

Did Christ Die In Vain? **No. 193**

Introduction.

- I. I would like to invite your attention to two passages of scripture from the gospel of John. (Jn. 3:14-16; 12:32, 33).
 - A. These passages are just two of about 175 in the New Testament that mention the death of Jesus Christ.
 - B. This does not include the many passages in the Old Testament that make reference to His death.
- II. For our lesson let us consider the question, “**Did Christ Die In Vain?**”
 - A. The very statement of this question is shocking to faithful Christians, yet there are several statements made by people today that teach or imply the death of Christ was a needless tragedy.
 - B. I am not sure that many of the people making these statements are fully aware of how they effect the death of Christ, but these statements, if true, make the death of Christ vain.
- I. **Christ Not Raised** - There are many people, even religious people, who affirm Christ was not raised from the dead.
 - A. They scoff at the resurrection of Christ, as they do the other supernatural elements of the Bible.
 - B. If it be true that Christ was not raised, He died in vain.
 1. Listen carefully to what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 12-19.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; 7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17

and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.¹⁹ If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

2. Paul affirms Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and He was buried and raised on the third day according to the scriptures.
3. Paul also affirms if Christ was not raised from the death that the apostles were false witnesses and their preaching was vain.
4. He also states that if Christ was not raised from the death that we are lost in our sins and will not be raised.

B. I am thankful, however, that Paul made this statement. In verses 5 and 6 of this chapter he states more than 500 people were witnesses to the resurrection of Christ. Most of these were still alive and could verify what they had seen.

1. Some might ask, **“Were these witnesses reliable?”** The answer is yes.
2. There are **two things** about these witnesses that make them reliable.
 - a. First, these people were **not easily fooled**. (Lk. 24:11; Jn. 20:24-29).
 - b. A second thing that makes these witnesses trustworthy was **their transformation**.
 - 1) When Christ was arrested **His disciples fled from Him**. They were afraid to associate with Him. They remained frightened until three days after His death on the cross. After that time they became men of great courage who were willing to stand before vast multitudes and proclaim their faith in Jesus Christ. Many were willing to die for their faith in Christ.
 - 2) The fact of the resurrection of Christ is the only way to explain this great change.

C. I am thankful Paul made another grand statement. In verse 20 of 1 Corinthians 15 Paul makes this statement, “But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep.”

1. Paul assure us that Christ was raised and that He is the “pledge” or “fruit fruits” of our resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:22, 49).
2. He closes this chapter by giving these comforting words. (1 Cor. 15:50-58).

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this

mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

II. Law Saves - There are others today who teach the law of Moses is still binding and a person can be saved by keeping its commandments.

A. If this is true, the death of Christ was needless. (Gal. 2:21).

B. In the Galatian letter Paul was writing to rebuke those who were trying to bind the law on Christians and teaching that salvation was through the law.

1. Paul fought against this doctrine because it made Christ's death vain. If one could be saved by the law, there was no need for Christ to die. The law was given hundreds of years before Christ.

2. We hear the noise of this battle throughout the Galatian letter. (Gal. 2:16; 3:13, 24-25).

3. Paul wrote. (Gal. 4:21-31).

21 Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman.23 But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.24 This is allegorically speaking: for these women are two covenants, one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. 25 Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.26 But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. 27 For it is written, "Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; For more are the children of the desolate Than of the one who has a husband." 28 And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. 30 But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, For the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

4. Paul later wrote. (Gal. 5:4).

III. **A Good Moral Life** - Another statement currently made by man is that a good moral life will save a man.

- A. If this is true Christ die in vain because men could live a good moral life before the death of Christ and can do so today.
- B. A good moral life is essential but morality alone will not save a man. A man cannot be saved by his own merits.
 - 1. The case of **Cornelius** proves this. (Acts 10:1, 2; 11:14; 10:48).
 - 2. Cornelius needed the blood of Christ just as you and I need it to be saved. (Heb. 9:22).

IV. **Saved Outside The Church** - There are others who state that a person can be saved outside the church.

- A. Some have gone so far as to belittle and ridicule the church.
- B. If one can be saved outside the church, Christ died in vain because Christ died for the church. (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).
 - 1. These scriptures show that Christ placed great value on the church.
 - 2. He shed His blood that He might save the church and promises to save only those in the church. (Eph. 5:23).

Conclusion.

- I. Christ died in vain, so far as you and I are concerned, if we die lost. Christ died on the cross to save those who will believe on Him. If we refuse to believe on Him, His death will not benefit us. We will be lost because of our rejection of the Savior. (Jn. 3:36).
- II. Will you obey the Lord? Will you come and confess His name? Will you be buried with Him in baptism? Give your life to Him this day. Come as we stand and sing.

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