

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE DEATH OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST.

In relation to:

1. God the Father. Eph. 5.2.
2. Ourselves, if believers.
 - (a) When sinners 1 Peter 3.16.
 - (b) Since salvation 1 John 1.7; 2 Cor. 5.15.
3. Our sins. 1 John 2.2a; 1 Cor. 15.3.
4. Israel John 11.51.
5. The Lost world. Heb. 11.7; 1 John 2.2b.
6. The earth. Matt. 13.44.

Our subject this evening, dear friends, is "Various aspects of the death of the Lord Jesus". One feels at the outset how important it is that a subject like this should be considered prayerfully and spiritually by the Lord's people. It is not a matter for mere argument, it is not a matter for mere controversy, it is not a matter for mere mental information. If we are in Christ Jesus we want to know more of the preciousness of His finished work; if we are those who have passed out of death unto life, it is our privilege and joy, and should be our increasing priv-

ilege and joy to know more of the fulness of that work on which we rest, and by which we are saved.

There are many ways in which we might consider the death of the Lord Jesus. The syllabus that you have, particularly refers to its effects, and I thought that that was the special subject that you desired we should consider before the Lord. But we might also notice various aspects with regard to the cause. Sometimes Jewish men come up to us and say, "The Lord Jesus of Whom you speak did not lay down His life; He was killed", and we answer, often referring to Isaiah 53, "The LORD made to meet on Him the iniquity", but also "He made naked His soul for death", yet beyond that "He was LED as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers, is dumb".

We might furthermore have considered the various aspects of the death of the Lord Jesus with respect to its nature. I do not mean to speak scientifically as to what was the dying of the Lord Jesus. 'Tis not a matter for mere discussion as to how the physical death was produced. These things are too solemn for such a mode of study - unless indeed the hearts of those thus studying are in fullest subjection unto the Lord, and on their guard against Satan's misleadings, for Satan will always seek to drive us away from spiritual teaching to that which is mental, and then from that which is mental to that which is proud, or that which is not study at all. However, we realize that our beloved Lord, in connection with the nature of His death emphasized His SOUL as well as His BODY, and the Scriptures also refer to His SPIRIT. "Through an Eternal Spirit He offered Himself" - that was His Deity. He laid down His SOUL? says John 2, and again "The soul of the flesh is in the blood", Lev. 17.11; and yet more in Isaiah 53, "He made naked His SOUL for death". Thus He not merely took a physical death, not merely was that BODY which was 'prepared' for Him laid down, but He took the penalty of sin, as it is written, "The soul that sinneth it shall die". Wondrous was the nature of that death, wondrous beyond explanation, wondrous beyond full realization, but blessed be God grasped in some measure by a living faith.

And now we come to the syllabus that deals with the aspects of the Death of the Lord Jesus with respect to the effects.

First, in relation to God the Father. The death of the Lord Jesus was a declaration of the righteousness of God. A few thoughts here may be given as to two theories, and one true teaching, as to the atonement. Some will tell us that the death of the Lord Jesus was only a revelation of wondrous love; that it was an exemplary work. It was that, but but much more. Others hold what has been called the 'governmental' theory of the atonement - that God was pleased to make known His righteous anger against sin in general upon the Person of the Lord Jesus, and now can forgive (they tell us) in general because He has made manifest His holy displeasure against sin. The idea underlying that theory is that the law of God has been outraged, and that the law is vindicated if One Who is perfectly righteous is given up to show the holy hatred that God has toward sin. Now that theory contains a portion of true doctrine as far as it goes, but when any exhaust teaching as to the death of Christ therein they lose that which is the precious resting of a believer's faith. That God DID make manifest His righteousness then is evident, but not merely His righteousness in connection with government, not merely did He vindicate the law in general, but He vindicated the law in particular; that is to say, we believe by grace in the 'satisfaction' doctrine concerning the atonement, that the Lord Jesus not merely offered a general offering with a view to the general display of God's righteousness, but that there was a distinct manifestation of God's absolute righteousness in that the full penalty of the law for all who are brought to believe in Christ, the full penalty of the law was placed on the Son of God's love. It was not merely a haphazard event, it was not merely a declaration of general holiness, but of specific righteousness, that there must be a Divine equivalent, and God would spare not His own Son but gave HIM up that there might be a satisfactory work to meet the full demands of law; but not only did God make manifest His perfect righteousness, the atonement of the Lord Jesus reveals the love of God. "God so loved that He gave" says John 3.16. "SO" loved that He gave, for love will give, love is not mere sentiment.

Then there is a third thought as to God the Father in Eph. 5.2. We are told that our Lord Jesus offered Himself to God, and that when He did so He was presenting an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. It is blessed to realize this, You know how that in the law of Moses, among the sacrifices the Burnt offering was first - that was wholly unto God. It is blessed to

realize that this aspect of the work of Christ is a reality, that He presented Himself to the Father, and that the Father was well-pleased to accept that work. It was a sweet-smelling savour before Him. I believe that this should be continually in the minds of the Lord's people, that all the sacrifices of old were precious to God because they were types of the Lord Jesus offered to Him. So I believe one of the precious fulnesses of the Lord's Supper is in connection with the thought that it is toward the Father, not as a sacrifice but as a reminder of a sacrifice, the word of God being thus written, "This do with a view to My memorial".

We now come to consider the Death of the Lord Jesus with reference to ourselves, if by the grace of God we have passed out of death into life, and are believers in the Lord Jesus. And we must first think of ourselves as we were before God laid hold of us. We were children of wrath even as others, with no merits and no glories, nothing but sin, nothing but corruption, nothing but evil. But the work of the Lord Jesus is declared in Romans 5 in these words, "Christ died for ungodly ones". The thought is this, that Christ died for us when we were sinners, enemies and ungodly. Viewing us as lost He shielded us from the Divine wrath, the sword of God being sheathed in Himself, for the sword ^{awoke} against Him that it might not awake against His redeemed. He stood in their place, and one of the names that is given to Him in this connection is "THE RANSOM", the word implying that He gave an EXACT EQUIVALENT to the Father for all who are brought out of a justly deserved judgment. But not only was the work of the Lord Jesus for us when we were sinners, to cover us from wrath, it was also to bring us to God. It not only changed our position with respect to law, it also changed our position with respect to the Father. We were afar off, but now in Christ we who were once far off, are made nigh IN the blood of Christ. And again in 1 Peter 3.18 we read "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Righteous One for unrighteous ones, that He might bring us to God". There is yet a further thought. The Lord Jesus Christ when He died for poor guilty sinners to redeem them, died in order that His righteousness might be made available. You recollect how that in Gen. 3 the coats of skin were not available until there had been the death of the sacrifice. Likewise was it with respect to the Burnt offering of which the skin belonged to the priest. Now the righteousness that God gives to His people is His Own award to His beloved Son of Whom it is written in the Psalms, "He shall receive

the blessing from the Lord and righteousness", but that which is awarded to His beloved Son as an acknowledgement of the perfect work which He accomplished is made ours, not by a transfer as in the case of the coats of skin, for we were dead, and to cover dead people with righteousness would not be enough. Hence the precious words of 2 Cor. 5, "Him Who knew no sin God made to be sin (or a sin offering) for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God THROUGH HIM. The death made it possible to have that righteousness of God applied to cover us, the "Robe of Righteousness" of Isaiah 61.10.

But since we have been born again there is still an important aspect of the death of Christ. Since salvation we still need the blood. Not that we can lose salvation, or become in the sphere of wrath again, but we read in 1 John 1 that "if we walk in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin". It is not merely the province of the blood to cleanse. The present tense has the thought of a continuance and a conditional continuance. It is IF we walk in the light that the blood cleanseth. It is not that if we walk in the light we are saved. Salvation is a free gift, but for the continual cleansing of the blood it is necessary that we walk in the light, otherwise we shall defile our garments, though we do not lose our acceptance in the Beloved. In this connection we recollect the words of Rev. 7 concerning those "Who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb". This does not mean that they have robes of their own works. Nay, those robes are Divinely given, and therefore have no spots in them, but we may get spots ON them, and those can only be removed by the application of the blood of the Lord Jesus,

In connection with believers(2) and their need of the blood of the Lord Jesus we recollect that Israel's priests, though they never required the same sacrifices as at the first, still had application of the blood afterwards when they sinned. "If a priest that is anointed do sin" is the striking introductory word concerning God's gracious provision of a sin-offering.

Then we have a further thought in connection with the application of the blood of Christ in connection with the Lord's Supper, - not the literal blood, but a type of the blood, suggesting our need for the realization of what that blood means within

ourselves. Then further we notice that in Hebrews 13, the Lord's people are said to have "Come to Jesus the Mediator of the better covenant, and the blood of sprinkling", as though that is always to be a helpful thought to them. The blood of Christ is not merely to our salvation, but to our present encouragement, as it will be our glorious triumph when we join the ransomed throng, who never weary of speaking of the blood of the Lamb. The Book of Revelation makes two things very definitely emphatic - that in heaven they never weary of ascribing glory to the Lord, and never weary of thinking of the blood of the Lamb.

We next come to consider the work of the Lord Jesus with respect to our sins. He died not merely for us to cover us and to shield us, but He did for OUR SINS. Of course there is a distinct aspect here. He died for US to take us from our sins, He died for our SINS to take them away. He died in connection with our sins, bearing the penalty of them, not to save our sins but to DESTROY them and save us, that our sins might be drowned in the depths of the sea, that the full payment of the righteous law might be met by Himself. Hence we read that He was made sin or a sin-offering (the very word for sin-offering being elsewhere rendered 'sin') so exactly did He meet the full equivalent for those who are by grace "made the righteousness of God in Him". Isaiah 53, speaking of our sins, said, "The Lord made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all", and we read in 1 John 2.2 "He is the Propitiation". The word is a legal word. The word is a term that suggests wrath, and alludes to the day of atonement. "He is the Propitiation for our sins" - the Lord Jesus exactly met what our sins deserved. Two prepositions are used concerning His work for our sins. One, 'PERI' implying that He embraced them within His work to remove them entirely. The other 'HUPER' implying that His work was over them to cover them and blot them out, though they were as a thick cloud that blotted out the glory of God from our view.

In connection with this work of the Lord Jesus for our sins it is well to realize that it was not merely an indefinite work, but definite. "The Lord made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all". That is to say "He was wounded for OUR transgressions" when "He gave Himself a Ransom for MANY" and died for those that were given to Him. He knew exactly all their shortcomings and failures. It was not a general work, but a work of full conscious-

ness, and a perfect and Divine equivalent was wrought out, that ours sins might be righteously removed and we ourselves might be righteously saved. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" fulfilling the sacrificial types which were always with reference to specific persons. And though sometimes, as to general sins that the people did not know, there was always the thought that God knew those sins and viewed them and hated them, and could not have them removed from His sight unless they were removed by transferred wrath.

And next we come to consider the aspect of the death of the Lord Jesus for the poor nation of Israel. Caiaphas being High Priest that eventful year when the Lord Jesus died, spake prophetically when he said that Christ should die for the whole nation, that they might not perish. The Holy Spirit explains it thus - that He died for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that the children of God who were scattered abroad might be gathered into one. The only nation for which Christ died as a nation is the nation of Israel. This is a special nation which is dealt with in Scripture as a nation. I do not mean that every Israelite will be saved, (Judas Iscariot is sufficient to prove otherwise). But that God will fulfil His promise that He pardons those whom He reserves. In other words, if God saved a large number now out of any nation He saves them as individuals, as children of God in the family; but when God saves Israel in the future He saves them as a nation. All who are spared, the third part brought through the fire, refined as silver and gold, will be saved as A NATION. So, "ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED" in regard to the unchanging promise of Him whose gifts and calling are without repentance.

This salvation of the nation of Israel is I think brought before us in the types of the day of atonement. There was a bullock for the 'house' (the children of God); there was a goat for the nation. The bullock was offered first, the goat was offered second. Christ died that there might be the saved priestly family of which 1 Peter 2 speaks, and that there might also be the saved nation. You will notice in connection with the tabernacle that there is always a contrast with the tabernacle itself (a picture of the heavenly things) and the court with the brass, a picture of the earthly people. Moreover, Abraham had two cities* the literal and the spiritual, and though the literal will have to be

*Should 'cities' read 'seeds'?

brought to a spiritual position when they are saved, they are nevertheless viewed as a nation in the flesh when they are brought to the Lord in a future day. In regard to this we find in Genesis 22 that the ram that died for Isaac died instead of the nation, and also died instead of the children of promise. There is thus the twofold aspect of the work of the Lord Jesus, which is also hinted I believe in 1 John 2, "He is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world". For there will be an application of the work of the Lord Jesus when He comes back, not to every individual for He will come back in judgment, but to Israel as a nation, to whom nations will be joined in that day, as Zech. 8 puts it. But this will come in connection with our fifth point - the relationship of the death of the Lord Jesus to the lost world.

When He wrought out His finished work it was the same as with Noah. Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house by the which he condemned the world, that is to say he made manifest to the world their condemned position, and showed them their judgment, and their mocking at him only brought a severer judgment upon them. So with the work of our Lord Jesus with respect to a lost world; it only brings out more definitely the awful condition and the tremendous judgment that will fall on those who despise the Lord. By His work the Lord condemned the world. Do not misunderstand me - I believe that as a result of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ there are many advantages that we find now, in which men of the world share. God is holding back the pouring out of His judgments until His elect people be gathered together, and if I might so say the world is as it were the scaffolding until He has finished His building, and is affected by His going on with His gracious building, calling a people out from the world. But specifically there was no work of the Lord Jesus in His atoning death for those who are not brought to believe on Him. It was a DEFINITE TRANSACTION, not merely vague and indefinite. There are some Scriptures which at first sight seem to present a difficulty, but I think we may sum it up thus, that the Scriptures which present a difficulty may be explained in regard to the 'satisfaction' view of the death of our Lord Jesus, but that other Scriptures cannot be explained in connection with any other view. The indirect results of the death of the Lord Jesus are manifold and advantageous to men, but inasmuch as sinners when they stand before the great white throne will be judged according to their works,

the death of the Lord Jesus is not viewed in Scripture with special reference to those who deny Him and who war against Him. There is one however that I would mention, and that is that by His work as Son of man He has the right to judge, as John 5 puts it, and therefore in this sense He has authority over all flesh in connection with His purchase of everything that He might control it, but this is of course not the aspect with which we are now dealing, the BENEFICIAL aspect.

In this connection I should like to say a word or two further as to 1 John:2, for what I have said must sound somewhat hard though I cannot for one moment consider that our beloved Lord when He died, died for those who were then in hell, or that He died doing a vague work - therefore we are drawn to the conclusion that the words must not be taken in their literal meaning, but that He gave Himself a ransom for 'many' fully knowing all those who by sovereign grace would be brought to rest upon Himself, of whom He says that they were given to Him, and having been given to Him He took them in hand as the gift, and for that gift He died and for the gift He prayed. But having said this, which may at first sight appear strange, I should like to add that I feel sure that our beloved Lord will in all things, even numerically, have the pre-eminence, for not only are there the vast myriads who are taken away from this world in infancy, who cannot stand before the Great White throne where judgment is according to works, and there must be saved by that precious blood of the Lord Jesus, but also when He shall return and a nation shall be born at once from Israel, many nations will be joined to the Lord also. I have referred to 1 John 2,2 in this connection already, and I would emphasize it again. I do not think that Isaiah 53 primarily has reference to us in the present time in the use of the word 'many'. I know it does refer in a large degree but I do not think there is the primary, or shall I say I do not think that is the only allusion. In the early part of Isaiah 53 we have that which is future. If a Jew comes up to us and says, Isaiah 53 is future, we say we quite agree, but do we mean the work there is future? By no means. But Isaiah 53, it is clear, is not ON Christ's death, but a revelation of ISRAEL'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of Christ's death, and THAT is future, for it goes on to say, "We esteemed Him not, Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows". It is repentant Israel who will take up the strain of Isaiah 53. Then the words have a full force, "For the transgress-

ions of MY people was He stricken". And after that, AFTER THAT be it noticed, we have the change from the "OUR" to "their"; we have the change from "MY PEOPLE" to the "MANY". He poured out His soul unto death that He might bear the sin of MANY. The "MANY" are plainly alluded not only to those who are brought to be saved by grace now, but those who will be brought to acknowledge the Lord in that day toward which our eyes look when "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied". For when the Lord Jesus Christ shall return we know that there shall be righteous nations at Matt. 25 puts it - those who will be brought to accept Himself and to be with Himself in that wonderful kingdom when He shall have dominion from sea to sea; and from the river to the end of the earth.

We next come to consider the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in His death with respect to the earth. I do not mean the people of the EARTH which was given to man as a sphere of dominion, till man forfeited his dominion. We know how that when man sinned the earth was ruined, but the Lord Jesus came as THE Man, the Son of man, the Fulfiller of Psalm 8, to Whom all things are made subject as Heb. 2 shows us. And therefore when He came, in the words of the fifth parable of Matt. 13, He bought not simply the "treasure" of His people but the "field" with the treasure within it. But the field is the earth. And the Lord Jesus came to buy the earth that in it He might display His dominion, and display His blood-bought people. It is well to notice in connection with the Day of Atonement in Lev. 16 that we have an allusion to the sacrificial work concerning the tabernacle, and the camp of Israel was thus in measure included. Moreover, when Israel had sinned against God together with David in the numbering of the people, when atonement was forgotten and God's arrangements for atonement, you remember how there was not only a sacrifice but the purchase of the field, the field of Araunah the Jebusite. You remember moreover, that when our beloved Lord died, the pieces of silver which had been wrongly given were taken by the High Priests to buy the field to bury strangers in. There is a blessed contrast and an allusion in the work of the Lord Jesus, for when He died He died not simply to bring about a burial ground. He did not merely purchase that, though Abraham purchased a burial ground, but He purchased a field that His people might be raised to LIFE and be displayed with HIM.

We come next to consider the work of the Lord Jesus in

others relations. I believe that as to the ANIMAL KINGDOM there is a wondrous work, for the first Adam brought the animal kingdom into ruin. The creation was made subject to vanity, says Rom. 8, "not willingly but by reason of him who subjected it". "And the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now". Now Romans 8 declares that this creation shall be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, referring to the animal creation being blessed when the Lord Jesus shall come back, and in the words of Isa. 65.25 "The lion and the lamb shall be together". You remember how that not only in Eden were the animals types, but in the ark which is a wonderful picture of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, for inside that ark, the one ark, we have a gathered family underneath that which was called by the word "ATONEMENT", and that gathered family contained those of all the different races, typically, representatively, and the Lord Jesus has saved out of all nations. You know how that the type of Israel was there - SHEM. The type of those who are brought by grace to know the Lord now - JAPHETH. And also HAM, perhaps suggestive of those who will be brought to know the Lord in the future day from all nations, when in some of the far distant lands of the heathen the Lord will display His glorious grace. In this connection we find the ANIMALS were in the ark, and before the throne in Rev. 4 the living creatures have animal appearances as well as the faces of men. This is no mere accident. Moreover, the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as purchasing the earth must affect the VEGETABLE KINGDOM, and instead of the thorn and the briar there shall come up the myrtle and fir tree. The "thorns and briers" that came in through the first Adam's sins shall be removed through the last Adam's obedience unto death, and there shall be a revelation of the wondrous fulness of that work of Christ extending even beyond this sphere, for the light of the sun shall be sevenfold in that day, and the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun.

It is well just to consider in this connection the work of the Lord Jesus in respect to Satan. Of course you know, dear friends, that I do not mean that He made any atonement for Satan, for we are aware that Satan shall be punished in everlasting fire, whither those who choose his ways will also be sent in a tremendous judgment. I am rather referring to the fact that the Lord Jesus said when He died, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out". His death with respect to Satan was a conquest, for though the particular fighting with the

evil one was in Gethsemane, it would seem, where He was in a conflict, an agony, the word implying a conflict with powers, though that was the immediate conflict with the evil one, yet the Cross was the triumph. That which seemed the weakness of God was indeed the display of His glorious victory, "NOW is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out".

May I in this connection refer sorrowfully to the interpretation that some have taken that the death of the Lord Jesus offered something to Satan. To me it seems an awful thought, His work was offered to God. "But", it is said, "was not the death a purchasing?" "And had not the ungodly sold themselves to Satan?" These facts are true, but the inference is wrong. We might look at it like this. The Lord Jesus Christ died to pay the debt that sinners owed to God. Now man had had the tenancy of this world and had proved an utter failure as a tenant. When the Lord Jesus came He did not pay the purchasing price to the one whom the tenant had disloyally given the world, and given himself, but He came to pay the price to the rightful Owner, that He might have the tenancy and the persons who belonged to God in that thousand years' kingdom when He shall display in this world that which the first Adam OUGHT to have displayed in measure, but which he did not even display for two or three days.

And so, dear friends, at the end of our subject, or rather at the end of my part of it, we see the wondrous relations of the work of the Lord Jesus. What a fulness of righteousness and grace and wrath was there revealed! How blessed to know if we are among those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; how blessed to know that ourselves and our sins are alike covered because of His work. Ourselves covered with fragrance and acceptance before God, and our sins covered never again to rise in judgment, for they are sent away and blotted out and removed and will never come back. How blessed to realize that the Lord Jesus will yet see of the travail of His soul in a far more manifest way than He hitherto has seen. That in the Jerusalem where He died He will be exalted, the Exalted One, and that among the nation that cried "Crucify Him" He will be the honoured One, and that He Who was the "despised and rejected of men" shall yet come back as THE MAN to Whom all men must bow, and Who will have dominion as the glorious last Adam,

for Whose return His blood-bought people wait, For till He comes back the full fruition of His atonement has not taken place, not only with respect to earth, not only in respect to Israel, but with respect to ourselves. Then shall we be saved from the presence of sin. "Oh" you say, "If we fall asleep in Christ, that will take place". Then let me mention something else that will take place after, for those who have fallen asleep in Christ have not yet had the fruition of the atonement to the fullest extent. How about the poor frail body that is laid in the grave? Christ died that there might be the glorification of the body, that our body might somehow, having been sown, be raised in incorruption, that the "house which is from heaven" being joined to it, mortality might be swallowed up of life. It is a great mystery, this redemption of the body, but we should rejoice to realize that that fruition of the work of Christ is to take place for all His blood-bought ones, that they may be like Himself as well as IN Himself, in the day when He shall return.

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