

## Why Jesus Died

The death of Jesus during His ministry in the flesh was not anticipated by His followers. Anyone who believed that Jesus was the Christ of God – the long-anticipated Messiah – would not expect Him to die, but rather to live and reign on the throne of David forever.

John the Baptist began the Messianic Hope, which focused on Jesus, and became the Christian Gospel of today. The word “gospel” means good news or glad tidings. It has come to also mean truth, because the death of Jesus made Him appear to be a false Messiah to everyone. The Resurrection, however, proved that He was, in truth, of God all along.

John the Baptist was not the first with good news of the Christ. There were many in those days who claimed to be the Christ of the Jews, but all were perceived by the people to be false, because they were not able to establish the throne of David in Judea due to Roman occupation.

We see this at Jesus’ birth, where Herod slaughtered all who might be the Prince, because he understood himself to be reigning on David’s throne. There was also one named Judas, who gathered a large following at about that same time (during the taxation of Augustus). Herod feared the coming of the Messiah, because it meant that he would lose his throne. His attempt to kill Jesus also proved that he believed the Messiah would be a mortal man like himself. This was the way all Jews understood Messiah in those days before Christianity existed with its Resurrection doctrine of Messianic divinity.

Any king like Herod, on a Jewish throne, would fear for his life if the Messiah should come, but not so for priest and temple authorities, because no one expected the Messiah to do away with the Levitical priesthood. Only if we properly understand the religion of the Jews in those days and the politics of Messianic hope under tribute to the Romans can we possibly discover the cause of Jesus’ death.

If Herod had succeeded in killing the Christ child, then His death would be due to belief that He was genuine rather than belief that He was a false Messiah. Death by the sword of Herod was to prevent Jesus’ reign. Death by the Sanhedrin was to prevent the Romans from killing the people who followed Jesus.

If we ask Christian apologists today, “Why did Christ die?” we may get different answers, but when He died like a criminal at the hands of the Romans, it proved to everyone that He also was a false Messiah. I say also because other Messiahs were killed by the Romans, proving that they were not of God. Notice how death tests and proves a Messianic claim.

So many gospels were being preached in Judea in those days, but none proved to be true. When John the Baptist was imprisoned, he began to entertain the thought that he also may have heralded a false Messiah. He was reassured by the fact that Jesus was doing miracles like Moses and Elijah which proved that He was, indeed, a true prophet of God. This was always the litmus test for a Jewish prophet. Miracle workers like Moses and Elijah were held in greater esteem than “doom” prophets like Habakkuk and Jeremiah. This still exists today in Christianity, because many conclude that if a thing is miraculous, powerful, and successful, then it must be of God; but if it is a failure, then it cannot be of God.

John did no miracles, but eventually Resurrection Day proved that all John had claimed for Jesus was true. We cannot justify the many different reasons given today by the Christian church for the death of Jesus, but we can very clearly justify the one reason believed by everyone in the days of Jesus’ humiliation.

Judea, in those days, was a province of Rome, consisting of a remnant of Jews whose ancestors had lost the throne of David to the Babylonians and then went into exile. They had returned to Jerusalem, rebuilt the Temple, and restored the priesthood, but lost everything to the Greeks. Herod had restored the Temple and the priesthood and was their king, much like the sons of David after Josiah, the last king to reign for God. Herod reigned for the Romans, who put Judea under tribute. This is identical to the last days of Judah, when the sons of Josiah reigned for Egypt and also for Babylon, with the land under tribute.

Such was the fallen kingdom of David in the days of Jesus, but there is some difference in the politics of change expected by the advent of the Messiah. Zealots believed that they must be activists like the Maccabees. Then the Messiah would save them in the Insurrection. Herodians did not want controversy; they liked things as they were. Pharisees believed that God would only honor the righteous; therefore, the righteous (according to the law – not according to faith) would inherit the kingdom. The sophisticated priesthood only expected change in tribute and politics; they did not expect the Messiah to affect the restored worship of the Jews. The Sadducees did not even believe in the resurrection of the dead at all; therefore, the death of Messiah meant that He would never live again (reign) – period.

We see the common consensus of anticipation (hope) concerning the Messiah. He will restore the Jews to the kingdom of David. They will be the head – not the tail. They will reign over their enemies once again. Blessing will replace the curse, and good will replace the evil. God will finally remember His covenant and return to visit His people again. Notice how return and again are words with the same meaning. Likewise, all the words with the prefix

“re”, such as redeem, rescue, restore, regenerate, and resurrect, make again to be the meaning of the prefix. However, God can restore life to a dead man by giving him a life that he never had; therefore, again does not apply in this case. God can make something new without again, as He did in creation with Adam. God will make all things spiritual in re-creation, where again does apply because they once existed by creation. God can visit the circumcised again, but He can only visit the Gentiles for the first time – not again.

A person today may well ask why the lawyers of the Messianic text could not find the death of Messiah revealed in scripture. Paul later said that Jews were blind when reading Messianic text. Obviously, this same blindness exists today in Christianity, where there is no consensus of Messianic belief, either in the first Advent or the second. The texts are read by different people, giving it a different interpretation.

This is what we know for sure, based on all the literature of those days, which includes the recently discovered Dead Sea Scrolls. All hope in Messiah was Jewish and pertained to a physical kingdom in flesh life. Non-Jews must become Jews in order to benefit, or we might say, to come into the Messianic kingdom “on the coattails of a Jew”.

Everyone understood the Messiah’s kingdom to be the restored kingdom of David which had fallen at Josiah’s death. But some put the Jew first because Judah had preserved the kingdom until Josiah’s death - over one hundred years after Samaria had fallen to the Assyrians. David ruled seven years at Hebron over Judah, and then moved his throne to Jerusalem to reign over all the tribes of Jacob. Solomon, his son, reigned after his death and built a house for God in Jerusalem. The death of Solomon ended the throne of David over all Israel and left the throne over Judah *only* until the death of Josiah, when the times of the Gentiles began.

With everyone expecting a restored kingdom, it was difficult for Jesus to present a new kingdom altogether for everyone who would believe. He warned the people of disappointment in Him if they continued to expect a flesh and blood kingdom.

### **First and Then**

(A paraphrase of Jesus of Nazareth)

*Jesus continued His theme – which we will call First and Then. If we could paraphrase the words of Jesus, we might hear Him say, “First I must die and then the glory... Nothing Messianic can come to pass until I die, because my reign is eternal – not physical and temporal... I must rescue my citizens from death before I can reign over them in life... First I must rescue my subjects from the bondage of death before I can give them their life and liberty... First I must bind the strongman before I can destroy his house... First I*

*must destroy Satan’s power of death before the dead can live again... First I must leave my flesh life with you before the Spirit (breath) of God can come... First I die your death; then you live my Life... My kingdom is not of this world like that of David; it is a Spiritual kingdom which shall be in you, but first I must get you out of bondage to sin in Adam, just like Moses had to first get the people out of bondage to the sin of Pharaoh before he could give them the kingdom... I am that Man like Moses; only in Passover will the people go free... First I must die a Passover death before the Kingdom can come... First I must be a slain lamb before I rule as a lion from the tribe of Judah... First I must be delivered to the Gentiles to be crucified; then in Resurrected Life I will reign in my Kingdom forever... I must die so that where I am now (in the bosom of the Father) there ye may be also in the Resurrection... My Father and I are now one – He has been in me since my birth. I have been in Him since eternity past... When I die, I will go to the Father... When I return, I will bring the Father with me to be in you then as He is in me now.”*

### **Gospel Literature**

The literature of the four Gospels covers the life of Jesus in the flesh. This is all we know about Messianic doctrine as discussed by Jesus in His first Advent. From this dialogue we learn from Jesus to expect His death before the kingdom can come, and we learn from the Jews that they expected David’s kingdom to come without the death of Messiah.

From the Gospel text we learn how wrong they were to expect a kingdom before the Messiah was crucified. This is why Jesus’ death caused His followers to scatter and it proved to His critics and enemies how justified they were in accusing Him. There are those today who read the Gospel text from the same hope as the remnant in Judea. Therefore, they cannot see the death of Messiah as necessary before the kingdom of David can come. They see the death as necessary for the Spiritual kingdom of God which did come, but not necessary to fulfill God’s promise to Israel and establish the kingdom of David.

This viewpoint attributes His death to rejection by the nation, but not necessary to establish the kingdom of David; only necessary to establish the Christian kingdom. The kingdom of David is now delayed until the Second Coming of the Messiah, when the promise of God to Israel will be fulfilled. With this viewpoint, the Messiah will return after the age of His Spiritual kingdom to restore the physical throne of David in Jerusalem, which has been trodden down by the Gentiles. The Messiah will also, at this time, restore the Levitical priesthood to a nation which has been without sacrifice.

We do not find this concept in the text of Acts, which comments on His death and Resurrection; rather, how in death and Resurrection the Messiah fulfilled the promise to David – “This is the day the

Lord hath made”.... "This is that which the prophets promised”.... "This day this prophecy is fulfilled in your ears”.

### **Salvation and Kingdom**

There are many Bible students today involved in textual criticism relating to Messianic text. There are many Bibles consisting of an Old Testament and a New Testament which contain highlighting and comments on the text relating to the Messiah. Christians have very different opinions about Jesus as the Messiah, as well as about Jesus as a Savior. They also differ in their hope concerning future Messianic activity.

Jews today still hold to the same Messianic hope that the remnant had in the days of Jesus. They understand the Messianic text of their Bible in much the same way as they did in the first century when Christianity began.

Christian faith is based on the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus, who is called the Christ of God. (Christ is Greek for Hebrew Messiah). Jewish doctrine does not allow Messiah to die, while Christian doctrine depends entirely upon it. Herein we find the cause of Jesus’ death as given by man today. The Jews rejected the kingdom of David offered by John the Baptist and Jesus, whereupon the Kingdom was delayed and postponed until Jesus returns in His Second Advent. This theory makes the cause of Messiah’s death to be rejection by the remnant. It also makes it possible for the kingdom to precede salvation.

Does the reader understand how the word “salvation” is used in the Bible and just what constitutes a kingdom? Salvation must precede kingdom if bondage and servitude exist in the present kingdom. Obviously, people must be delivered from bondage and slavery before they can be free under the reign of another king in another kingdom.

As long as Pharaoh ruled, the people were in bondage to his will; therefore, deliverance from the will of Pharaoh was necessary if the people were to be free to act according to their will. In this case, salvation could have been accomplished by bringing another king to Egypt with another kingdom. Moses could have liberated his people in Egypt and established the Kingdom of God in Egypt if this had been his commission, but he would, of necessity, have bound Pharaoh, the strong man, before he could take his house. This would save the people from bondage without a Passover salvation from Egypt.

### **A Salvation Like Moses**

Since Jesus is the man like Moses who would, like Moses, save His people, we must seek to understand the salvation of Moses before we can understand the salvation which Jesus accomplished. (Note: Jesus did succeed in saving the world from the bondage of death, which was His objective; but He failed to save

His people from bondage to the Romans.)

We are told that Moses saved his people from Pharaoh’s sin which kept them in bondage to slavery. We are told that Jesus would save His people from their sins which kept them in bondage to Rome. But with Jesus, we are told that He is also the Savior of the world. Like Moses, Jesus would bring salvation, then a kingdom of liberty and justice for all.

Moses’ kingdom was freedom for only Moses’ people, and any who would leave Egypt with Moses. Jesus’ kingdom was freedom for only Jesus’ followers and any who would leave Adam with Him.

Moses went into Egypt with God’s commission to bring out a church. Jesus went into death with God’s commission to bring out a church.

Moses found his church in bondage to the power of Pharaoh. Jesus found His church in bondage to the power of death and the devil.

Moses built his church in Egypt, releasing the captives with animal Passover blood. Jesus built His church in death and hell, releasing the captives with His Passover blood.

The gates of Egypt yielded to Passover death and Moses brought his church out. The gates of death (hell) could not prevail against the power of Passover blood, and Jesus brought His church out.

Moses did not bind Pharaoh, the strongman, because he was not destroying Pharaoh’s kingdom. Jesus bound Satan, the strongman, in order to spoil his house and release all the captives.

### **An Inheritance Like Joshua**

Pharaoh would have lost his throne if Moses had established his kingdom in Egypt instead of the wilderness. Seven kingdoms were destroyed when Joshua brought the kingdom to Canaan, but no one lost a throne when Jesus gave His Kingdom to the Jews at Jerusalem - not even Herod, who ruled on the throne of David. How can we explain this contrast between Moses and Jesus? This was a mystery which Jesus resolved by teaching a Spiritual kingdom for the Messiah.

Joshua put the redeemed out of Egypt into their inheritance. Jesus put the inheritance into the redeemed out of (Adam’s) death.

Death would take away the inheritance which Joshua gave to the circumcision, leaving them without God and without kingdom, and without covenant, but not without promise. Jesus is the Promised One, the Christ of God, the Passover Lamb, the True Vine, and the Resurrection.

The hope of all the dead in the grave is to live again; therefore, whether they know it or not, their hope is in Jesus, because He is the Resurrection, whereby people live again in new life.

There is no death in Resurrection life to take away

the inheritance, which is the Spirit of God. There is no death in an everlasting covenant, nor an eternal kingdom.

Moses brought a vine out of Egypt which Joshua planted in Canaan. David rooted the vine in Jerusalem where God built towers and hedges, and put watchmen on the walls. This is the vineyard where thieves stole all the fruit. This is the vineyard whose caretakers killed all of God's prophets and then killed His Son. This is the vineyard full of dead branches bearing no fruit from the Joshua vine.

From this parable we are able to see why the Son was rejected and stoned to death at the winepress. Could we really say that the Son died for the sins of the caretakers, or should we say He died because of their sins? If we look at the matter from the Father's viewpoint, we see the cause of death in the purpose of God, the Son's Father. Obviously, the Father did not expect to find faith (fruit) in dead branches since the vine itself was severely stressed, the vineyard was destroyed and spoiled by others, and exposed to the elements, needing pruning and dunging. He knew the Son would not return with fruit from the vineyard with any more success than those sent before Him. He knew they would kill the Seed, but He planned to plant (Isaiah 61:3) a New Vine with fruit bearing branches (John 15).

### **The True Jesus**

Jesus is the True Vine, but this does not mean that Judah is a false vine – only that it is earthly and temporal.

Jesus is True Manna (John 6) from heaven but this does not mean Moses' bread was false or lacking, rather that it fell from the physical heavens and was for earthly life only. Jesus' bread was for Resurrected Life, which comes from the Creator, not the creation. Spiritual creatures need Spiritual food, just as earthly creatures need physical food.

Jesus served the True Tabernacle (Hebrews 8) in His Resurrection, but this does not mean that Levites served a false tabernacle in their earthly lives; rather that the risen Messiah was High Priest in Jerusalem above, where He also sat on His throne. Neither does it mean that the Levitical priesthood of Moses was lacking in ability to perfect and complete its job. The only fault in the earthly priesthood in Jerusalem is death, meaning it is only for flesh life. Every priest will die, but can he be a priest again in the temple where he served? Some find fault in the blood of animals because they claim that it only covered sins until a future blood transaction took them away. This means that the blood of Jesus completed what animal blood began, but nowhere do we find the blood of animals in any way related to Spiritual death, Spiritual Passover, everlasting covenant or eternal atonement.

The Old Testament sacrifices related to the first covenant while the New Testament sacrifice related to

the second covenant. The second covenant was sealed with Jesus' blood to be a new and different covenant altogether. It is not the continuation, or fulfilling, or removing of any fault in the Mosaic first covenant.

The blood of animals in the Levitical priesthood was 100% efficacious in the atonement for which it was given (Lev. 17:11). But it was severely limited by the thoughts and intent of the heart whether the sacrifice was personal or national.

Some teach a limited atonement in the First Testament with animal blood that must be finished in the New Testament by the Blood of Christ. There are some texts that seem to say this in the translation to English. However, there is no such connection in the work of animal sacrifices and that of Christ.

The blood of animals was shed and sprinkled for people under the First Testament (Israel) – while the Blood of Christ was shed and sprinkled for people under the New Testament (Christians).

The people of the First Testament didn't bring their sacrifices to Jesus for completion. If their sacrifices were made in faith, they were accepted by God. If the sacrifice was for redemption, they have redemption. If the sacrifice was for atonement, they have atonement. If the blood sprinkled a covenant, they have a covenant. But nothing that is eternal is obtained with animal blood. Therefore, those under the First Testament need the Blood of Christ and the benefits of an everlasting covenant.

Hebrews 9:12–15 paraphrased:

Having obtained eternal redemption when He died, Jesus rose to enter The Holy Place above to make atonement for (us) Christians. If the sprinkling of animal blood purified the unclean Israelites under the First Testament, so shall the Blood of Christ purify and cleans (us) Christians under the New Testament.

The people under the First Testament are now called to the New Testament where there is eternal atonement. They have sprinkled animal blood year after year to purify, sanctify and cleans their soul from sins in their past. And God promised them a New Testament with an eternal inheritance that they can put their transgressions under the Blood of Christ in eternal atonement – which purges the past and daily cleanses them from all sins.

Please note: The 'us' here is in reference to a Hebrew Christian. Gentile Christians were never cleansed with First Testament blood. Hebrew Christians may speak of a better atonement, but it is identical to the Christ atonement for all Christians.

The problem with animal blood is found in the sinner who offered it whether it was a gift or sin sacrifice. We can see this truth from the first gift offering by Cain and Able. The gifts are accepted or rejected by God based on the giver and not the gift.

Animal blood was required by Moses for certain functions, but a gift for God did not require blood unless the giver gave an animal or dove. Any ceremony of sacrifice can fail to meet the law's requirement related to it. But the giver himself can make of non effect a perfect sacrifice.

Jesus had to die to provide the Passover blood of God for the death sentence in the Garden (not in Egypt). This same Passover blood will seal an everlasting covenant for those which the blood redeemed. This same Passover blood will be sprinkled (Leviticus 17:11) on the altar in a True Tabernacle to make atonement for the souls of the children of God. This is a new work entirely. It does not finish a work began with animal blood for a nation. It finishes the work of God to save the world.

Jesus, like Joshua, must defeat the enemy who occupies the inheritance. For Joshua, it was Canaanites; for Jesus, it was death. To be a man like Moses, He must redeem. To be a man like Joshua, He must secure the inheritance. To be a man like David, He must unite all Israel under one throne in Jerusalem (above). To be the Son of David like Solomon, He must build a house (not made with hands) for God to dwell with His people (family).

In other words, the Messianic kingdom would not be of this world, dependent upon the creation; but rather of God, depending upon the Creator. The Messiah must first be a Redeeming Lamb before He can be a Ruling Lion. First, the creature fell; then the creation fell; then Israel fell. First, the creature is saved; then the creation is saved; now all salvation is in regeneration.

## Conclusion

Jesus is a man of all seasons, and He was born with a commission to save the world. This He succeeded in doing by the sacrifice of Himself. The world needed salvation from the Fall in the Garden of Eden long before Israel needed salvation from Pharaoh, or Jews needed salvation from the Romans.

While the cause of Jesus' death is the sin of Adam, the benefits are many. Christians will often mistake the many benefits of His death for the cause, thereby creating many false causes. There are far more benefits in the death of the Jewish Messiah than there are causes. A cause must precede effect; therefore, we must find the cause prior to effect. Paul finds the primary cause in Adam, with the Second Adam committed to save Adam and his family from death and the grave.

The Seed of the Woman became the Seed of Abram, which was the Seed of David at Bethlehem, conceived by the Holy Ghost to become the Son of God.

He will do so much for so many that blessings and benefits will abound. Some Christians will make

atonement, forgiveness and eternity to be the cause of His death instead of the benefits of it.

Jews have the same benefits in the death of Messiah as Gentiles. They have atonement, forgiveness, and salvation, but they are still in bondage to Rome even after salvation and forgiveness. Jesus died as much for Gentiles as for Jews. Gentile benefits are the same as Jewish benefits.

When we see the cause of death given by Jesus and Paul, we are made to agree with them that the love of God for mankind which promised salvation in the Garden and the love of Jesus which provided it on the Cross is the primary cause of a multitude of benefits in Messiah, whether Jew or Gentile.

When we say that Christ died for our sins, we are making our sinful behavior to be the cause of His death. But we are born long after He died for us.

When Judeo-Christians like Peter or Paul, who were contemporaries with Jesus, speak in like manner, "Messiah died for our sins," they may refer to national Israel under the first covenant and they may mean because of the blind sin of unbelief. This would make the (sin of Israel) rejection by the remnant to be the cause of death.

When the Apostle Paul examines the mystery of The Christ he finds the cause of death in original sin that preceded all sinning. The Second Adam must redeem the first Adam – requiring the same kind of life the first Adam lost.

The Jews were expecting a Messiah to save and redeem the Jews from Roman oppressors. They did not know that the Jewish Christ would also be the Second Adam who first must save the world. From the wage on Adam's sin which is death.

Mankind has needed salvation from death ever since God drove Adam and Eve from the Garden to die.

They were created 'living souls' and could have begotten 'living souls' before death entered to corrupt the seed of Adam.

This corrupt seed causes death in the womb at conception. This means the cause of death for mankind is in Adam, not Eve. It also means that the seed of the woman could be a 'living soul' *if* the fruit of the womb was from an incorruptible seed.

Herein, we find the real cause for the death of Jesus. He was born of the Seed of God, not man. Therefore, He inherited Life from God, His Father, not death from a man.

Jesus willingly gave His Life from God, to ransom man from death in Adam. He passed from Life to death so that *we* might pass from death to Life.