

GREAT BIBLE TRUTHS

13. Work of Christ (Part 3)



An Introduction

We have been looking at the purpose of Christ's coming from the New Testament, and have seen that his life was preparation for his death. Different illustrations are given in the Scriptures to portray the various aspects of his death, so we are going to look at these now.

PICTURES OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST

1. Legal Terms

(a) Justification

- Paul's argument in Romans and Galatians is that Christ, the righteous, bore God's judgment against us, the unrighteous, when he was nailed to the cross. 1 Peter 3:18
- So God justifies us and declares us righteous (*i.e. that there is nothing against us*) on the basis of what Christ has done. Romans 3:24-25, 4:25, 5:9, 18
- It does not depend on anything we have done. We are simply justified through faith in his death. Romans 4:24

(b) Redemption

- If we know the background of this word in the Old Testament, it will help us understand what this word means. E.g. God redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt, the redemption of property, a friend or relative redeeming a slave.
- There is a two-fold meaning to this word: freeing of a slave and payment of a price.
- We belong to God but sold ourselves into sin, so Christ has bought us back. The price was his blood. Acts 20:28
- We are freed from the power of Satan and death. Hebrews 2:14
- See use of word 'redeem': 1 Corinthians 1:30, 7:23, Galatians 3:13, Ephesians 1:7

(c) Covenant

- A new covenant had been promised. Jeremiah 31:31-34
- This covenant is only possible through the death of Christ. Hebrews 8:6, 9:14-22

2. Social metaphors

(a) Atonement (*Expiation or Propitiation*)

- When a crime has been committed, punishment is deserved and justice must be satisfied.
- As sinners, we are under the wrath of God and his judgment on sin must be satisfied.
- Christ averted God's wrath, and by accepting this, we no longer come under God's wrath, and reconciliation is possible. Romans 3:25, 1 John 2:2, 4:10

(b) Reconciliation

- Our relationship with God was estranged by sin, but Christ made it possible for God and us to come together. Romans 5:10-11, 2 Corinthians 5:17-20
- The result is peace between us. Ephesians 2:15-16, Colossians 1:20

3. Military Terms

(a) Deliverance

- Rightfully we belong to God, but sin has made us captive to the enemy, Satan. Ephesians 4:8
- Christ conquered Satan and evil on the cross and his victory is proven by the resurrection. John 12:31, Colossians 2:15
- Either we remain slaves to sin or accept Christ's death and are freed to serve God.
- Now we have deliverance from:-

Condemnation of the law	Romans 8:1
Bondage of the flesh	Romans 7:5
Satan and evil spirits	Galatians 4:3
Death and hell	Hebrews 2:14-15

4. Sacrificial Metaphors

(a) Sacrifice

- As Priest: Christ fully represented us, and continues to represent us in Heaven as High Priest. He presented a sacrifice that could atone for sin forever. Hebrews 2:17, 4:14-15, 7:26-28
- As sacrifice: Christ offered himself for us as the Lamb of God without spot or blemish. John 1:29
- His death was the means of our atonement. Hebrews 9:11-22, 10:10
- Thus Christ was our representative and substitute, suffering as man for men.

(b) Representative *Isaiah 53:5-6*

- Christ is the only one who can represent us to God, as he understands us and knows the mind of God. As our representative he received our judgement and we receive his justification. 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Baptism is a picture of death and resurrection, and in this act we die with him to sin and rise again to new life. Romans 6, Galatians 2:20
- As sinners we were represented at Calvary by those who crucified him, but as Christians we are represented by Christ himself on the cross.

(c) Substitute

- From these pictures we have seen what God has done for us through the cross.
- Now we can know the Father and receive the benefits Christ has won for us – spiritual blessings and eternal life. Ephesians 1:18, John 3:15, 6:44



Would it have been possible for God to save us in any other way, other than by the death of his Son? Why or why not?

Do you think the death of Christ is still necessary and effective for today? Hebrews 9:26, 10:11-14



What picture of the death of Christ is most meaningful to you? Spend time giving thanks to God for all he has done for you.