

## Searching the Scriptures / 9 / Christ’s Death / Part 4

As a young boy, I grew up in a denomination where crucifixes were prominently displayed. For two years I also attended a school for missionary children in Japan, where I am sure I heard about the death of Christ, but I don’t remember ever hearing about its true meaning with any real understanding. God had not yet opened my spiritual eyes and ears. I was dead in trespasses and sins, as the Bible declares. It wasn’t until I was in college that I was confronted with the reality of the death of Christ and of the fact that His death was not merely an interesting historical event – but a matter of supreme importance.

Paradoxically, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is more important than even his amazing life. We read the following in Hebrews 10:

Heb 10:1-4 *“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. {2} For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. {3} But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. {4} For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”*

Heb 10:8-10 *“Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; {9} Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. {10} By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”*

Because sin is so horrible, the Bible teaches us that from eternity past the Lord Jesus would be the sacrificial Lamb of God. Rev 13:8 declares, *“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*

Acts 2:23 also states, *“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”* In the book of Acts Luke, the physician under the inspiration of God, gives us a bird’s eye view of the people and their religious leaders’ sentiment toward this controversial Galilean named Jesus of Nazareth. Acts 13:27-28 says, *“For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.”*

A deep spiritual poverty existed in Jesus’ day *“because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day”*– and the same is true today. In other words, the people did not recognize their Messiah, God Incarnate, and neither did they understand the Old Testament Scriptures that pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus emphasized this in John 5:39-40 where He affirmed, *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”*

Let’s look a little more closely at the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus to better understand the spiritual significance of His death. In order to be the sacrificial Lamb “slain from [before] the foundation of the world” (as we read in Rev 13:8), Jesus had to become a man. This in itself is humbling for eternal, infinite God. We read in 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.*” In Heb 12:2 we find this statement, “*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*” In Heb 2:14 we find these words, “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same...*”

Secondly, Christ also had to become something that is absolutely contrary to His perfect, holy, sinless, nature – He had to become sin, as we read in 2 Cor 5:21, “*For he[God the Father] hath made him [God the Son] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*”

Thirdly, Christ became a curse for those He came to save. To become a curse means to be suffer eternal damnation for each individual Christian. Gal 3:13 says, “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*”

Fourthly, Christ’s death served to free the true believers from their bondage to sin, the world, and Satan. Heb 2:14 declares, “*... that through death he [Christ] might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*”

Fifthly, Christ’s death was foretold in Scripture hundreds and even thousands of years before it took place. In order to accomplish His divine mission, the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world had one day to be physically betrayed by one of his disciples, to allow Himself to be betrayed, captured, humiliated, beaten, and crucified. Mat 26:2 informs us, “*Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.*” His death was the means that God decreed to reconcile every Christian to the Father, as Isa 53:5 dramatically points out: “*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*” That is, Christ’s death resulted in spiritual healing for all whom He came to save.

As we contemplate this wonderful truth, may we be convicted to faithfully share the wonderful message of salvation to all with whom we come in contact.