

Lesson # 7 -- The Greatness of the Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus

Introduction

- A. Some events that happen in the life of an individual reveal the true character of that person.
- B. In the Crucifixion of our Savior we see a revelation of His person and His greatness -- in a way that overwhelms us -- we see Him dying as our substitute -- our sacrifice.
- C. We must approach this subject with careful and thoughtful preparation. Our study must be an exercise of the heart as well as mind. As we read the Scripture we must depend on the Holy Spirit to open our understanding so we may grasp the meaning of the Crucifixion and respond correctly.

I. The Background to the Crucifixion.

- A. In Gethsemane the Lord Jesus reaffirmed, in spite of a fresh understanding of the agony before Him, His life-time dedication to the will of His Father. Matthew 26:36-46
- B. The Lord Jesus is betrayed by Judas, arrested as a common criminal, and forsaken by the disciples. Matthew 26:47-56
- C. The Savior is taken to Annas, a retired high priest, while messengers are sent to call the Sanhedrin (supreme court) together. John 18:13-23
- D. The Lord Jesus is accused before the Sanhedrin. False witnesses speak against Him. He is accused of blasphemy. Matthew 26:59-66
- E. Peter denies His Lord. Matthew 26:58-75
- F. The soldiers make the Lord Jesus their play-thing through the rest of the night. Matthew 26:67,68
- G. The Sanhedrin reassembles and formally condemns the Lord Jesus. Luke 22:66-71
- H. Judas goes in remorse to the priests and is rebuffed. He throws the thirty pieces of silver into the temple and commits suicide. Matthew 27:3-10
- I. The Lord Jesus is brought before Pilate to be sentenced. John 18:28-38
- J. Pilate sends Him to Herod. Luke 23:6-12
- K. Herod sends the Lord Jesus back to Pilate. Luke 23:11

- L. Pilate seeks to set the Lord Jesus free. He reminds the Jews of the custom of releasing a criminal at the Passover. The people choose the criminal -- Barabbas -- instead of the Savior. Matthew 27:15-18
- M. Pilate surrenders the Lord Jesus to be scourged. Matthew 27:26
- N. The Son of God is mocked by the soldiers. A crown of thorns is placed on His head, a robe on His back, and a stick in His hand. He is spit upon and beaten. Matthew 27-31
- O. The Savior is led to a place called Golgotha and there crucified with two criminals. Matthew 27:33-38

Summary: As we contemplate these events we realize we understand only a fraction of the meaning of what is happening. Even so we are unable to find words to describe our concern, amazement, and fear. We can only admire the steadfast love of the Lord Jesus as He is forsaken, mocked, beaten, and condemned. We are deeply aware that there is something tragically wrong here. We are beginning to see that the Savior is taking our place on that cross -- we should be nailed there instead of Him -- and that produces a deep fear within us.

II. The Greatness of the Lord Jesus as Seen in His Crucifixion.

- A. His compassionate mercy for His executioners.

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do Luke 23:34

- B. His ability to forgive the repentant criminal.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. Luke 23:43

- C. His loving provision for His mother.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. John 19:26,27

- D. His physical agony under divine condemnation.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. John 19:28

E. His spiritual agony under divine condemnation.

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matthew 27:46

F. His affirmation of a completed atonement.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished John 19:30

G. His commital of Himself to His Father.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father into thy hands I commend my spirit, and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. Luke 23:46

Summary: What are we to say as we contemplate the Lord Jesus crucified?

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away. (William Cowper)

Far more than pains that racked Him then,
Was the deep, longing thirst Divine
That thirsted for the souls of men;
Dear Lord, and one was mine.

III. The Biblical Explanation of the Crucifixion.

A. The Lord Jesus died as the Lamb of God.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 1:29

Comment: Here the Savior is seen as the fulfillment of all that the Old Testament sacrificial system taught. He came as God's provision for us.

B. The Lord Jesus died as our substitute.

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. By whose stripes ye were healed. I Peter 2:24

Comment: Because the Lord Jesus was the God-Man He could be our representative before God. He could take our place -- bear our judgment.

C. The Lord Jesus died as our sacrifice.

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. Eph. 5:2

Comment: The word "sacrifice" explains what it meant for the Lord Jesus to be our substitute. The emphasis is upon obligation, penalty, and suffering.

D. The Lord Jesus died as our ransom.

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Mark 10:45

Comment: In the act of substitution, when He gave Himself to be our sacrifice -- the price He paid to redeem us -- was the ransom. In that act He met all the demands of divine holiness.

E. The Lord Jesus died as our redeemer.

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Hebrews 9:12

Comment: By His crucifixion -- the Lord Jesus made it possible for us to be redeemed. By paying our ransom He became our Redeemer.

"No word in the Christian vocabulary deserves to be held more precious than Redeemer, for even more than Savior it reminds the child of God that his salvation has been purchased at a great and personal cost, for the Lord has given himself for our sins in order to deliver us from them."
(Baker's Dictionary of Theology, p. 439)

IV. The Lessons We Should Learn from the Crucifixion.

A. The Crucifixion testifies to the reality and nature of sin.

- B. The Crucifixion testifies to the reality and nature of divine judgment.
- C. The Crucifixion testifies to the reality and nature of divine holiness.
- D. The Crucifixion testifies to the reality and nature of divine love.
- E. The Crucifixion testifies to the reality and nature of divine provision.

Conclusion

- A. This lesson confronts us with a Person -- The Lord Jesus Christ. His Crucifixion presents, in the most profound manner possible, the meaning of His loving care and provision for us.

If God be for us, who can be against us? Rom. 8:31

- B. The Crucifixion presents us with an inexorable demand. Jesus Christ gave Himself to die the death and suffer the hell we deserve. The least we can do is to give ourselves totally to Him, choose to live fully for Him, and to renounce all sin today and every day.

Are you going to go on living as though the Crucifixion did not happen?