

13 April 2014

The Significance of the Lord Jesus' death

Given that the major Christian denominations around the world celebrate Easter from Friday 18 April to Monday 21st of April, and given that the Jehovah's Witness (JW) churches have sent out invitations to homes around Auckland inviting people to a meeting to "listen to a brief talk" that "will explain why Jesus' death is so important", we put forward this study of the Scriptures as a comparison with what the JW's say.

We did not attend their meetings but it would be reasonable to suggest that any teaching from the JW's would be in-line with their church's official instruction. Therefore, we provide this study on the death of Christ, and a subsequent study on His resurrection, as outlined in Holy Scripture, and compare what the Scriptures say to the JW's doctrine. In the hope that we can learn more about the importance of the Lord's death as recorded by the Holy Spirit of God in the Authorised Bible, and encourage believers to identify a counterfeit man-made religion that our adversary uses to deceive people by using bible words, and a corrupt copy of the Scriptures, to establish doctrine that is "like" Biblical doctrine yet contradictory to Biblical teaching.

For our study of what the Scriptures say about the significance of the death of Christ, we have searched the Scriptures using the words "die", "death", "died" and "sacrifice" in a concordance, and considered the verses that apply to the death of Christ. In doing so hope we have captured the majority of verses that speak of Christ's death.

We will establish thirteen points about the significance of Christ's death:-

(1) Christ laid down his life, and (2) He died for the ungodly, and (3) His death was for every man, and (4) Christ's death was a sacrifice unto the Father for man's sins, and (5) a sinner is justified when they believe their sin is on Christ on the cross, and (6) a sinner is saved from wrath through Christ's death, and (7) a sinner is redeemed through Christ's death, and (8) a saved sinner is imputed with Christ's righteousness through Christ's death, and (9) a saved sinner receives eternal life in heaven through Christ's death, and (10) therefore, Christ's death brings reconciliation to God, and (11) Christ's death provides the believer with a hope that he will be *with Him* in heaven, and he has power over death, and (12) in His death Christ showed obedience unto the Father in all things, even unto *death*, and (13) a believer is baptised into His death, and is to remember His death, and show forth His death.

Before we consider these points, let us establish some back-ground on Man's sin until the time of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth:-

a) Man dies because of Adam's sin.

Rom.5:14 & 21 *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come...That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

b) God's chosen people Israel, were given the law that they, and all men, would be without excuse, they would forever have the knowledge of sin (Rom.3: 20).

c) As part of the law, Israel, when they as a nation and as individuals transgressed the law, were given a means to be temporarily righteous before God through a spotless animal sacrifice, where "the blood of bulls, goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling of the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh" (Heb.9: 13), once a year, for the sin of the people and the high priest (Ex.30: 10, Lev.16: 34 & Heb.9: 7).

d) Since Adam's sin, prophets of God have foretold Christ's death (Is.53 & Matt.10: 33, 34).

e) The Lord Jesus Himself foretold His death (Jn.18: 32).

f) The religious leaders of the day, the chief priests and elders, sought to put Jesus to death (Matt. 26: 59), because they believed He had committed blasphemy, which was punishable by death (Mk. 14: 64).

g) The Lord Jesus had done nothing worthy of death, He committed no sin (Lk.23: 15, 16 & 1Pet.2: 22). Even Herod found no fault in him (see Lk.23: 14 & 15). Yet, the chief priests and elders of Israel, those who hoped to see the Messiah, called for His crucifixion, they jumped-up charges and cried out for Him to be crucified (Lk.23: 21, 24: 20), He was put on a cross, whilst a murderer was released (Lk.23: 18).

WHY? Given that all men everywhere die, what is so important about Christ's death? What is the significance of His death for mankind? We answer this question with thirteen points:-

1. Christ laid down his life.

1Jn.3: 16 *Hereby perceive we the love [of God], because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down [our] lives for the brethren.*

2. Christ died for the ungodly.

Rom.5: 6, 7 & 8 *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man would one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were sinners Christ died for us.*

3. Christ's death was for all men.

Heb.2: 9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

Given that all men have sinned (Rom.3: 9, 10 & 23), Christ therefore, died for all, His death was for every man. He didn't just die for the elect, or the 144,000 in Rev.7: 14. Christ died for all our sins (1Cor.15: 3). "In that he died, he died unto sin once" (Rom.6: 10).

Rom.6: 10 *For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

4. Christ's death was a sacrifice unto the Father for man's sins.

Heb.10: 12 *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

A sacrifice that can never be repeated (Heb.10: 10). An organisation that calls themselves "the church", cannot be "the church", if they hold a Mass each Sunday where the sacrifice of Christ is repeated (Rom.5: 10).

5) A sinner is justified when they believe their sin is on Christ on the cross.

Gal.3: 22 *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* Rom.5: 9 *Much more then being justified by his blood [which He shed at His death], we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

6) A sinner is saved from wrath through Christ's death.

Gal.3: 22 *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* Rom.5: 9 *Much more then being justified by his blood [which He shed at His death], we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

7) A saved sinner is redeemed through Christ's death.

Eph.1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

See also Col.1: 14 & Heb.9: 12

8) A saved sinner receives eternal life through Christ's death.

Rom 5: 21 *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

See also Rom.6: 23

If man rejects God's free gift of His Son, the wrath of God is upon him and he is condemned already, he will spend an eternity in hell (Ps.9: 17).

9) A saved sinner is imputed with Christ's righteousness, through Christ's death.

Col.1: 22 *In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight:*

10) Christ's death brings reconciliation to God.

Rom.5: 10 *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

See also 1Pet.3: 18

11) Christ's death provides the believer with the hope that he will be *with Him* in heaven, and has power over death.

1Thes.5: 10 *Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*

12) In His death Christ showed obedience unto the Father, even unto death on the cross.

Php.2: 8 *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

13) A believer is baptized into His death and is to remember His death, and show forth his death.

Rom.6: 3 *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 1Cor 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

We now have an understanding of what the Bible says, now what does the JW say? See <http://www.jw.org/en/publications/books/bible-teach/the-ransom-gods-greatest-gift/>

"When God created humans, he intended for them to live forever on earth without ever suffering sickness or death. However, the first man, Adam, disobeyed the Creator and lost the prospect of living forever. As descendants of

Adam, we inherited death from him. (Rom.5:8, 12; 6:23) The true God, Jehovah, sent his Son, Jesus, to the earth to die and redeem what Adam had lost. — Read John 3:16. Jesus' death makes forgiveness of our sins and life without end possible for us.

Since a perfect human life was lost, no imperfect human life could ever buy it back. (Ps.49:7, 8) What was needed was a ransom equal in value to what was lost.

How did Jehovah provide the ransom? He sent one of his perfect spirit sons to the earth. But Jehovah did not send just any spirit creature. He sent the one most precious to him, his only-begotten Son. By means of God's holy spirit, Jesus was born as a perfect human and was not under the penalty of sin. — Luke 1:35. How was the ransom paid? On the 14th day of the Jewish month Nisan in 33 C.E., God allowed his perfect and sinless Son to be executed. Jesus thus sacrificed his perfect human life "once for all time." (Hebrews 10:10) On the third day after Jesus died, Jehovah raised him back to spirit life. In heaven, Jesus presented to God the value of his perfect human life sacrificed as a ransom in exchange for Adam's offspring. (Hebrews 9:24) Jehovah accepted the value of Jesus' sacrifice as the ransom needed to deliver mankind from slavery to sin and death. — Romans 3:23, 24.

The ransom is Jehovah's means to deliver humankind from sin and death. Ephesians 1:7.

Jehovah provided the ransom by sending his only-begotten Son to earth to die for us. 1 John 4:9, 10.

By means of the ransom, we gain the forgiveness of sins, a clean conscience, and the hope of everlasting life. 1 John 1:8, 9. We show that we appreciate the ransom by getting to know more about Jehovah, by exercising faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice, and by attending the Lord's Evening Meal. John 3:16."

Each of us could do the same exercise and compare what Scripture says compared to the Roman Catholics, Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists and any other "Christian" church the world believes to be "just" another denomination. And you will find two things in common:

1. Each will use similar words to the Bible.
2. Each will have "some" truth to what they say.

So, how does the reader establish which is truth and which is error, given that our study is from the Scriptures and the JW quotes bible verses as well?

First, they compare the JW doctrine to the Scriptures to see what is missing and second they establish any contradictions between the JW doctrine and the Scriptures.

i) Comparison between the Scriptures and the JW doctrine

a) A first glance indicates that the JW teaching refers to the word *ransom* whereas the word, although in Scripture, did not appear in our study. This was because the word *ransom* does not occur in Scripture with the words "die" "death" or "sacrifice". Yet, Scripture does say that "*the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*" (Matt.20: 28).

Hence we appreciate this contribution from their study, that Jesus' death was a ransom for our sin.

b) The JW doctrine excludes our points 4-13 above, with one correction, they do speak about everlasting life, but without going into what that means. However, we know that they teach a believer's soul sleeps after death until he returns as one of the 144, 000 back to earth when the Lord reigns, which is unsupported by Scripture. Therefore, they err, not knowing the Holy Scriptures.

ii) Contradictions between JW teaching and what the Scriptures say.

a) In the JW teaching they say that God "*sent one of his perfect spirit sons to the earth.*". This contradicts Scripture on two accounts. God only had *one* Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, He was also God incarnate in the flesh, and he is never referred to as a "spirit son". Therefore, they err, not knowing the Scriptures.

From our study, we encourage you to know what the Scriptures say first, whether it be about the Lord Jesus' birth, His death, His resurrection, or any other topic. Then look for aspects of instruction that are not supported in Scripture, and those that are contrary to Scripture. Such that when the Lord, even Jesus, opens up an opportunity for you to speak with a "Christian" from any denomination, you are able to show them "what saith the Scriptures", and able to convince the gainsayers (Tit.1: 9).

Having said what we have said let us say it again. In this study on the significance of the death of Christ we have covered thirteen points: (1) Christ laid down his life, and (2) He died for the ungodly, and (3) His death was for every man, and (4) Christ's death was a sacrifice unto the Father for man's sins, and (5) a sinner is justified when they believe their sin is on Christ on the cross, and (6) a sinner is saved from wrath through Christ's death, and (7) a sinner is redeemed through Christ's death, and (8) a saved sinner is imputed with Christ's righteousness through Christ's death, and (9) a saved sinner receives eternal life in heaven through Christ's death, and (10) therefore, Christ's death brings reconciliation to God, and (11) Christ's death provides the believer with a hope that he will be *with Him* in heaven, and he has power over death, and (12) in His death Christ showed obedience unto the Father in all things, even unto *death*, and (13) a believer is baptised into His death, and is to remember His death, and show forth His death.