

The Death of Christ Necessary

by James M. Henry

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of Christ's death for fulfilling God's purpose, providing salvation, and demonstrating divine love.

Scripture: Luke 24:46, John 3:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, Romans 3:25, Romans 10:13, 2 Peter 1:5, 1 John 1:3, Revelation 3:21

Topics: "Christ's Death", "Sin Redemption"

Description

James M. Henry preaches about the necessity of Christ's death and resurrection for the repentance and remission of sins to be preached among all nations. The theme of Christ's suffering and rising from the dead is inexhaustible, showcasing His worthiness to redeem and reign over all. His death was essential to fulfill God's purpose in creating man, to show His love, and to provide a justifiable ground for pardoning sinners. The apostles, empowered by the Holy Spirit, preached reformation and forgiveness in Jesus' name, emphasizing faith, repentance, confession, baptism, and calling on the Lord for salvation.

Transcript

And he said unto them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."--Luke xxiv:46-48.

TERNITY will never exhaust the riches of this theme. The redeemed in the heavenly world will sing forever, "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." The saints on earth overcome the accuser of the brethren, by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. Jesus was made, for a little while, lower than the angels, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. This is he by whom all things were made, and without whom was not anything made that was made. God called Him his only begotten Son--his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. So full was Jesus of Divinity, in the days of his pilgrimage [260] on the earth, that all the angels, at the commandment of God, fell down and worshipped Him. His dignity is such as to entitle to the profoundest regard every thought revealed concerning Him. The richest sacrifices ever offered before, could not take away sins; but by the offering of himself, Jesus perfected forever them that are sanctified. The sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, were of such importance that the prophets searched and inquired diligently concerning

them, and the angels desired to look into these wonderful things. Paul, under the influence of inspiration, declared to the church at Corinth that he determined not to know anything among them, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. The death of Christ is the ground of hope for a lost and ruined world. Ever since it occurred, it has been the joyful theme of all the holy men on earth. Let it, then, command our prayerful attention.

The death of Jesus became necessary, in order to accomplish the divine purpose in creating man.

That purpose is recorded Gen. i:26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. David says, Ps. viii:6, Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. Paul also says, Heb. ii:8-9, Thou hast put [261] all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all things in subjection under him, he left nothing not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.

From these passages, God's purpose in creating man was known during forty centuries of the history of our race. But Adam sinned, and lost the scepter, the crown, and all pertaining to his royal character and condition. He was sent forth from the garden, the original seat of his empire, to endure for a time, degradation and toil. To make his labor more severe, the ground was cursed for his sake; "thorns and briers shall it bring forth, and in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return unto the ground." A finite intelligence having learned God's purpose in making man, and then seeing him so soon fail for that design, would probably conclude that God's plans were frustrated. That this, however, was not the case, may be indicated in his language to the serpent--"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Time bore the race onward through four thousand years, and with it the hope and numerous and various prophecies of him that should bring deliverance to man, and overthrow to the serpent. [262]

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,

And scan his work in vain;

God is his own interpreter,

And he will make it plain."

"In the fullness of the time, God sent forth his Son, . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons." "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The overthrow of him that had the power of death, and the adoption of men as sons of God, in order to the accomplishment of the divine purpose in man's creation, made Jesus' death necessary.

We make no inquiry of God's purposes beyond what is revealed; for all such inquiries are a virtual abandonment of faith for philosophy--of what God has written for human reason. God ordained, as it is written, that Adam should not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If it be said that God secretly decreed that he should eat of it, then, whether he eat or not, a decree of God will be broken;

and further, faith in his word is overthrown, because what was recorded as His will, was what his secret purpose determined should not come to pass. Let us never tread the border of so dangerous a vortex as that.

Man's history does not terminate with the few [263] days of his existence on the earth, in his present condition of labor and suffering. In the sequel of God's revelations to us, man is represented as being a king and a priest to God; and having overcome, as Jesus overcame, is seated with him on his Father's throne.

The maintenance of the divine veracity made the death of Jesus necessary.

"The word of the Lord," says David, "is established in heaven forever. The word of the Lord, which by the Gospel is preached unto us, endureth forever." "These are the words that I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me."

We may learn much of how God regards his word, if we remember some fifty predictions made directly concerning the Messiah, nearly all of which refer to his death, and the circumstances attending it. Not one of these fails, though Jesus must be condemned by a human tribunal to a most painful and shameful death, and their truthfulness be vindicated.

God has said, they shall look on him whom they pierced. If He is not pierced, how shall the divine veracity be maintained? His cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" had been foretold, and how shall this be made true, if Jesus utter not that wail? It had been written that he should be numbered with the malefactors, hence the necessity [264] of his death with thieves. His hands and feet were pierced, according to a prediction one thousand years old. They gave him gall for his meat, and vinegar for his drink, when he cried from the cross; for it was written. He died so soon on the cross as to cause Pilate to marvel, for it had been written in the Psalms, "Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame and my dishonor; mine adversaries are all before thee. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness." It was written, "All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying, He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver him, let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him." All this was borne by him. From all this, and much more of a kindred character, the conclusion is easy, that Jesus died to vindicate His Father's word. Another is equally clear, viz.: If God would allow His Son to suffer as He did, and ever forsook Him, that His word might be kept true, He will also forsake and permit every sinner to suffer who may be found in the day of judgment adverse to His word. There is no hope for us, except that which is built upon His word.

The law of Moses had a shadow of good things to come. Under it a font of beautiful and appropriate types was instituted. Among other things adumbrated there, nothing occupied a more prominent place than those typical of the death of Christ. Shall they all be abortive of the purpose for which [265] they were given? It would have been so had not Jesus died. All the blood that had been offered by divine authority from the beginning, for remission of sins, was typical of the precious blood of Christ, who, in this manner, was as a lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. Without the shedding of blood, there was no remission. The sacrifice of bulls, calves, lambs, and goats could not take away sins, though offered according to the law of Moses. "Jesus, by his death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament gave promise of eternal inheritance to them that are called, and offered himself through the eternal spirit without spot to God, to purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living

God." The types were all fulfilled, and the prophecies concerning his sufferings verified, that our faith produced by the word of God may be strong, and our hope in his promises rest on a sure foundation.

That God may be just in saving believers in Jesus,. His death was necessary.

That Jesus died as a substitute for sinners should not be overlooked. He did not, however, suffer all that the impenitent will suffer in a future state, for then he would have to endure everlasting punishment. Neither were his sufferings an equivalent for what the ungodly will suffer, for then there could be no pardon extended to those who are saved; and the Scriptures teach that the saved are all pardoned persons. He did not die because God was angry with [266] the world, but because He loved it. Man's sins lay in the way of God's purpose in creating him, and an honorable and justifiable ground for pardoning him must be presented, or man must forever perish, and God's design in creating him, fail. God, therefore, sent forth His Son to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God--to declare, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.--Rom. iii:25, 26.

God pardons men for the sake of His Son. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I John ii:12. The death of Christ, considered as the divine expedient for saving men, is what is generally denominated the atonement. Such is the worth of the sacrifice of the Son of God, that sinners may be pardoned for His sake, that otherwise must perish forever. No just complaint can be brought by any intelligent being in the universe against the government of God, because He pardons the believer in Jesus.

Pardon may, and often has been extended, by human governments, to the injury of the government, for insufficient reasons. The object of government is the good of the governed. Mercy may be exercised when it can be done without weakening the government, and injuring the governed. A familiar illustration of a government pardoning an offender, and maintaining its authority, is [267] furnished in the history of Zaleucus, the king of the Locrians. He had enacted a law against adultery, the penalty of which was that the offender should lose both eyes. The first person convicted of this offense was the king's own son. As a father he felt anxiety to save his son, but as a king he felt disposed to maintain his authority for the good of the government. If from his paternal feelings he pardons his son, his subjects will despise him as a ruler. If he repeals the law to save his son, he may justly be charged with weakness; and if, on the other hand, the law is executed, his son must grope in blindness through the world the rest of his days. How shall he be merciful to his son, and maintain his authority over his subjects? He decided to lose one of his own eyes, and destroy one of his son's eyes. In acting thus the king exercised mercy to his son, and at the same time secured the integrity of his authority. Let us see how this transaction would affect his subjects. They would hear of the case--the king's son has violated the law. Will his father punish him? If he does, we may be sure that he will punish us, if we disobey. They learn that the king has spared one eye of his son, and had one of his own destroyed as a substitute for the son's other eye. Does one of the king's subjects say he has acted unjustly? On the contrary, every one thinks, if the king had been merciful to his son, he has shown such a regard for his law, that if I dare to violate it, I will be punished as certainly as I am convicted. The dignity of the [268] king, as a ruler, silences all objections. He has been merciful and sustained his authority.

The case of the Prophet Daniel is an illustration of an attempt made by the king to be merciful to him, and failed. A decree had been signed by the king, that no petition should be made to any god or man, except the king himself, for thirty days, on pain of being cast into a den of lions. Daniel continued his custom of

praying three times a day with the windows of his room open toward Jerusalem. His enemies watched him, and reported his disregard of the unalterable decree to the king. "Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel, to deliver him and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him!"--Dan. vi:14. The king was doubtless striving to spare Daniel, and maintain the decree. He failed, however, and did the best thing that he could--maintained the decree, and commended Daniel to the God in whom he trusted, who delivered him. There was no honorable ground on which the king could pardon the prophet. In other words no atonement could be found. Had he substituted a less honorable man for Daniel, it would not have answered the ends of government. One equally honorable in the king's judgment, could not be found. It would not have answered the purpose to have compelled any one of the presidents or nobles of his kingdom to suffer instead of Daniel. It might [269] have answered the purpose, if some one had voluntarily offered himself in Daniel's place.

Jesus Christ voluntarily came and suffered in our behalf, so that God does no violence to His government, in pardoning the man who complies with the terms His son submits. God accepted the offering that Jesus made of himself, and regards it sufficiently worthy and honorable to give all rule, and authority, and dominion, into the hands of His Son; and power to execute judgment also, because He as the Son of Man, partook of flesh and blood, humbled himself, and was found in fashion as a man.

To this is objected, that Jesus was innocent, and men guilty before God. The idea of the innocent suffering for the guilty, is revolting to our sense of justice. It is a fact, nevertheless, that one certain result of sin is, that the innocent suffer on account of the sins of the wicked, all around the world. For proof of this, look into any one of ten thousand households that can be found in this country. See the bare walls, the cheerless appearance of everything in that poor dilapidated hut. Contemplate the inmates. There sits, in worn and faded clothing, one young in years, but old in sorrow. Her eye, that once sparkled with joy, and was met with pleasure by numerous friends, has lost its radiance, and the cheek that once bore the impress of health and beauty, is faded and sorrowful. Her heartstrings have been relaxed and broken, one by one, until life is a burden, and hope, so often disappointed, has gone out [270] forever. Little ones gather around her knee in your presence, as if in fear, because a stranger talks to their mother. They are in clean rags, that scarcely hide their nakedness. They look pale and hungry. Their young hearts, that are capable of gladness, are being schooled to sorrow and woe. Ask the cause of all that sad condition. An honest shame mantles the cheek, with a feeble ray of former beauty, but soon fades to pallor, as she says, "My husband is an indolent drunkard."

Is she, poorer than the widow, to blame for all her sorrow? Are her little ones, less fortunate than orphans, at fault because they suffer? Answer me, you who say the innocent suffer not for the guilty. Do you say that is all wrong? So it is, but is it not a fact, that the innocent suffer for the guilty, as one of the certain consequences of sin? Why, then, object to the "suffering of the just for the unjust," if God in His wisdom and mercy uses this as the occasion to bring us salvation? God is just in justifying the believer in Jesus, in forgiving sins for Christ's sake.

The death of Jesus was necessary to show the love of God.

"God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."--John iii:16. The frequent repetition of this statement in the word of God, renders its quotation, in other places unnecessary, to the careful reader of the [271] Bible. How, except by what we do, say, and suffer for another, can we show him our love? In all these respects, nothing is wanting on the part of heaven, to show the most earnest love to our ruined race. Such words of grace and

gentleness never fell on the human ear, as those employed by our blessed Lord, in the days of his flesh. Hear him addressing the poor miserable woman, brought before him by his enemies. After they have been conscience-smitten by His address to them, He said to her, "Has no man condemned thee?" She said, "No man, Lord." Said he, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." Hear Him comforting Martha and Mary, in their bereavement. His voice is most soothing, his bosom heaves with emotion too great for words, and is feebly indicated by weeping. Listen again, as He converses with His disciples, just before His death. They are almost overcome with sorrow, because he has told them he must leave them. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Time fails to repeat now, all that he said, expressive of His great love to us.

More forcible than his words, are his benevolent acts. He healed the sick, unstopped the ears of the deaf to the harmonies of nature, and the [272] music of his own sweet voice, opened the eyes of the blind, to see plainly, cast out demons, and restored to life and the embrace of weeping friends, the dead. His Omnipotent power was employed to do good. His miracles, excepting two, were of a merciful character. "He did all things well."

Admire, as we justly may, his love to us, as shown in what He said and did, all that is completely eclipsed in what He suffered for the world. What human tongue or pen can describe His amazing sorrows of heart! After instituting the supper, in commemoration of His body and blood, and walking toward the garden in Gethsemane with his little company of disciples, he said to them: "Now is my soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?"

And yet for this cause came I unto this hour." When He had entered the garden, he prostrated himself on the cold earth, and being in agony, He said "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." This He did three times. At last an angel appeared to strengthen him. But for this angelic assistance, he might have died there. He was made known to those that accompanied Judas to arrest him, by the traitor's kissing Him. He was taken to Pilate, and by him sent to, Herod, because Herod was in the city, and Jesus was a Galilean.

Herod had long desired to see him, and witness His performance of a miracle. Jesus will not even converse with him, [273] which so exasperates Herod, that he and his men of war set him at naught, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and returned him to Pilate. These two rulers were made friends that day. Then Pilate examined him, and reported to the Jews who sought his death, that he found no fault in him. The governor was disposed to release him, but they said if he did, he was not Caesar's friend.

He sought to reason them out of their opposition to Jesus, but to no purpose. You have a custom, said he, that I should release one prisoner at this feast to you. Here are Jesus and Barabbas in my custody; which of them will you that I release? They said, not this man, but Barabbas. He had been a leader of an insurrection in the city, and had committed murder. Think of it as we may, it is certain that Jesus was put to death instead of Barabbas, who was one of the most wicked of men.

Pilate then, seeing he could not reason them out of their opposition, took Jesus and had him scourged. Presenting Him to them, bathed in His own blood, and quivering in every muscle, and His countenance so marred that there was no beauty that they should desire him, Pilate said, behold the man. His suffering does not move their hard hearts. "What shall I do with him?" asked Pilate. "Away with Him, away with Him,

crucify Him, crucify Him," said the multitude. Pilate, alarmed at their wickedness, and startled by a message from his wife, who said, "See thou have nothing to do with that innocent man," said, "Shall I crucify your king?." [274] "We have no king but Caesar," they answered.

He then called for a basin, and in their presence washed his hands, saying, "I am clean from the blood of this innocent man, see ye to it." They said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then Pilate gave sentence that he should be crucified. They hurry Him away with the cross upon Him. On the way He reels, faints, and falls, beneath the weight of the cross. There they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, whom they compelled to carry the cross to the place of execution. The only act that seems to have any compassion in it, during the whole of this awful tragedy, was the offer made by one of the soldiers, that had charge of his execution, of a cup of wine, mingled with myrrh.

He would do nothing that should mitigate the bitterness of the cup His Father had given Him to drink. They nailed Him to the cross, and then mocked Him, bowing before Him in worship saying, "If thou be the Christ, come down from the cross, and we will believe thee. He saved others, He can not save himself! Hail, king of the Jews! Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days! He said God was His Father!"

See His agonies! Hear His cry! "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" He calls for water, and they offer Him vinegar and gall. After three hours of the strongest suffering ever borne on this earth, he says, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," and bowed His head and died. [275] The heavens and earth were mantled in darkness by the time he expired. While all were in consternation, and men speak to one another in whispers, a new alarm startles the guilty consciences, for a distant rumbling is heard, the earth trembles, and the sound increases, as if the foundations of the globe were being broken. The centurion speaks, and says, "Truly, this good man is the Son of God." The darkness passes away, and many graves of the saints are found open; the vail in the temple has been rent from the top to the bottom. Pilate on being informed of the speedy death of Jesus, marveled at it.

There never was such a death, for there never was such a victim. There never was such suffering, for there never was such love to be shown by suffering. God laid on Him the iniquity of us all; the chastisement of our peace was on him; by his stripes we are healed.

By His sufferings, that He voluntarily bore, we know He loved us. He could have prayed His Father, and instantly twelve legions of angels would have hastened to His rescue from the hands of His murderers. But then how should God's purpose in creating man have been accomplished? How could sinners have been induced to love God? Without love to Him, how could they have been brought to reformation? This is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. God commended His love [276] toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Christ did not die a martyr for the truth, but offered himself a sacrifice for sins. If He died only as a martyr, He was less fortunate than any of His disciples that have died for their love of Him since, for He was forsaken of God, which none of them ever was. In the bitterness of His sorrows is God's love to us manifested. Jesus left heaven, and all its glories and honors, became poor as the poorest of the children of earth, that all might know He loved them. When the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, He had no place to lay His head. He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. When He had given all else, then He laid down His life, a ransom for all.

The death of Christ was necessary to induce men to love God and forsake sin.

"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," "and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him."

The perfection of Christ as a Saviour is here declared to be through suffering. His sufferings, voluntarily endured, form an honorable ground for God to pardon the believer in Jesus. To show man the sinfulness of sin, and the love of God, Jesus suffered as he did. Suffering certainly could add nothing to [277] the wisdom, goodness, power, or knowledge of the Lord. But His sufferings do perfectly adapt Him to influence the human heart to love Him, and hate sin. That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, are the grand facts, declared to be the Gospel, by which men are saved, if they keep it in memory.--I Cor. xv:2-4.

The apostles were commanded to preach the Gospel. They always referred to the death of Christ for men's sins, as proof that God loved them, and that they should forsake their transgressions. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him, which died for them, and rose again."--2 Cor. v:14, 15. The mind in contemplating the death of Christ for sins, easily arrives, indeed, is compelled to the conclusion, that sin is of such a nature as to make it unsafe for one longer to continue it. If I would be saved, I must turn from my iniquities to the Lord. God knows the difficulties sin has placed in the way of my salvation, and for their removal allowed His own Son to suffer as He did, that those who live should not live unto themselves, but unto Christ who died for them; then if I will not be warned, my punishment will be just.

There is a disposition in the human mind to regard sin as less obnoxious than it is, and to apologize for it. This disposition must give way in the presence [278] of the sufferings of the Messiah, or we can not be saved. The man whose heart can remain untouched by the evangelical narratives of the sufferings of the Son of God, need look in no other direction for saving power. These narratives are the most precious and wonderful records ever known to man. They contain the power of God to save them that believe. There is a point of contact between the human heart, and the power of God. That point is Christ crucified. There is power in the death of human friends to move our souls greatly. How much more then in the death of Jesus, our heavenly friend? He whose heart is not moved to love God by the sufferings of Christ, must think too lightly of sin and the great love wherewith God has loved us, to be accepted of Him. Being made perfect by His sufferings, to lead men to love Him, and hate sin, He is the author of eternal salvation, to all them that obey Him.

"He laid down His life, that He might take it again." "He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." Through death and the resurrection, He reached the scepter and the throne of universal domination, in heaven and earth. All may trust in Him, for He is able and willing to save, to the uttermost, all that come to God by Him.

His death was necessary, that reformation and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations. [279]

So Jesus declares. No terms of pardon, nor precedent for our salvation, can be found, in his name, before He arose from the dead. Persons were forgiven by Him during His ministry on the earth, but not by His own authority. He came in His Father's name. "My Father," said He, "He doeth the works." He was obedient to the will of His Father, whose love and authority, as manifested in the law of Moses, continued

until His death on the cross. The Proclamation of reformation and pardon, he said, should begin by His authority in Jerusalem. Jesus began to preach in Galilee.--Matt. iv:17. What He preached is called the Gospel of the kingdom. What he said was, "Reform, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." After He arose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, no inspired man has said, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. On the contrary, the first discourse preached after His ascension, declared that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ. This believed, caused the people to ask the apostles of Christ what they should do € They were promptly told to reform, and be immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins and they should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The fact that God has given all dominion and power, in heaven and earth, in to the hands of His Son, is repeated substantially in every discourse and epistle of the apostles after Jesus' coronation in heaven. They say that God has given Him a name [280] which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow; that every tongue shall confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. There is a lamentable failure among the professed friends of Jesus to confess his authority as supreme in all the matters of salvation. When he said to one man in the days of His flesh, "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" or to the thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise," no precedent is thereby furnished for the way we shall be saved. These men were saved by divine authority. Jesus had not then died, nor risen from the dead; both of which were necessary in order to the proclamation of repentance and remission of sins by His authority. The apostles pleaded Jesus' authority for their preaching to the people. "He commanded us to preach unto the people," said they.--Acts x:42.

The proclamation of reformation and remission of sins was to commence in the city of Jerusalem. It was to be done by the power with which the apostles were to be endowed by an immersion in the Holy Spirit. They claimed to be ambassadors of Christ. Their credentials were shown by their power to speak in many languages, to heal the sick, to cast out demons, to raise the dead, and to do many wonderful works. They were invested with the power to submit the terms of pardon to all nations and to every creature. Through them alone, guided as they were by the Holy Spirit infallibly, can we learn the way of salvation. What they taught is sanctioned [281] by the authority of Christ, the Lord of Lords, and King of kings. How reformation and forgiveness are preached by Jesus' authority we must learn of his apostles.

They taught that men must believe in Christ, or they can not be saved. "By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."--Acts xiii:39. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house."--Acts xvi:30, 31.

They taught repentance toward God. "The times of this ignorance, God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to reform; because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Acts xvii:30, 31. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."--Acts iii:19.

They taught that men must confess the name of Christ. "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest be immersed." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts viii:37). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; [282] and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x:9, 10).

They taught that men must be baptized in order to be saved. "Reform, and be immersed every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts ii:38). Paul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And the Lord said unto him, "Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts ix:6). Ananias said to Paul, "And now why tarriest thou ? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii:16). "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (I. Pet. iii:21).

They taught that men should call on the name of the Lord to be saved. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." (Acts ii:21). "For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x:13). "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii:16).

From the foregoing it is seen that faith, reformation, confession of Christ, immersion, and calling on the name of the Lord were all taught, and the promise of salvation connected with each. Should we [283] refuse to obey any one of these commandments, we neglect and come short of the promise of salvation. All of them were required to be observed, by the ambassadors of Christ. He died and rose again, that they might be proclaimed by his authority. He who disregards these things, disregards to the same extent the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again.

Those who comply with the above conditions are pardoned. Then, if they add to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; then to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity, an abundant entrance will be ministered unto them, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

To persons possessed of the above characteristics, the death, resurrection, and glorification of the Christ is a pleasing theme, and forever will be. They that overcome, as he overcame, shall sit with Christ on His throne. They shall inherit all things. To them crowns and scepters, and dominion over all things will be given. Then they will sing, "Thou are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." Then it will be clearly seen, that God has not been frustrated in [284] His purpose in creating man. The most wonderful scene in the whole drama is, and forever will be, the death of Christ according to the Scriptures, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in thee;

Let the water and the blood,

From thy side, a healing flood,

Be of sin the double cure--

Save from wrath and make me pure.

Should my tears forever flow,

Should my zeal no languor know,
This for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone:
In my hand no price I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling.
While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold thee on thy throne--
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!" [285]

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