

GREAT BIBLE TRUTHS

12. Work of Christ (Part 2)



An Introduction

In our previous study we looked at the pre-incarnate ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ and then we began to look at his earthly ministry. We discovered the purpose for his coming in the Old Testament and now we will see what the New Testament teaches.

EARTHLY MINISTRY

2. Purpose of Christ's coming – from the New Testament

(a) Revelation of God

Jesus came to reveal what God was like. He showed us what God was like by his life (John 1:17-18) and his words. (John 3:34, 7:16, 12:49) His death in particular revealed the nature of God.

(1) Holiness of God – *God's hatred of sin*

- Seriousness of sin – could only be forgiven by Christ's death.
- Consequences of sin – separation from God. Isaiah 59:2
- Judgment on sin – death, wrath of God. John 3:36, Romans 5:12, 2 Corinthians 5:21

(2) Love of God – *In dealing with sin*

- Reality of love: Romans 5:8 "God so loved ..
- Extent of love: John 3:16 .. the world
- Nature of love: 1 John 4:9-10 ..that he gave his only Son."

(3) Wisdom & power of God

God used man's sin to accomplish the greatest act of wisdom and power to defeat sin. This was part of his sovereign plan. Acts 2:23, 4:26-28



The apostles always preached that Christ's death was God's plan from the beginning. Why is that important do you think?

(b) Example to man

His life in every way was an example of the kind of life God has for us and wants us to live.



To what extent are we following his example in the following areas? - his dependence on the Holy Spirit for power, his humility, his love and concern for others, and his suffering?

(c) Atonement for men

- The supreme purpose of Christ's coming is to save sinners. Mark 2:17, 1 John 4:14
- Every reference in scripture to the incarnation suggests redemption as the reason, and the Gospels give most attention to this aspect of Jesus' life.

Let us now look at this saving purpose in his life, death, resurrection and ascension.

3. Saving purpose of Christs' life and death

(a) Life

It was Christ's perfect life that made possible his redeeming death. His life was also a preparation for the cross.

(1) Baptism

- This is recorded in all 4 Gospels because of its' significance.
- For Jesus it was an act of dedication, in anticipation of the cross. Jesus was committing himself to the task of leading men and women back to God through the cross.

(2) Temptation

- These only have significance if you understand that Jesus could have chosen an alternative form of Messiahship from what God had planned.
- The first temptation was to urge Jesus not to render complete obedience to what the Father was calling him to do.
- The second was to be a miracle working Messiah, rather than the suffering servant.
- And the third was to make a compromise, by avoiding pain and death, and to be a political leader instead.

(3) Teaching

The fact that Jesus anticipated his death is seen throughout the Gospels. Mark in particular seems to have been written to show critics that Jesus did know this from the beginning of his ministry. Let's look at some examples of this:-

- Mark 2:19-20 The Bridegroom taken away.
- Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34 Jesus speaks of his suffering and death.
- Mark 10:45 'Give his life a ransom for many'
- Mark 12:1-12 Parable of labourers in the vineyard, which anticipates his death and victory.
- Mark 14:8 Anointing at Bethany was preparation for his burial.
- Mark 14:24 New covenant which is poured out. Jeremiah 31:31
- Mark 14:27 'Strike the shepherd'. His death is a fulfilment of this prophecy.
- Mark 14:32-42 His agony in the Garden of Gethsemene.
- Mark 15:34 His cry of desolation.



*How could Jesus have known he was going to die?
Were the sufferings of Christ only physical?*

(b) Death of Christ

The last week of Jesus' life takes up one third of the Gospels. His life prepared for his death, and without this there could be no atonement.

(1) Cross was no accident

- Planned before the foundation of the world. Acts 2:23, 1 Peter 1:20
- Seen in the Old Testament sacrificial system with priests and sacrifices, etc.
- Seen in the picture of the Passover lamb. Exodus 12:21-23, 1 Corinthians 5:7

(2) Cross was God's initiative

- John 3:16, Romans 3:25, Isaiah 53:10

(3) Christ died willingly

- John 10:11-18, Ephesians 5:2, Hebrews 10:5-10

(4) Christ bore the punishment due to us

- 1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53:12

What did the death of Christ do? This is shown to us in Scripture in many ways. One of those ways is by the use of various illustrations which portray the various aspects of his death. You cannot get a true picture by looking at one of these ways alone, but you must see them all together to understand what God has done for us in Christ. We will continue looking at those in our next study.



Are we living in the light of all Jesus has done for us through his death? What difference should this make to our lives? 1 Corinthians 7:23, Ephesians 5:2, Hebrews 9:14



Spend time remembering all Jesus has done for you!