

Why Jesus Died by Leroy Surface

Millions of lambs were sacrificed over a period of fifteen hundred years as Israel attempted to serve God under the Law of Moses. The Law required two lambs to be offered every day continually. Exodus 29:38. Once a year, at the feast of Passover, every family was required to bring a lamb to be sacrificed as a covering for their sins. The historian Josephus said this amounted to over 250,000 lambs which were offered during the Passover week. The blood from the sacrifices would flow from the Temple down to the brook Kedron until the waters would flow red for miles downstream. These sacrifices were offered to cover the sins the people committed during the past year. The following year there would be another “remembrance of sins,” and more lambs would be sacrificed. Of the millions of lambs that were offered, there was not one found which could take away the sins of the people.

The apostle commented on the futility of animal sacrifices, saying, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” Hebrews 10:4. To do what animal sacrifices failed to accomplish, that is, “take away sins” is the reason Christ was born into this world. The apostle tells us, “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:” Hebrews 10:5.

John the Baptist was the son of Zacharias the priest, and was given the mission to introduce the Son of God to the world. John said “I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God” John 1:33-34.

John's message of repentance to the people had been “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” Matthew 3:11. When Jesus came to John's baptismal service to be baptized, a phenomenal thing happened. The Apostle Matthew gives the following record:

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:16-17

From that day forward, John begin tell people that

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 1:29

Jesus was the “Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” John 1:29

With all the millions of lambs that had been offered during the previous fifteen hundred years under the Law of Moses, John was saying, “Finally, this is the Lamb, which when sacrificed, will actually take away the sin which came into the world through Adam's transgression.” Romans 5:12.

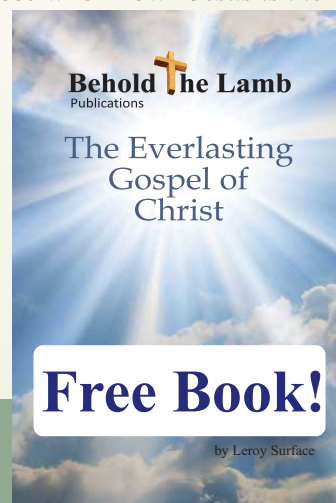
Many people believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive our sins. This is not true. Jesus forgives sins, but he died for something much, much more. Since the beginning of time, God has forgiven those who repent

and turn from their transgressions. When God revealed to Moses His holy name, He said, “The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, **forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...**” Exodus 34:6-7.

Almost a thousand years later, the prophet Isaiah said, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for **He will abundantly pardon**” Isaiah 55:7. Jesus did not have to die on the cross before God would forgive our sins, so the question remains, “Why did Christ die?”

The answer is found in the writings of the Old Testament prophet Daniel. God sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel with the promise of a redeemer to come. Redemption from sin would come in the form of one whom Daniel called “The Messiah, the Prince,” whom God would send into the world, “to make an end to sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” Daniel 9:24-25. Gabriel gave Daniel a mathematical formula to prove who “The Messiah the Prince” would be, and it proved to be perfect to the very year Jesus was baptized by John with the corresponding signs from heaven.

“The Christ, the Son of God” is the New Testament Greek equivalent of the Old Testament Hebrew “The Messiah, the Prince.” Those who know “Jesus is the Christ” and that He died on the cross to “make an end of sins” and “bring in everlasting righteousness” are made free from sin in their heart and nature. Jesus first promised this when he said, “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32.



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