

## **The Lifted Up Christ**

No. 17

### **Introduction.**

I. This Lord's Day I have chosen to speak on the theme, "The Lifted Up Christ."

A. This is a subject that is very close to my heart. I do not know of any other subject that I would rather speak on than this one. The expression "lifted up" occurs some three times in the gospel of John in reference to Christ.

John 3:14-15. **And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.**

John 8:28 **Jesus therefore said, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things.**

John 12:32, 33 **And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die.**

B. The word "lifted up" in these verses have reference to the Lord being lifted up on the cross to die. There are many things that can be said about Christ's death, but for our lesson let us focus our attention on the question, "Why did Christ Die?"

I. **False Concepts of Christ's Death** - At the very outset of this discussion it is important that we consider some false concepts of Christ's death. By considering these false concepts, it will help us better understand why Christ died.

A. One false concept of the Lord's death is the **accidental theory**.

1. By this theory it is meant that the Lord's death was an accident. It is argued that Jesus did not intend to die. It is affirmed that Christ was a man who set forth progressive ideas that the people could not accept, so the people rose up and killed Him. In other words there was not any significance to His death. It was a tragedy, but it was not for redemption of mankind.

2. A man or woman who believes the Bible cannot accept this theory for at least 3 reasons.

a. First, Jesus **planned to die**.

1) The verses we considered a moment ago prove this.

2) Matt. 16:21

- b. Second, the **death of Christ was planned by God.** (Eph. 1:4; 3:11).
- c. Third, Christ **could have prevented His death if He had so desired.** (Jn. 10:18; Matt. 26:47-53).
  - 1) Christ said if He desired He could ask God and God would send more than 72,000 angels to rescue Him from death.
  - 2) His death was no accident. Jesus intended to die.

B. Another false concept of the Lord's death is the **martyr or example theory.**

- 1. Simply stated this theory suggests that Christ's death was an example of courage and suffering. There is so much truth in this theory that many have been led to believe that it is the whole truth of the matter.
- 2. Peter said. (1 Pet. 2:21).
  - a. Peter clearly affirms Jesus died as an example for us.
  - b. He goes on, however, to state in verse 24 of this same chapter that Christ "bore our sins in his body upon the tree."
  - c. Peter's statement refutes the example theory only concept.

C. Another false theory of the Lord's death is **the appeasement theory.**

- 1. Most of us have seen movies where the heathen gods became angered for some reason and a sacrifice had to be offered to settle them down.
- 2. Many people picture God as this kind of God. They believe that He became angered at man and Jesus had to die to appease His anger.
- 3. This theory is not supported by the scriptures. John 3:36 indicates the unbeliever is under the wrath or displeasure of God. Even though the sinner is under the wrath of God, Christ did not die to appease it. Christ died to satisfy the justice of God. God's perfect justice that we be punished for our sins.

D. Another false concept of the Lord's death is the **arbitrary theory.**

- 1. This theory states that God could have saved man in any one of a dozen ways, but He arbitrarily chose to save man by the cross.
- 2. I am shocked at the number of people, even in the Lord's church, who accept this view. This view makes a demon of God! If God could have saved man in any way He chose, why did He choose the cross? Why did He let His own Son die such a horrible death? Why did He let His Son suffer such pain and shame?

3. The answer is that it was not possible to save man another way. Christ had to become a sacrifice for man.

II. **Why Christ Died** - Now that we have considered some false concepts of Christ's death, let's set down in explicit terms why Christ died.

A. In the first place, Jesus died to **take away the law of Moses**.

1. Paul wrote in Romans 7:4-6.

**ROM 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God.**

**ROM 7:5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were {aroused} by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.**

**ROM 7:6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.**

2. Paul states we are dead to the Law "through the body of Christ." Christ set aside or removed the Mosaical Law by His death on the cross.
3. The law was a means of condemnation, not salvation. When Christ died on the cross He established a law or system of grace by which we can be saved, by which we can have life with God.

B. In the second place, Christ died to **fulfill the Old Testament prophecies**. (Matt. 5:17).

1. Let's consider a few prophecies Christ fulfilled.
2. Psa. 22:16, 18; Isa. 53:8, 9; Psa. 16:10.

C. In the third place, Christ died to **ratify the New Covenant**. (Matt. 26:28).

1. "The blood of the covenant" is the blood by which the New Covenant was made binding. It did not go into force until Jesus died on the cross. (Heb. 9:15-17).

**HEB 9:15 And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were {committed} under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.**

**HEB 9:16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.**

**HEB 9:17 For a covenant is valid {only} when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.**

2. In this passage the Hebrew writer states a man must die before His will goes into effect. Likewise, Christ had to die that His New Will would go into effect.

D. In the fourth place, Christ **died for the church**. (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).

1. Since Christ died for the church, it shows that the church is important. Sometimes you hear an individual say, "I believe that I can be saved outside the church."

2. If this is true, Christ died uselessly. The scriptures state Christ shed His blood that the church might be saved.

E. In the fifth place, Christ **died to reconcile God and man.**

1. In Isaiah 59:2 Isaiah states sin separated man from God. Christ reconciled God and man by removing this barrier.
2. I once read of a **couple who had separated** and were making plans for a divorce. While they worked on their plans for the divorce, their little boy became very ill. They stayed with the boy in the hospital day and night. As the little fellow was dying, they clasped hands over his little body. They were reconciled with one another through his death.
3. This is exactly what Jesus did on the cross. He reconciled lost humanity to God.

F. In the sixth place, Christ died **as a propitiation for our sins.** (1 Jn. 2:1,2).

1. The word “propitiation” has the idea of substitute. Justice demanded that man be punished for his sins. Christ became, however, a substitute or a propitiation for us. He suffered and died for us.
2. What Jesus did is **illustrated by a Russian officer.**
  - a. He had a lot of stealing in his group. He made a law that the next person caught stealing was to receive 100 lashes across the back. The next person caught stealing was his own mother. She received 2 or 3 lashes across her back and he could stand it no more. He ran to the man administering the whipping and said, “The law demands a hundred lashes; I’ll take the rest of them.” He became a substitute for her and justice was fulfilled.
  - b. This is what Christ did. He became a substitute for you and me. (Isa. 53:5-6).

G. Finally, Christ died to **demonstrate the Father’s love for man.** (Rom. 5:8).

1. The death of Christ was the greatest possible manifestation of love. Many of you have sons. I am sure that you would not let them die for me or for anyone else.
2. I have three sons and three grandsons I would not give any one of them on the cross for the world. They mean too much to me. God was willing, however, to let His only Son die on the cross for you and me.

**Conclusion.**

I. **During the Civil War a young soldier was sentenced to die.** His mother went to President Lincoln and pleaded for a pardon. Lincoln issued the pardon and the boy’s life was spared. When a cabinet member escorted her from the President’s Office she said, “I knew it was a lie.” The cabinet member said, “What are you talking about?” She said, “They told me that Mr. Lincoln was an ugly man, but I declare that he is the handsomest man that I ever saw.”

II. Beloved, Christ dying on the cross was an ugly thing to the world, a thing of shame and disgrace. It was a

death reserved for criminals. But we come to the One who gave His life on the cross, our sins will be forgiven and we will realize that Christ is the most beautiful and wonderful Person in the world.

III. Christ die for all who will believe on Him. Will you believe on the Lord Jesus? Will you come forward and be baptized! (Mk. 16:16). Come as we stand and sing.

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