

Understanding Jesus' Death

10-5-14

In I Corinthians 1:17-18 Paul said that the Word of the Cross is the Power of God (to Salvation). Compare this to the Gospel's power in Romans 1. In Galatians 6:12-14 he made it clear that the Cross has personal application to the Christian. By it we die to the world; to the Christian, the cross is the instrument that divides us from the world.

How did Jesus death save us?

We must see it as a sacrifice to appease the wrath of God. Passages such as Hebrews 10:5-13 or Isaiah 53:10 use the language of the sacrifice to describe Jesus death. As well, His death is the means by which the pre-existing covenants (from Adam through Moses) which were broken by men. The only manner in which covenants can be renewed was by the death of the testator. Thus Jesus died to create a new covenant (Romans 7:1-4).

Fundamentally, Jesus' death represents an atonement. Atonement literally means covering (think of the ark of Noah covered with pitch; the Hebrew word for atonement refers to pitch). It means a payment for sin. There are different words meaning the same thing used to describe Jesus' death:

Matthew 20:28 – Ransom

Titus 2:14 – Redemption

Galatians 3:13 - Redeemer

Why Jesus Died?

Jesus' death was the ONLY WAY to save us. Jesus said as much in John 12:23-24. In Hebrews 2:14 we find that only by death could Jesus overcome death. He died so that we can die to sin thru Him (Romans 6:3-6).

Redemption or Substitution?

If Jesus' death was redemptive, then we should conclude that Jesus' death was not a substitution for us. Meaning: Jesus did not take our sins personally, He paid for our sins by His death. He did not become sinful (filled with sin) as clearly stated in Hebrews 4:15. God NEVER regarded Him as sinful (1 Peter 2:21-24).

Jesus' death was not a substitution for us. There are a number of passages that cause some question about this. 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:13, & Romans 8:13 carefully do not state Jesus was sinful, but paid a price for our sin; therefore, these passages tell us that Jesus' death was due to sin (ours, not his). In Matthew 27:46 Jesus quoted Psalm 22, not because God had forsaken Him due to His sins, but to draw our attention to the suffering Messiah prophesied in that passage/chapter.

We know this because the wage of sin is SPIRITUAL death, not physical death (Romans 6:23). One of many times this is made clear is Revelation 20:14 (Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death). Jesus ONLY died physically (1 Peter 3:18), not spiritually.

Simply Stated: 1 John 3:5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.