

Did Jesus Die in Vain?
8-18-13

When we study the purpose or work of the death of Jesus, we find it is a complicated study. We find a number of passages that speak to the accomplishments of the death of Jesus. In Colossians 1:19-23, Paul summed up the great meaning of the death of Jesus on the cross by reminding us of the authority behind it, and the great need we had for it.

However, consider something said by the Apostle Paul: *"I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."* (Galatians 2:21). How could Jesus Christ "die in vain"? If asked, most would readily say Jesus did not die in vain. But many people believe things that suggest the opposite. Many people conduct themselves in ways that make Jesus' death in vain.

1. Jesus Died in Vain If Moses' Law is Still in Effect. According to Galatians 2:20-21 and Hebrews 9:15-18, Jesus' death served the purpose of removing all preceding covenants. If someone then attempts to justify themselves by these disposed doctrines, they are making the death of Jesus a vain thing.

2. Jesus Died in Vain If You Must Live by the 10 Commandments. According to Colossians 2:13-14, the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross. If you were to teach or believe that the Ten Commandments were still necessary or valid today, then Jesus died in vain.

3. Jesus Died in Vain If There is a Difference in Jew and Gentile. In Ephesians 2:13-16 we read that Jesus' death served to remove the division between Jew and Gentile. If we teach or believe that the Jews of today are still God's people, that the nation of Israel is a chosen nation, then we teach and believe that Jesus death was in vain.

4. Jesus Died in Vain If You Can Be Saved in Any Manner. Jesus speaks to His death in John 3:14-16, 12:32-33. When we add this to Romans 6:3-6, we find that baptism is the means to access the death on the cross. To the Christian mind, Baptism IS the cross. Yet many believe or teach that we need not be baptized to be saved; effectively, they believe we need not go to the cross to be saved. Therefore, by teaching the sinners prayer, "letting Jesus in your heart", or other invalid forms of salvation, they make the cross a vain thing.

5. Jesus Died in Vain If You Don't Need the Lord's Church. In Acts 20:28 Paul told the Ephesian elders that Jesus' blood was the purchase price of the church. Jesus planned, heads, and paid for with His death the church. Yet many say that one does not need the church in order to be a faithful Christian. If not, why did Jesus die to purchase it? Thus they render the death on the cross a vain thing.

These doctrines are bad enough. But did you know that your conduct can render the cross a vain thing? In Hebrews 6:4-6 the writer says that those who are saved, if they turn away into sin, make the cross a meaningless thing. Again in Hebrews 10:26-29 we are told that to turn to sin after becoming a Christian counts the blood of the cross a common thing.

We believe that Jesus did not die in vain. To do so means we must believe everything about the work of the cross, including the promise it makes of a resurrection. Its value is completely up to you.