

Why Did Christ Die?

Those who oppose the vicarious offering of Christ, admit, of course, that he died, and to give an explanation of the cause of His death falls upon them, and it is attempted. They deny that in any sense He died in our stead, and one statement made in explanation is: Christ became one of us, to share with us the ills of life, and die like us for the same reason that we die, because being flesh, and the flesh life being forfeited, he must die.

The same teacher says: "A little Scripture is worth more than a great deal of reasoning." We accept this as true, because God's word is based on the infinite philosophy, which is not always revealed, and even if it were stated in words would be so far above the grasp of finite minds, that it would still remain unrevealed. He withholds the philosophy of some facts which are clearly revealed. If it be true that Christ died as one of us merely, we must infer that it was as necessary that he should die for himself, as that we should die for ourselves, on the principle of the same philosopher (?): "Each one must suffer his own penalty." Against such reasoning we are willing to set the word of the Lord and abide the issue.

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off BUT NOT FOR HIMSELF." Dan. 9:26. It has been attempted to make it appear that Christ's sacrifice consisted in giving up his glory with the Father, in becoming a man. But even if it could be proven (which it cannot) that the Word becoming flesh was a cutting off, or a death, still that imaginary death could not be the one referred to in the above text. Those weeks, as has often been shown, reached to the baptism of Jesus, where he being Christ-ened or more properly, in English, Anointed, he was manifested as the Messiah. And after the weeks Messiah shall be cut off.

"He was cut off out of the land of the living: (not for himself) for the transgression of my people was he stricken." Isa. 53:8.

"For His life is taken from the earth." Acts 8:33.

His voluntary condescension in laying aside His glory and riches, to become a man, or to take the body prepared for sacrifice, is an important fact, and as an expression of the love of Christ, one which we delight to see and present to others; but the taking of the body to be offered, is surely not to be confounded with the "offering of the body of Jesus Christ." Heb. 10:10. "Being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death even the death of the cross." Phil. 2:8. We are lower than the angels, "And we see Jesus made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death,... that he by the grace of God might taste death for every man" (but not for himself). Heb. 2:9. The man died, he became a man for that purpose.

"There is one God and one Mediator between God and men – the MAN Christ Jesus, who gave himself (the man) a ransom for all," &c. (but not for Himself). 1 Tim. 2:5,6. The ransom or price of anything always takes the place of the thing bought, and in that sense Christ gave his flesh life for the deliverance of man from death. Heb. 2:14,15. In the same sense that He is our Price, He is our Substitute. If a man knows not in what sense He was our Ransom or Price, he cannot see in Christ our Substitute.

Adam is the natural man. He lost his life, the natural life. When he forfeited his life, we being in him forfeited ours, and "so death passed upon all for in him all have sinned." To redeem Adam, secures the recovery of all. Christ takes Adam's place, and thus the place of all, for Adam represents all. As Adam was a natural man and lost his natural or flesh life, the Redeemer must become a man in order that he might have a flesh life to give as Ransom. Hence He took our nature, and for the purpose named. Heb. 2:14,16. Here is the point where Christ needed more than Adam. Adam had but one nature – the human,

while Christ had two – the human and Divine. In Christ's earth life the human was manifest in form, but the Divine indwelling was the power, and "glory as of the only begotten of the Father." John 1:14. In Christ's risen and glorified life He wears the Divine form or image of His Father. The flesh life of Christ satisfied the claim as a Ransom, but the Divine secured the resurrection and change to a spiritual body or form.

Had Christ been merely human his death would have been as Adam's, but a Mighty One is provided who could give away all that Adam, and all in him, had lost, and yet have an infinite fullness of life. "He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit." 1 Pet. 3:18. The Ransom secures man's recovery or reconciliation, but Christ's Divine life imparted to us secures eternal salvation. "Reconciled by His death, saved by His life." Rom. 5:10. Thus Christ is the Redeemer, and also the second Adam, or head of a new and Divine race. Oh the fullness of Christ! Man's life lost, if not redeemed must have been lost eternally, and man's life is redeemed, but Christ's flesh life was not redeemed, it was given up forever. He gave it as man's Substitute. But was not Christ's flesh preserved and made alive? Yes, but not made alive by the flesh life, but by the Spirit as shown above. When it was raised it was made spiritual, for He was the "First Born from the dead." "And that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Jno. 3:6. As of Him so are all who are made partakers of His Divine nature, their mortal bodies will be made alive, but like His, "it is raised a spiritual body." If a mortal body quickened is of necessity mortal still, then indeed an enemy reconciled may be an enemy still, (Rom. 5:10) as is claimed by some. But if that is true then a vile body changed must be vile still, and when God converts the unconverted, they will be unconverted still.

Where then is our hope? How strange that men will reason so strangely.

The same writer who says Christ died because He was mortal, also says He died to get rid of His flesh, and show us the way into the holiest and that He went through as the First and our Forerunner, the last of which is true; but if as the same writer assumes Christ and the Saints are all raised in the flesh and changed afterward, then how much does dying help them to get rid of the flesh? Are such inconsistencies the marks of a "clean theology?" Why do men continue to die if Christ is Substitute. He died to make men alive. He found them counted dead. Practically the work of Christ converts death into a sleep, for all who die. Sleep implies waking. Absolute death knows no waking. We have the word of Jesus that "The maid is not dead but sleepeth," and "Lazarus sleepeth." They were to wake. In the statement "Man does not die," the word die is used in the same sense as Jesus used it, and those who cavil at the statement know what is meant, and believe the same themselves. Let them settle it with the Master. He gained the power to deliver from death when he died. Heb. 2:14,15. But he does not use that power (only in a few special cases) until the "Times of Restitution." The plan is to save men first, and bring them to the knowledge of the truth afterward. So in "due time" the fact that Christ gave himself a Ransom for all will be testified. 1 Tim. 2:4,6. Men born in that age will not even "fall asleep" for Adam's sin, and it will not be so difficult for them to believe in Substitution. They will realize that the Ransom paid is what prevents the original sentence passed upon all, from being executed upon them. Now, because we are exceptions to the rule, i.e. get the light or the knowledge of the truth before the "due time," it seems more difficult to catch the idea of the Ransom. As we are now counted dead in Adam before we die, so we are counted redeemed in Christ, and we are dealt with in regard to the truth as if we had actually been dead and raised again. This is why those who now become partakers of the Divine nature are not raised in the flesh, like the rest of mankind, who have not heard the Gospel, but having here, like their Head, voluntarily crucified the flesh with its affections

and lusts, are raised a spiritual body, and to a share in His work of restoring and enlightening the world. The world of mankind will be raised in the same kind of life that Adam lost, and by the knowledge of the truth be begotten to a higher life. If they obey the law of that higher life, they will never die, but will be changed into the immortal state. If they disobey they must die – the second death. Some talk of the necessity of death as if a change from mortality to immortality were death. An egg is not lost that develops into a chicken; a grub does not die that changes into a butterfly; "Enoch was translated that he should not see death."

Those who die in the future age will be as an egg with a germ of life implanted and begun to hatch, and then removed from proper heat and moisture. No man will die eternally for Adam's sin. Christ hath redeemed us once for all. And he has redeemed all. This salvation by Christ's death does not secure spiritual life for any, but it makes it possible for all. The knowledge of the truth, which is the begetting power, is the gift of God to all. But when the new life by the Spirit of Truth is begun, man is held responsible to obey. The salvation by Christ's death is the "foundation for repentance," because it is the goodness of God that leadeth men to repentance. Hence to ignore the value of Christ's death, is to belittle God's love and saving power. For God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Rom. 5:6.

We are glad now this subject is agitated, as it is to us an additional evidence that the "due time" is dawning in which God's love in giving Christ as a Ransom for all, is to be made known. Oh that those who oppose it may not be of those who have known and then rejected.

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