

The Gospel of Christ which centers around the cross of Christ is always in season. During what is called the Eastre season there is special emphasis placed upon the sufferings of Christ as well as upon the words which He uttered while on the cross. Many messages are given on the seven last words of Christ. Yesterday we spent a few moments studying probably the least understood of the words which Christ uttered on the cross -- those being -- "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" We looked at Psalm 22 where incidentally more details are given concerning that which transpired on the cross between the Godhead than we have in the New Testament. But we did notice these words were not spoken in conversational tones, but according to Psalms 22:1 these words were screamed by our Lord as He addressed "My God the Father, and My God the Spirit. These screams pierced the darkness that covered the land between the hours of 12:00 and 3:00. These prolonged screams were the result of heaven's judgment that was being poured out upon Christ, who was bearing the eternal punishment of man's sins as man's substitute -- or, as Isaiah put it "He was smitten of man and afflicted. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him and God put Him to grief and His soul was made an offering for sin". Or, as Paul put it in II Cor. 5:21, "God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him". In Galatians 4:4, 5 it says, "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman made under the law to redeem them that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons". All of this fulfilled God's time-table -- at God's appointed time Christ came -- at God's appointed time Christ died. And Jesus said in John 12:27 "For this cause I came unto this hour". Christ was born to die. Time is measured by the Person and the Cross-work of Christ. ^{As the O.T. + Jewish history + finds its fulfillment in} All ancient ^{as the N.T. flows from the Cross -} history flows into the cross of Christ, and all modern history flows from the cross of Christ -- thus the terms "B.C." and "A.D." The Old Testament scriptures beginning with Genesis 3:15 looked forward to that great climax of the coming of the Messiah, a Savior, who would come to save His people from their sins. The death of Christ is central in history -- it is the

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central theme of the Bible, and, of course, it is the basis of the Gospel. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures -- He was buried and He arose again -- all according to the scriptures. The last words that Jesus Christ spoke upon that cross were "It is finished" -- and these I might say, although apparently easily understood -- are not too well understood by even many religious people! Maybe you will catch the point as we go on. ^{When the last Jesus uttered the words it is finished} WHAT was finished? Actually - THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH HE CAME; ^{and why did he come. - ~~For that~~} and he came to take care of the sins of the world -- TO DIE IN YOUR STEAD AND MINE. In other words He came to fulfill what John said in John 1:29 "Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world".

Hebrews 2:9, "Though we see Jesus Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death that He by the Grace of God should taste death for every man". CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS -- He died for our original sins -- man's inherited sins -- AND HIS PERSONAL SINS. Christ died for all of our sins. Now, with that, I would like to have you notice II Cor. 5:18, "And all things are of God who hath reconciled us unto Himself by Jesus Christ and hath given unto us the ministry ..." Every Believer actually is a minister, and he has a ministry of reconciliation. What does that ministry consist of? Verse 19, to wit, "that God was in Christ (the Deity of Christ) reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespass unto them". Note -- the ministry of reconciliation consists of a message the good news is that Jesus Christ reconciled the world, and that God is no longer imputing man's trespasses against him, or holding man's sins against him! IS THIS NOT GOOD NEWS! In other words, man's sins were COMPLETELY AND TOTALLY taken care of by the Lord Jesus Christ, and sin no longer stands between God and man. The sin barrier has been removed, and CHRIST now stands as the connecting link --- HE IS NOW THE BASIS OF RECONCILIATION

Now, actually, there were two things that laid the foundation for this reconciliation. One was man-ward; the other was God-ward. The man-ward aspect of Christ's death upon the cross is called "redemption".

Redemption actually involves a price that is paid; an adequate payment that is paid -- and, in this case, Christ's payment was adequate to purchase man out of the slave market of sin! Thus, Ephesians 1:7 says "In whom we have redemption through His blood, ^{I pet 1:17-18 Rom 3:24 13 are justified freely by His grace.} even the forgiveness of sins". The God-ward aspect is found in I John 2:2 which says "Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. Now, propitiation means SATISFACTION. In other words, Christ's death upon the cross was not only adequate to pay man's fine -- to get man "off the hook" but, actually, that sacrifice satisfied the legal demands of the whole law courts of heaven! Thus, that sacrifice was a sweet-smelling savour in the nostrils of God. That was the God-ward aspect. GOD IS SATISFIED. MAN'S SINS ARE TAKEN CARE OF. THUS, THERE IS NOTHING THAT STANDS IN THE WAY BY WHICH MAN CAN NOW NOT BE RECONCILED TO GOD. DO YOU REALIZE THAT ACTUALLY NO ONE CAN GO TO HELL BECAUSE OF HIS SIN! YOU SEE, GOD IS NO LONGER HOLDING MAN'S SIN AGAINST HIM ... AND SO, IF THESE SCRIPTURES MEAN WHAT THEY SAY, THEN, UNDER THE LAW OF DOUBLE JEOPARDY, YOU CANNOT HANG THE MAN TWICE FOR A CRIME. WE ARE SINNERS. AS SINNERS WE ARE CONDEMNED. BUT JESUS STEPPED IN AND PICKED UP THE TAB AND PAID OUR FINE AND "TOOK OUR RAP" -- THUS, GOD CANNOT EXECUTE THAT PENALTY UPON US, ^{because of Sin} AND SO THESE WORDS MEAN EXACTLY WHAT THEY SAY -- GOD IS NO LONGER HOLDING MAN'S SIN AGAINST HIM! "Well, someone might say, "that's fine! then everyone is going to heaven!" "Oh no, they are not!" -- for Jesus said, ^{Matt 7:13+14} "Broad is the Way, many there are that are on that road to destruction..."

You see, Jesus Christ now stands in the way, and the only sin that Jesus Christ could not die for is REJECTION OF THE FREE PARDON THAT IS AVAILABLE IN CHRIST. Thus, though Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life, though He says "He is the door..." -- if I refuse to believe that -- THUS UNBELIEF NOW BECOMES THE BASIS OF MY ETERNAL DAMNATION. Notice John 3:18 "He that believeth on Christ is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the Name of the only Son of God"