

# **LET THE BIBLE SPEAK, SERIES**

## **DID CHRIST DIE IN VAIN?**

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To die is sad, to die in vain is tragic. When we read of people who are killed in an automobile accident by a drunken driver, we come to realize that it did not have to happen. Since such could have been avoided, we feel that they died in vain.

The Scriptures declared that Christ would die in Isaiah 53. We read the actual account of his death in Luke 23. The death, burial and resurrection are given as facts of the gospel by Paul in 1Corinthians 15:1-5. Did He die in vain? You might reply "of course not." However, if certain things now being preached are true, He did die in vain. For example:

### **1. If Justification Could Have Come By The Law of Moses, Then Christ Died in Vain.**

Many today insist that we are still living under the law given Moses and the children of Israel by God in the long ago. Some in the early days of the church desired to be under the law. Galatians 4:21 "Tell me ye that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?" These people wanted to go back to the law of Moses even though they had accepted Christ and were his professed followers. The Colossian heretics bound the law, and Paul told the people "Let no man judge you in respect of meat, drink, etc." These false teachers were trying to bind the law on the Christians of their day. Paul said no to that. We have been discharged from the law according to Romans 7:6 "But now we are delivered from the law." We no longer live under that law. Paul declared it had been "taken out of the way and nailed to the cross" in Colossians 2:14-16. Someone may day "don't you believe in

the 10 commandments?" Yes, I believe they were given by God to Israel. I believe that they represent good moral teaching. However, I also believe that as a law they were done away with when Christ died on the cross. That doesn't mean that I can steal, or lie, or commit immorality. However the reason I cannot do these things is not because the ten commandments forbid them, but because the law of Christ forbids them. Christ's death abolished the law. It was not possible for the blood of animals to take away sin. If sin could have been forgiven based on animal sacrifices, then Christ would not have had to die. If salvation or justification could have come by the law, Christ died in vain. Jesus came to redeem those under the law Galatians 4:5. The law was a tutor to the Jews to bring them to Christ. Christ fulfilled the law, at which time it was taken out of the way according to Matthew 5:17 and Colossians 2:14-16.

## II. If Being A Member of Christ's Church is Non-Essential, Jesus Died In Vain.

Many people deny the necessity of the church. They say "Christ, and not the church." "Exalt Christ, do not exalt the church." What? exalt the king and not his kingdom? Exalt the husband and not his bride? That is impossible. Jesus is the head of the church according to Ephesians 5:23-27, and the savior of the body. The body is the church Ephesians 1:21-22; Colossians 1:18. To be in Christ is to be in his body 2Corinthians 5:17 and 1Corinthians 12:13, hence to be in Christ is to be in the church. If Christ is the savior of the body, then he is the savior of the church. How then can one be saved if he/she is not in the church? The church owes its existence to Christ and his death. He purchased the church with his blood Acts 20:28. If we don't have to be members of the church, then Christ shed his blood in vain. Think about it. All the suffering, pain and shame that he endured was to no avail, if the church is unnecessary. Who can believe it? Paul assures us that Jesus died and gave himself for us that the might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works Titus 2:14.

## III. If Religious Division is Right, Christ Died In Vain.

Many claim that denominations are good and pleasing to God. Some even thank God "for all the churches." They say that all the denominations represent "the Lord's big church." Denominationalism, however, represents religious division. Denominations are divided over names, doctrine, worship and terms of entry. They disagree over what is necessary for salvation and faithful Christian living. Since Christ died to unite all the saved in one body (Ephesians 4:4) how can we say that many religious divisions are good and pleasing to God? Jesus even prayed that we all might be one in John 17:20. Paul declared that Jesus died in order to "reconcile both (Jew and Gentile) in one body by the cross having slain the enmity thereby" Ephesians 4:4-6. Paul pleaded for unity in 1Corinthians 1:10-13 and

gave the charter for it in Ephesians 4:4-6. How can anyone say that religious division is all right? If hundreds of denominational churches are right, Christ failed in his mission to unite us all in one body, and died in vain. How sad.

#### IV. If There Is No Future Resurrection, Christ Died In Vain.

The Sadducees during the time of Christ denied the resurrection. Some in the early church did as well. In 1Corinthians 15:12 Paul wrote "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" Today the materialists deny a resurrection, and teach that death marks the end of our existence. If such were true, we would have no hope and would be of all men most miserable. The bible teaches, however, that Jesus died to guarantee for us a resurrection. In John 11:23 the Lord declared "I am the resurrection and the life." What a blessed thought. Paul further tells us: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept" 1Corinthians 15:20. The figure of "the first fruits" suggests that image of a great harvest which is ushered in by the first sheaf. Just as the first sheaf cannot be harvested and offered unless the entire harvest is ripe and ready, so Christ in being resurrected, becomes our certainty or guarantee that all shall be raised. Hence, we look forward to the day that we shall come forth from the grave to everlasting life. But if there is no resurrection Christ died in vain for Paul plainly declared "if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith vain also."

#### V. If I Am Lost, Christ Died in Vain.

The bible plainly teaches that some will be lost. To be lost means that we will be punished eternally according to Luke 16:24 and Matthew 25:46. The scripture speaks of "everlasting punishment." What a horrible thought. For anyone to be lost is not the will of the Lord. "Who will have all men saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" 1Timothy 2:4. The scripture tells us that Christ died to save us "but God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" Romans 5:8. The death of Christ, however, is only of value if I accept it's benefits through obedience. If you have not taken advantage of the sacrifice Christ made in your behalf by accepting Him and obeying His commands His death was in vain so far as you are concerned. Won't you repent today and obey the gospel being baptized in water for the remission of your sins Acts 2:38?