord to myself I am clean and ready to face God. Moreover, man is irreverent, meaning "ungodly". He is seen as an insolent and arrogant individual, mocking God without fear. Moreover, he mocks the very offering for sin, and as Hebrews records, "trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant . . . an unholy thing" (Heb. 10:29), yet for such despicable beings the Lord displayed His love. Well might we sing:

"On such love my soul still ponder
Love so great so full so free,
Say while lost in Holy wonder
Why O Lord such love to me?"

Paul continues, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). We were both sinful and sinners. As preachers used to say, sinners by nature and practice. Finally there is added, "enemies". We are actively involved in hostility against God and Christ. How beautiful then was the fragrance, the savour (Lev. 1:13) of the Lord to God, a man who was never ungodly, a sinner or an enemy, but being perfect was able to bring perpetual delight to the heart of God and be the perfect sacrifice for sin.

The Lord said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13). We were not His friends but His enemies. Some years ago there was a train which carried hundreds of passengers into a major city. Part of the journey was across a bridge which lifted up for ships to pass under. One day the man who controlled the lifting and lowering of the bridge had his little son, His only son, with him. Somehow the child fell into the gears as the bridge was going down. It was at that moment the man heard the whistle of the approaching train. The only way to release his son was to lift the bridge, but to do that would mean a train crash and many would lose their lives. Frantically he struggled to save the child but there came a moment when a decision had to be made, save the child or save the people. Deliberately he released the lever and the bridge continued to lower and the train went safely across, but it cost the death of his son.

- a) Would he have done that had they been his enemies?
- a) Had the child known that which lay ahead, would he have gone?
- b) Had the Father known that which lay ahead, would he have brought his son?

God gave His son and Christ gave Himself, both knowing the bitterness of the cup He would drink, draining it to its last dark dregs, and doing this was in love for those who hated Him. Infinite immeasurable love!

- a) In this case, the duty of the father and amazing compassion for the lives of others caused him to give his son that the passengers might live. God and Christ went far beyond this, for God gave His son and Christ gave Himself for those who were ungodly, sinners and enemies that they might live eternally.

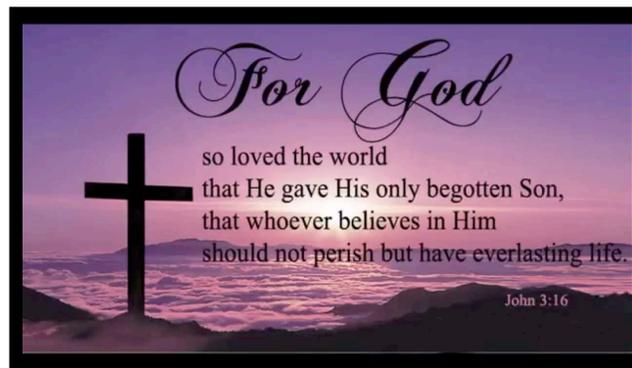
What sort of death was it?

- 1) The Holy Spirit and the Lord tell us the characteristics of His death.
 - a) “He offered up Himself” (Heb. 7:27)
 - b) “An offering and a sacrifice to God” (Eph. 5:2)
 - c) “By which sacrifice we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ” (Heb. 10:10)
 - d) “By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14)

- 2) When our Lord manifested the fulness of His love for the unsaved.
 - a) “He offered up himself” (Heb. 7:27). It was an act of His own volition. It was not something he was pressured or obligated to do.
 - b) He could say, “I lay it down of myself” (Jn. 10:18). It was a sovereign activity.
 - c) It was a substitutional work for He said, “I lay down my life for the sheep” (Jn. 10:15).
 - d) Thank God this was not the end for it was a victorious work. He laid down His life, “That I might take it again” (Jn. 10:17).

There can be no doubt that many an individual will be in hell for all eternity, but they will never be able to say, I was unloved and there was no salvation for me. Individuals make a choice to accept Christ as the only and complete way of salvation or die in their sins.

... Rowan Jennings



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