

Foundations of the Faith 103
Systematic Theology
“Christology”
The Cross of Christ
Pt. 22

Introduction - William Evans in his book, “The Great Doctrines of the Bible,” says “*Christianity is not merely a system of ethics; it is the history of redemption through Jesus Christ, the personal redeemer. The atonement is the scarlet cord running through every page in the entire Bible. Cut the Bible anywhere and it bleeds; it is read with redemption truth.*”

I. The Importance of the Death of Christ

Contrast the importance of Christ’ death with His life.

1. It is foretold in the Old Testament

“The death of Christ is the subject of many types and prophecies in the Old Testament. We can trace a scarlet cord through the whole Bible: the sacrifice of Abel (Gen. 4:4), the ram on Mount Mariah (Gen. 22:13), the sacrifices of the patriarchs in general (Gen. 8:20; 12:8; 26:25; 33:20; 35:7), the Passover lamb in Egypt (Exod. 12:1-28), the Levitical sacrifices (Lev. 1-7), Manoah’s offering (1 Sam. 7:9f; 16:2-5), David’s offerings (2 Sam. 6:18), Elijah’s offering (1 Kings 18:38), Hezekiah’s offerings (2 Chron. 29:21-24), the offerings in the days of Joshua and Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:3-6) and Nehemiah (Neh. 10:32f). These all point to the one great offering made by Christ.

Further, there are prophecies that point forward to the death of Christ. The Psalms prophecy the betrayal of Christ (Ps. 41:9; cf. John 13:18; Acts 1:16), the crucifixion and the attendant events (Ps. 22:1, 7f, 18; cf. Matt. 27:39f., and the resurrection (Ps. 16:8-11; 27:39f., 46; Mark 15:34; John 19:23f.) and the resurrection (Ps. 16:8-11; cf. Acts 2:25-28). Isaiah writes, “He was crushed for our iniquities” (53:5). Daniel indicates that after sixty-nine weeks Messiah will be cut off and have nothing (9:26). Zechariah foretells the selling of Christ for thirty pieces of silver and the investment of that sum in potter’s field (11:12f.; Matt. 26:15; 27:9f). Zechariah for sin and impurity (13:1).” - Lectures in Systematic Theology, Henry C. Thiessen

2. It is Prominent in the New Testament

The last week of our Lord’s earthly life occupies about the one-fifth of the narratives in the four Gospels. Similarly, the Epistles are filled with references to this historic event. Manifestly, the death and resurrection of our Lord were esteemed of supreme importance by the Holy Spirit, the author of Scripture.

One out of every forty-four verses in the New Testament deals with the theme of Christ’s death. His death is mentioned in all 147 times in the New Testament.

3. It is the Chief Purpose of the Incarnation

Christ did not come primarily to set us an example or to teach us doctrine, but to die for us (Mark 10:45; Heb. 2:9). His death was not an afterthought nor an accident, but the accomplishment of a definite purpose in connection with the incarnation. The incarnation is not an end in itself; it is but a means to an end, and that end is the redemption of the lost through the Lord’s death on the cross.

4. It is The Centered Theme of The Gospel

- I Cor. 15:1-5

5. It is Essential to Christianity

- Only a religion of ethics
- Gal. 6:14, it was Paul's glory!

6. It is Essential to Our Salvation

“The Son of Man must be lifted up if man is to be saved (John 3:14f.); the grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die if it is to bring forth fruit (John 12:24). God cannot pardon sin merely on the ground of the sinner's repentance. That would be impossible for a righteous God to do. God can pardon a sinner and to remain righteous at the same time, Christ paid the sinner's penalty (Rom. 3:25f.). Christ repeatedly said that he must suffer many things, be killed, and be raised the third day (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22; 17:25; John 12:32-34). The two men who were in the tomb after Christ had arisen reminded the women who came to anoint the body that Christ said that he must be crucified and arise again (Luke 24:7). Paul sought to prove to the Thessalonians the necessity of Christ's death (Acts 17:3). From God's standpoint, the death of Christ is an absolute necessity if man is to be saved.” - Thiessen

7. It is the Supreme Theme of Heaven

When Moses and Elijah appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, they conversed with Christ “of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31). The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sang a song of the redemption accomplished through the death of Christ (Rev. 5:8-10). Even the angels around the throne, though not in need of redemption themselves, joined in the song of the Lamb who was slain (Rev. 5:11f.).

II. The Necessity of Christ's Death

First, it was not necessary for God to save any people at all. But God in His love and grace chose to provide a way of salvation. It was necessary that the Christ should suffer and die. Luke 24:25-26

1. The Holiness of God

2. The Sin of Man

The cross show's us the sinfulness of sin!

3. The Fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures

- Luke 24:25-24
- Isa. 53
- Ps. 22

III. Unscriptural Views of Christ Death

1. The Accident Theory

- Acts 2:23, Peter's pentecostal sermon

2. The Martyr Theory

This theory, also called the Example Theory, holds that Christ's death was that of a martyr. He was killed because he was faithful to his principles and to what he considered his duty by men who did not agree with him in these respects. He is an example of fidelity to truth and duty. This view assumes that the only thing needed to save man is to reform him. Christ's example is to teach man to repent of his sins and to reform.

This theory, however, (1) ignores the fundamental idea of the atonement wherein the atonement has to be made to God (Exod. 12:13, 23; Rom. 3:24f.; Heb. 2:17; 9:11-14; 1 John 2:2; 4:10); (2) makes Christ's example sufficient to save, whereas his example is intended for believers only (Matt. 11:29; 1 Pet. 2:21, 24; 1 John 2:6); (3) logically leads to a perversion of every fundamental doctrine of Scripture, such as inspiration, sin, the deity of Christ, justification, regeneration, and eternal retribution; and (4) furnishes no satisfactory explanation of Christ's unmartyrlike agony in Gethsemane and on the cross, and the Father's withdrawal from him (Matt. 26:37-39; 27:46; John 12:27; cf. Paul's behavior in suffering, Phil. 1:20-23, and Stephen's, Acts 7:55-60). Even if the death of Christ as thus interpreted did move men to moral improvement, it cannot atone for the sins already past, nor yet save the sinner (John 6:53; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 11:25; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 7:14). - Theissen

3. The Moral Example or Influence Theory

4. The Love of God Theory

IV. The Meaning of Christ Death

1. **A Substitution:** O.T. Isa. 53:6 "for our sins"; I Pet. 2:24, 3:18; II Cor. 5:21. It's simply, "Christ died in the place of the sinner". This is the central meaning of Christ death.

Stott: "Substitution is not a theory of the atonement. Nor is it even an additional image to take its place as an option alongside the others. It is rather the essence of each image and the heart of the atonement itself. (John Stott "The Cross of Christ", pg. 202-203).

2. **A Ransom**, 1 Pet. 1:18; I Tim. 2:6; Gal. 3:13. It means to purchase and set free by paying a price. The price, the blood of Jesus Christ, Eph. 1:7.
3. **A Propitiation**, Rom. 3:25, I John 2:2, Heb. 2:17. To propitiate means to appease or to satisfy a god. Christ's death satisfied a holy God. Its extent, I John 2:2, "the whole world." The basis, Christ's shed blood. It's Christ's death - Godward Rom. 3:24-26. Now we can be sure God is satisfied. Lk 18:13, "God be propitiated."
4. **A Reconciliation**, Rom. 5:10, II Cor. 5:18, 19, Eph. 2:16, Col. 1:20. Its meaning, to bring together that which was separated or at war. (Lit. "To change")

- A. Christ's death removed the enmity.
- B. So man's state of alienation from God is changed so that now he is able to be saved. Man is reconciled not God. (It's God's work).
- C. The obstacles.
 - 1. God's holy law, satisfied.
 - 2. Man's sin, paid for.
 - 3. Man's heart changed.