

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

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

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Why Did Jesus Die?

Introduction

There is a painting of the Lord as a little boy running toward his mother. In the painting his arms are outstretched and because the sun is behind him, his shadow is in front of him. When one looks at the shadow it is in the shape of a cross and the lesson is quite clear, throughout the Lord's earthy sojourn the cross was ever before him. The question it poses is, "Why did Jesus die?" Years ago it was said, "Christ did not come to only preach the gospel, but that there would be a gospel to preach."

The Death of Jesus

Man may talk about the death of our Lord as a martyr's death, a death by the breaking of His heart, etc. However, a consideration of the scriptures will give knowledge to an individual that the sacrifice of the Lord is never referred to as an accident, but as:

- a) A baptism He must experience (Lk. 12:50)
- b) A lifting up He would endure (Jn. 3:14)
- c) A suffering through which He must pass (Lk. 24:7)
- d) An hour in which He would suffer for sins (Jn. 12:27)
- e) A laying down of His life for to save the sheep, they are unable to save themselves (Jn. 10:11)
- f) A fulfilment of Scripture (Lk. 24:44)
- g) A cup which He must drink (Jn. 18:11)
- h) The pouring out His soul unto death (Isa 53:12)
- i) A manifestation of His love (Jn. 3:16)
- j) A vicarious act, He as a substitute for others (Matt. 20: 28)
- k) A gift for the whosoever will (Jn. 6:51)
- l) A work He would accomplish (Jn. 19:30)
- m) A remission He would secure (Matt. 26:28)

A reviewing of these verses bears evidence to the fact that the death of the Lord was:

- a) A carefully planned and executed act of Divine persons manifesting the love of God.
- b) For the eternal salvation of humanity, it was an absolute necessity.
- c) An act of His own volition manifesting the fulness of His mercy, grace and love.
- d) For those who accept it an act of substitution.
- e) The foundation for the purposes of God in the annulling of Satan's power and the defeat of all his devilish attempts to thwart the will of God.
- f) The provision for full reconciliation, perfection of cleansing, freedom of liberation.

It was Divinely planned and executed

One of the questions often asked is, "If God is love, why would He send or leave a person to suffer in Hell for all eternity?" The sad and indeed tragic fact is people do not want to go to hell, but they are not willing to accept the only way of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. By rejecting God's free gift of salvation without works, they are making the decision that they would rather go to Hell than rejecting their dependence on their works and accept the finished work of Christ.

God is love and the evidence for such is provision of the rescuing of sinners to now have eternal salvation provided by the sacrifice of His Son. The entire work of the Lord was a sacrifice of love. Musing on the Lord not only offering Himself to be the sacrifice but being the sacrifice, that was the greatest act of love and self sacrificing time and eternity will ever know.

If there had been any other way for man to come into a right relationship with God via his own endeavours leads to the question, "Why was it a necessity for Jesus to die for our sins"? There are several answers. Heaven would have been filled with boasters singing, "I did it my way". What a depressing place to be for there would be a constant embarrassment over how little one person did and boastfulness of what another did. God has made it plain, being reconciled to God, being justified before God, being in a standing of peace and fellowship with God IS NOT by what I do.

In Romans chapter four Paul writes about two men, one before the law was given and one after the law was given. The question of Job was without a doubt in their minds, "How can a man be justified with God?" This was not a recent concern for many years before Job had asked, almost in frustration, "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job 25:4). God had declared him to be perfect and there was none like Him (Job 1:8; 2:3). Satan brought every affliction that could be tried and Job still retained his steadfastness (Job 13:15).

- a) Why was he being so afflicted, what else could he do to gain God's smile of favour? It plagued him as an unanswerable question since he had tried to do everything right. "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean *that is* born of a woman?" Paul gives God's answer. The question is posed, "What saith the scripture (free translation)?" Abraham believed God and it was counted (reckoned) to him for the reception of God's righteousness" If anyone works for salvation it is a debt and God is brought under obligation. That will never happen so God informs us through Paul, make no mistake, "To him that WORKETH NOT, but believeth on Him (that is God) who justifies the ungodly his faith is counted for (the reception of) righteousness (Rom. 4:5). Abraham lived before the law was given so he could not keep the law to be righteous. David on the other hand was born hundreds of years after the law was given. He was never justified by keeping the law. We all know the law, thou shalt not murder, yet David, by proxy, had a man murdered. Thou shalt not commit adultery, David did that. David broke the law so he could never by keeping it be justified, yet he was, how? David himself wrote, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Rom. 4:7). God informs us how David was justified. It was without works, that is, works he endeavoured to do. Another situation is considered, "Can a person be justified before God by religious ritual, that is, circumcision? Again the answer is given by the case study of Abraham for he was not circumcised, no religious ritual, yet God declares Him righteous (Rom. 4:11). In all three situations an individual can be justified, have the record of all sins eradicated and be brought into full fellowship with God.

However, that leaves a problem. If a person does wrong they cannot just be forgiven and the wrong they did made to seem it is not important. Example: If I went into a home and the individuals had a very expensive Rembrandt painting, but being careless I threw a ball and it cut the painting. If the homeowner said to me, "Well it does not matter", how much value did he put on that painting?

- a) To God, His holiness, His righteousness is beyond value and those who act and live in rebellion against those attributes must be punished. Each of us deserve nothing from God. Every iota of blessing we have comes from Him but such is His love for us that He designed a brilliant plan to restore humanity to Himself. The innocent must become a substitute for the guilty.
- b) However, that leads to another problem, "Is it right for an innocent person to suffer for what another has done?" The answer is a resounding "NO". The only way it is righteous is if the individual, of their own volition, offered to take the punishment for the guilty, and that is what Jesus did. He offered Himself (He volunteered to be Himself the substitute) and God brought to be carried out on the Lord the full penalty for our sins.
- c) Why did Jesus suffer and die? He suffered the Hell I deserved and finished the work for justifying each and every individual if they accept His free gift by faith. Just as by faith they are depending on their works, the individual transfers that faith to total reliance on the suffering Jesus and God declares them righteous and justified before Him.

... Rowan Jennings

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