

Last week we studied whether it was necessary that Christ should die for us and we saw that it was required because of God's justice, God's truth, God's promises, and because it was foretold that it should happen in this manner.

We looked at the importance of maintaining the integrity of Scripture by having Christ's death being foretold by the prophets, the law and the types of Christ, which did two things: it reminded the Old Testament saints of God's justice, truth and promises; and it manifested it when those promises and types of Christ were revealed exactly as the Scriptures foretold. We know, by that, that the Scriptures are true and the inerrant Word of God.

It is important that we regularly remind ourselves that the Scriptures are true because God engineered from before creation the manner in which He revealed himself.

We previously identified one of the four strands that hold the entire Scriptural revelation together, namely, prophecy and outcome. When the death of the Messiah was announced throughout Old Testament history by various prophets and types of Christ, there were also many false prophets who declared doctrines that were false and people of Israel were warned about them.

Deut 18:20-22    '...the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' <sup>21</sup>"And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' <sup>22</sup>"When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

So, why were there false prophets? Surely, if a prophet is prophesying about God, that prophet must be speaking the truth. Or, if a prophet's prophecies come true, that prophet must be speaking what God inspired him to say.

Not so, says the Scripture.

Deut 13:1-5 "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, <sup>2</sup>and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' <sup>3</sup>you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>4</sup>"You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. <sup>5</sup>"But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

Where have we heard that we should purge the evil from among us?

1Co 5:9-13 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; <sup>10</sup>I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. <sup>11</sup>But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--not even to eat with such a one. <sup>12</sup>For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? <sup>13</sup>But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.

Even back in Deuteronomy, the saints were tested with false prophets to see if they loved the LORD with all their heart. They were required to recognize when a false prophecy was proclaimed, even though the prophecy came true.

This is what the prophecies about Jesus' death have proven. Not only did they come true, they also were in perfect harmony with the other strands that assure Scriptural integrity, such as salvation history, testimony of witnesses, and miracles.

The importance of visiting the truth of Scripture again in conjunction with the importance of Jesus' death cannot be overstressed. Our entire hope of eternal life rests upon these pillars of the gospel, that Christ truly died and was resurrected and ascended into heaven and sit at the right hand of the Father.

We also saw last week that we should avoid sin in our lives, not only to remove the wicked from among us, but because sin cannot be atoned for without the intervention of the death of the Son of God. Our love for Christ should have us recoil in horror at the thought of sinning against our heavenly Father.

Now that we have been assured that Christ had truly died and truly died for us, the magnitude of our gratitude should be clear, having been spared the terrible suffering and death that He took upon himself, conferring upon us the great benefit of eternal life.

**Psalm 116:12** What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits toward me?

It is interesting to see how the psalmist answers this question in verse 13.

**Psalm 116:13** I shall lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

The psalmist is convinced that the best manner in which he can show his gratitude towards God "for all His benefits" is to call on the Name of the LORD when he lifts the cup of salvation. In this manner he brings his lips as sacrificial animals in a sacrifice of a broken spirit and a contrite heart.

**Hos 14:2** Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity, And receive us graciously, That we may present the fruit of our lips.

**Psalm 51:15-19** O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. <sup>16</sup>You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. <sup>17</sup>The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. <sup>18</sup>In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem. <sup>19</sup>Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole

burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

This morning we, too, lifted the cup of salvation in remembrance of that great sacrifice Jesus Christ brought for us to shower us with His benefits.

Now for the third and final part of Christ's death, the fourth degree of His humiliation:

#### 4.3 For whom did Christ really die?

For us to properly address this question, we need to look at apparent contradictions in Scripture about this subject. Some passages declare that Christ is said to have died for all, and for the whole world:

"He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2)

"...so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone." (Heb 2:9)

"And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." (2 Cor 5:15)

"Who gave himself as a ransom for all men" (1 Tim 2:6)

Other passages declare that Christ has died, prayed, and offered Himself only for some, for many, for the elect, for His own people, for the church, for His sheep, and so on:

"I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours." (John 17:9)

"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt 20:28)

"I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." (Matt 15:24)

"...he will save his people from their sins." (Matt 1:21)

"So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him." (Heb 9:28)

"After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." (Isa 53:11)

"...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." (Eph 5:25)

Does the Word of God contradict itself if we look at these seemingly contradictory passages of Scripture? Not at all. To make the proper distinction between these passages, it is necessary that we seek the revelation from Scripture. We find that Scripture teaches us that we should understand these passages in a two-fold manner.

There are some who interpret these general declarations as the whole number of the faithful, or of all that believe because the promises of the gospel properly belong to all those that believe, and because the Scriptures restrict them to those who believe.

"...whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16)

"...the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe..." (Rom 3:22)

"that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." (Acts 10:43)

It is in the light of these passages that some interpret that the death of Christ extend to all. In this way there is no offense and no contradiction, for, according to them, all those that believe are the many, the specific people, the Church, the sheep, the elect, everybody for whom Christ died and gave himself.

Others reconcile these seemingly contradictory passages of Scripture by making a distinction between the sufficiency and efficacy of the death of Christ.

Christ died for all and he did not die for all, but in different respects.

He died for all regarding the sufficiency of the ransom He paid; and not for all regarding the application and efficacy thereof.

So, let's look at these two aspects of Christ's death:

a) He died for all regarding the sufficiency of the ransom.

The atonement of Christ is sufficient for redeeming all the sins of all men, or of the whole world, if only all men will make application thereof unto themselves by faith.

The atonement of Christ cannot be said to be insufficient, unless we agree to the horrible blasphemy that some blame of the destruction of the ungodly results from a defect in the merit of the Mediator.

b) He died for the elect only regarding the application and efficacy.

All the elect, and they alone, apply unto themselves by faith the merit of Christ's death, together with the efficacy thereof by which they obtain righteousness, and life according to John 3:16 "...whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life..."

The rest are excluded from this efficacy of Christ's death by their own unbelief:

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36)

Those whom the Scriptures exclude from the efficacy of Christ's death, cannot be said to be included in the number of those for whom he died as it respects the efficacy of his death, but only as to its sufficiency. The death of Christ is also sufficient for their salvation, if they will but believe, and the only reason of their exclusion arises from their unbelief. They, therefore, have no excuse for not receiving salvation.

Since Christ willed to die, did He will to die for all? 1 Timothy 2:3, 4 ...God our Savior ... 4 ...desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

We answer this question in the same way, namely that as He died for all with respect to the sufficiency of His ransom, he died for the faithful alone with respect to the efficacy of the same. So, He willed to merit by His death, grace, righteousness, and life in the most abundant manner for all, because He would not that anything

be wanting as far as He and His merits are concerned, so that all the wicked who perish may be without excuse.

But He willed to die for the elect alone regarding the efficacy of His death, that is, He would not only sufficiently merit grace and life for them alone, but also effectually confer these upon them, grant faith and the Holy Spirit, and bring to pass that they apply to themselves, by faith, the benefits of His death, and so obtain for themselves the efficacy of His merits.

The remedy of sin and death is most sufficiently and abundantly offered in the gospel to all, but that it is effectually applied, and profitable only to those who believe.

The Scriptures restrict the efficacy of redemption to certain persons only, as to Christ's sheep, to the elect, and those that believe. On the other hand, it clearly excludes from the grace of Christ the reprobate and unbelieving as long as they remain in their unbelief.

"What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?" (2 Cor 6:15)

"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt 20:28)

"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matt 26:28)

"After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." (Is. 53:11)

"Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father--and I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10:15)

"He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." (Matt 15:24)

Christ prayed only for the elect, including those who were already His disciples, and also those who would afterwards believe on His name.

"I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours." (John 17:9)

If Christ would not pray for the world, by which we are to understand it means those who do not believe, much less would He die for them as far as the efficacy of His death is concerned.

There are two inseparable parts of the sacrifice of Christ, namely, intercession and death. If Christ himself refuse to extend the one to the ungodly, who is he that will dare to give the other to them.

Exo 33:19 And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

One reason for the use of the expressions such as 'the world,' 'all men,' 'all nations,' and 'every creature' was to correct the false notion that salvation was for Jews alone. Such phrases were all used in the New Testament to emphatically correct this mistake.

These expressions are intended to show that Christ died for all men without distinction (i.e. He died for Jews and Gentiles alike) but they are not intended to indicate that Christ died for all men without exception (i.e. He did not die for the purpose of saving each and every lost sinner). His saving work was intended to infallibly save a particular people, namely those given to Him by the Father.

Matt 1:21; 20:28; 26:28; John 10:11; 11:50-53; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27; Rom 8:32-34; Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 9:15, 28; Rev. 5:9.

Next week: As we have seen from the foregoing, only those that believe receive the merits of Christ's redemption. But how is this belief manifested?

Other benefits we receive from Christ's death.