

DOCTRINE OF CHRIST – part 5

II. THE STATES OF CHRIST

- A. **The State of Pre-Incarnation.** Before His birth, Jesus Christ existed as the eternally begotten Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, equal in power and authority with the Father. Christ’s pre-existence is taught in John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him ...” Jesus said in John 6:38: “I came down from heaven ...”
- B. **The State of Humiliation**
1. **Shorter Catechism Q.27.** Wherein did Christ’s Humiliation Consist? Ans. Christ’s humiliation consists in His being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.
 2. **The Incarnation & Birth of Christ.**
 - a. Jesus was supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a virgin. He humbled Himself by taking a human nature to His divine person (Lk 1:34-35).
 - b. The Word (Christ) was made in human flesh and lived among men (John 1:14). Christ became man in being born of a woman and made under the law, so that He might redeem us under the curse of the law. Gal. 4:4 “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,”
 3. **The Life of Christ.**
 - a. Christ saved us by His two-fold obedience: active & passive obedience.
 - b. Active obedience – in His life, He perfectly kept the Moral Law on our behalf. Mt 3:15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Mt 5:17-18 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Rom 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. 2 Cor 5:21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Heb 4:15 For (Christ) ... was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet without sin*.
 - c. Passive obedience – In His death, He submitted Himself willingly to die on the cross as our sacrifice (Isa 53:6-7, Jn 10:14-18, Phil 2:8)
 4. **The Sufferings of Christ.**
 - a. Jesus suffered during His entire life. He who was the Lord of the universe occupied a lowly position as a servant. He who was pure and holy lived in a sinful polluted world, in daily association with sinners. He suffered from the repeated attacks of Satan, from the hatred and unbelief of His own people, and from the persecution of His enemies. His sufferings reached its climax when the wrath of God was poured on Him on the cross as He cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mt 27:46).
 - b. Jesus suffered in body and soul. Jesus suffered anguish of the soul as He was burdened with the sin of humanity and the awareness of the extreme sufferings that would overwhelm Him as He went to the cross. He agonized in the garden of Gethsemane where His soul was “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” (Mt 26:38). Isa 53:3-5 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: ... Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: ... But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities:
 5. **The Death of Christ**
 - a. Why must Christ Die?
 - i. *So that He might bear the sins of many.* The death of Christ was the fundamental theme of the Gospel.
 - Isa 53:12 he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.
 - 1 Cor 15:1-3 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, ... how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

- ii. *Sinful man, unable to save himself, is under the wrath of God.* Good works do not and cannot save a person from eternal damnation in hell.
 - Ps 53:3 “*there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*”;
 - Rom 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”
 - Isa 64:4 “But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; ... and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”
 - iii. *Penalty must be paid for sin.* God is holy. He cannot overlook sin. Sinful man is under the death penalty (spiritual, eternal & physical death):
 - Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.
 - Rom 6:23. For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 - iv. *The Demands of the Moral Law must be satisfied.*
 - Gal 4:4-5 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
 - Rom 10:4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.
 - v. *The love of God.* God chose to save sinners out of His benevolent love and justice.
 - Jn 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
 - Rom 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- b. How did Christ save mankind?
- i. *As our Ransom.*
 - Mt 20:28 Even as the Son of man came ... to give his life a ransom for many.
 - 1 Tim 2:5-6 For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.
 - To ransom means to deliver a thing or person by paying the price for which it is held captive Eg. in Lev 25:47-49. And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother *that dwelleth* by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger *or* sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger’s family: After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: Either his uncle, or his uncle’s son, may redeem him, or *any* that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself.
 - Sinners are sold under sin in a slave market, “... carnal, sold under sin.” (Rom 7:14).
 - Souls are under the sentence of death. Ezek 18:4 “...the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”
 - Christ, by His death, buys sinners out from the slave market, thereby delivering them from the bondage of sin. He breaks their chains of sin, sets prisoners free by paying the ransom price of His own blood – His death paid for our deliverance. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by Himself being made a curse for us. (Gal 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree).
 - ii. *As our Propitiation.*
 - As a propitiatory sacrifice, Christ covered our sins and appeased the wrath of God.
 - Rom 3:25-26 “Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”
 - 1 Jn 2:1-2 And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.
 - iii. *As our Reconciliation.*
 - We are reconciled to God by the death of Jesus Christ, by His Cross, and by His blood. Once enemies of God, we are now become friends of God. Sinful man is reconciled to a righteous God.

- Rom. 5:10 when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son
- 2Cor. 5:18-19,21 ... God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, ...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; ...
- Col. 1:20 having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself;

iv. As our Substitution.

- Christ bore our sins and the penalty of our sins on our behalf. Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 1Pet. 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 2Cor. 5:21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
- God provided Abraham a ram to sacrifice instead of Isaac. Gen 22:13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

c. How did Christ die?

- Jesus was humiliated - stripped naked (Mt 27:28), mocked (Mk 15:17-20), crucified between criminals (Mk 15:27), and made a public spectacle (Mk 15:29).
- Christ died by crucifixion, a slow death by bleeding. Christ was whipped (Jn 19:1) and beaten (Mt 27:30), and nailed to a wooden cross (Jn 20:25; Col 2:14). It was a painful torturous death.
- There is no doubt that Jesus actually died on the cross because
 - Water and blood gushed out after the soldiers speared His side (Jn 19:33-37 “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. ... 36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. 37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.”)
 - *Blood is a mixture of cells and plasma. It is 55% plasma and 45% cells. The plasma is 90% water. To stay mixed it has to be constantly agitated. When a person dies, their body immediately begins to break down and decay. Very quickly, the blood cells begin to separate out from the plasma (the fluid they're suspended in.) The point of the detail is that Jesus' blood was not still flowing. He could not have been alive, because his blood was the blood of a dead man, a man whose heart has not been beating for at least 45 minutes to an hour. When Joseph of Arimathaea asked Pilate for Jesus' body, Pilate sent a centurion to make sure that Jesus was really dead. The centurion pierced Jesus side and when he saw the blood and water he knew that Jesus was really dead and had been dead for a while.*
 - His legs were not broken because the soldiers saw that He was already dead. Pilate gave permission for Joseph of Arimathaea to take the dead body of Jesus (Mk 15:43-45).

d. Christ freed us from the bondage of sin, death and Satan.

- Gal 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:
- Rom 6:6-7 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
- 1 Cor 15:55-57 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

6. The Burial of Christ

- a. Where does Isaiah prophesy Christ's burial will take place? Isa 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; ...
- b. Was Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled? Lk 23:33; 50-53 And when they were come to ... Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. ... And, behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a counsellor; ... *he was* of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: ... This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone...
- c. Jesus's body was laid in a solid rock tomb (Lk 23:53) and its entrance was covered by a huge rock (Mt 27:60).
- d. Jewish burial involved washing the body in warm water, and using 100 pounds of aromatic spices to prepare the body for burial. The body was then wrapped in white linen cloth and the folds glued together by myrrh. The whole encasement would weigh 120 pounds.
- e. The tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers (Mt 27:65). The cowardly disciples could not have overcome the well-trained and armed soldiers to steal the body. A Roman seal was stamped on the rock (Mt 27:66) enclosing the tomb. The seal represented the power and authority of imperial Rome. The one who breaks the seal faces capital punishment. The Roman soldiers would not risk execution for tampering with the seal.

7. Unscriptural Views of Christ's Death:

- a. Accident theory: *Christ's death on the Cross was an accident, something unforeseen in His life.* But Jesus had foretold of His death many times. It was not an accident, but God's salvation plan. Jn 10:17, 18 "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Also Mt 16:21, 20:17-19, 28, 26:2, 39-42; Lk 18:31-34, 22:19-20; Mk 9:30-32,
- b. Martyr theory: *Christ's death was similar in kind to that of the martyrs John Huss or Polycarp, who gave up their lives as a sacrifice for a principle and for truth.* If so, Christ and Paul would have said so. Stephen died a martyr's death, but Paul never preached salvation and forgiveness through the death of Stephen.
- c. Moral Example theory: *Christ's death has an influence upon mankind for moral improvement. The example of His suffering ought to soften human hearts, and help a man to reform.* But did the sight of Jesus' moral example, suffering and death move the Jews to reform? No. Such a view of Christ's death does not deal with sin.

8. Extent of His death. Was Christ's death meant for all men, the whole world, or only the elect? (A fuller discussion on limited atonement will be covered in the doctrine of salvation.)

- a. The "all" passages
 - Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. (1 Tim. 2:6).
 - the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. (1 Tim. 4:10).
- b. The "world" passages
 - For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (Jn 3:16).
 - And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (2 Cor 5:19). Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29).
- c. Limited to the Elect.
 - call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Mt 1:21); I lay down my life for the sheep (Jn 10:15).
 - Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (Eph 5:25).
 - feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

"The atonement is *sufficient* for all; it is *efficient* for those who believe in Christ. The atonement itself, so far as it lays the basis for the redemptive dealing of God with all men, is *unlimited*; the *application* of the atonement is limited to those who actually believe in Christ. He is the Saviour of all men *potentially* (1 Tim. 1:15); of believers alone *effectually* (1 Tim.

4:10). The atonement is limited only by men's unbelief.” – William Evans.