

WHY CHRIST DIED

Many articles have written about the crucifixion of Christ and the agony He suffered for us. It would be difficult to exaggerate on this subject. The prophet Isaiah, when foreseeing the sufferings of Christ, said *"His visage (face) was so marred more than any man, and his form (body) more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle (cleanse from sin) many nations..."* Isaiah 52:14-15. We have heard perhaps for generations that He was beaten with 39 stripes, which was the limit set by the Jewish law. Jesus, however, was beaten under the Roman law, which had no such limitations. It was this beating at the hands of Roman soldiers that marred His face and body beyond recognition. The crown of thorns which they beat into His brow blackened both His eyes, and further marred His visage. Jesus knew by the scriptures what torture awaited Him. It was for fear of these things He *"offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death..."* Hebrews 5:7.

"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matthew 26:39

"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Luke 22:14

"O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Matthew 26:42

We can read the entire record of Jesus in Gethsemane in about sixty seconds, yet these same appeals were made to His Father for a full three hours. The agony of Gethsemane may have killed most of us, but Jesus's sufferings for our salvation only truly began after He cried *"Thy will be done"* a final time. Jesus assured us that no one was taking his life. He said, *"I lay it down of myself"* John 10:18. Jesus told Peter, *"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"* Matthew 26:53-54. When Pilate said, *"knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?"* John 19:10, Jesus answered, *"Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above"* verse 11.

If we believe these sayings of Jesus, we understand there was absolutely no power on earth that could put Jesus on the cross. No one is to be blamed; not the Romans, not the Jews, and not Pilate. Nothing less than the will of His Father in Heaven could put Jesus on the cross. That being the case, why would our almighty God not only allow, but *"will"* the horrible sufferings and death of His only begotten Son on the cross. Perhaps the prophet Isaiah pointed the way for those who can see. When describing His face and body as *"marred more than any man"* Isaiah 52:14, he said, *"So shall He sprinkle many nations"* verse 15. With these six words he revealed the purpose for which Jesus died.

The "sprinkling" of animal blood was symbolic cleansing

under the Law of Moses, as confirmed by Paul to the Hebrews; *"Moreover he (Moses) sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission"* Hebrews 9:22. Paul gave a comparison between animal blood and the blood of Christ in the same chapter; *"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"* Hebrews 9:13-14. The blood of Christ did much more than just ceremonially wash the outer body. It was shed to wash sin from our hearts.

Many people search Moses' Law, seeking to discover in the Law what Christ came into the world to do. To do this is a tragic error, leading many to believe the blood of Jesus to be nothing more than a "once forever covering for sins." The Apostle Paul clearly denies this thinking. *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh"* Romans 8:3. If you truly want to understand the incarnation and why Christ became a man, search the scriptures to discover *"what the law could not do."*

"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." Hebrews 10:4-7

The Apostle John began his gospel, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made"* John 1:1-3. This same relationship continued between God and *"the Word"* from the beginning of creation until about four thousand years after the earth was cursed by sin through Adam's disobedience. After so long a time, *"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us"* John 1:14, and John added, *"we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."*

"Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me..."

Jesus said *"you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* John 8:32. A clear understanding of Hebrews 10:1-10 will free the sincere seeker from centuries of erroneous teaching and fables which have held multitudes of people in bondage to sin. As Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees in His day, many teachers

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continue to *"make the word of God of none effect"* Mark 7:13 through the traditions of men which they teach as Biblical doctrine. Notice it was Christ in the moment of His incarnation (*"when He cometh into the world"*) who said, *"Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not."* If the children of Israel had not refused to hear the voice God at Mount Sinai Exodus 20:19, they would have never offered animal sacrifices. God said through Jeremiah, ***"I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice..."*** Jeremiah 7:22-23. God said ***"I hate your feast days..."*** Amos 5:21. David, in godly sorrow for sin, said, *"Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it"* Psalms 51:16. God said in the first chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, ***"I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats"*** Isaiah 1:11, and He said in the last, *"He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck"* Isaiah 66:3. Why did God so despise the offerings of animal blood? ***"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."*** The Apostle Paul reminds us that the Law of Moses served only as a *"yoke of bondage"* to all who trusted in it Galatians 5:1.

"I come to do thy will O God..."

The "will of God" was that the holy body and blood of Christ which God prepared in the womb of Mary would one day be offered as *"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"* John 1:29. The same day sin entered the through the serpent's deception and Adam's disobedience, God promised a *"seed of the Woman"* who would *"bruise the head of the serpent"* Genesis 3:15. Daniel said *"the Messiah the Prince"* would come to *"make an end of sins"* Daniel 9:24-25. The Apostle Paul said it was *"through death"* that Christ *"destroyed the devil"* Hebrews 2:14. If the blood of animals could not *"take away sin,"* the precious holy blood of the Son of God would. The infant Jesus, lying in the manger, had but one purpose to fulfill, and it would require His death on the cross. He was *"the seed of the woman"* who came *"to bruise the head of the serpent"* Genesis 3:15. He was *"The Messiah, the Prince,"* who was come *"to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness"* Daniel 9:24-25.

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Hebrews 10:10

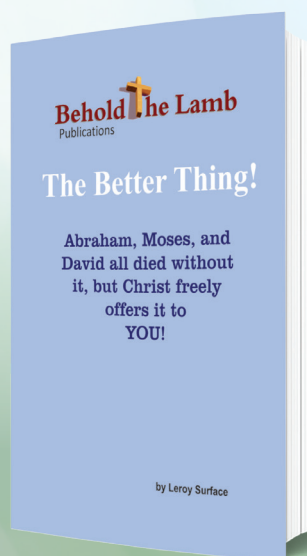
The will of God in the death of His Son on the cross was the *"sanctification"* of the people, that is, to *"take away their sin,"* and *"make them holy."* This could not be through a lifetime process of sanctification, but only *"through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."* When Jesus

said on the cross, *"It is finished,"* it was finished for all who would believe upon Jesus Christ.

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Hebrews 13:12

The Apostle John said, *"And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not..."* I John 3:5-6. When John wrote to believers in His generation, saying *"And ye know..."*, it is obvious that what he said was common knowledge among the children of God. In our generation, it seems many believers have traded the testimony of the scripture for religious promises which God's word never gave. They want to believe their sins are covered from God's sight and they can never be judged because their penalty or debt has been paid. Yet for anyone who will simply believe the word of God, the record is clear. Jesus Christ came into the world and gave his life to take away your sin so that you might truly be free!

"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." Hebrews 12:2



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