Week 13 - Jesus: His Life, Death, and Resurrection

The Savior Comes

Christ alone is the solution for our separation from God. Because of our sinful nature and God's holiness, we can never, without divine intervention, live in obedience to God's law. In such a state, we would face God's judgment. Our merciful God, out of His great love, sent His Son to be our Savior (John 3:16).

God's people, the Israelites, were promised a Messiah who would rescue them. Messianic prophecies and hints abound in the Old Testament. Right on schedule, Jesus was born around 4 BC.

Christ was born in Israel, then a Roman province, to a young woman named Mary. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, lived a faultless life, and provided in His death the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

The Savior Dies

Jesus came into the world to take our judgment on Himself and pay for (make atonement for) our sins when He was crucified on the cross. The Bible says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin" (Hebrews 9:22). Through Christ's shed blood, we are forgiven and redeemed!

Since Jesus took the punishment we deserved, when we turn from our rebellion toward God and put our faith in Christ for salvation, we immediately are forgiven of our sins (1 John 1:9). The barrier between God and us is removed, and we can enjoy intimate fellowship with God for eternity.

Jesus was no victim. It was His choice to die, in obedience to the will of the Father: "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from my Father." (John 10:17-18)

Jesus was no hapless prophet. Rather, He is the Victor and conquering King, whose obedience purchased our salvation. He is God's chosen sacrifice, who took on Himself the punishment for

sin that all mankind deserved, so that we might be spared eternal punishment when we respond by faith to Him and His cross.

The Savior Rises Again

Scripture teaches that after Christ's suffering and death, He was raised from the dead, and appeared to more than 500 witnesses. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

The resurrection of Christ is the very crux of Christianity. Had Jesus not risen from the dead, we would be without hope, without promise, without eternal life, and still in our sins. (1 Corinthians 15:14-17)

Consider these three aspects of Jesus' resurrection:

1. This historic event proves that Jesus was more than a mere man.

". .. who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord…" (Romans 1:4) "…because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:31)

Jesus could not be held down by the grave. Although his body died on the cross, his eternal nature as God's Son remained alive. His resurrection brought hope and proof to His disciples that He was indeed God. Even the "skeptic" disciple, Thomas, after seeing the Lord said, "my Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)

2. Jesus' resurrection makes it possible for us to be saved from our sins.

"…that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved…" (Romans 10:9) "He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification." (Romans 4:25)

3. Jesus' resurrection assures us that we will one day rise with him into a glorified state.

"Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed…" (1 Corinthians 15:50-51)

"Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil…" (Hebrews 2:14)

The New Covenant

In the Old Testament, atonement for a whole nation's sin happened when the high priest sacrificed a chosen lamb on the altar of God. This sacrifice had to be repeated every year, since it provided forgiveness of sin, but not freedom from sin. The old covenant atoning sacrifice only covered the sin but could not take away the power of sin. That's why God sent His Son.

In the new covenant, God used one man, a "second Adam," to redeem us, once for all, from the bondage of sin and the wrath which it incurs. When Jesus Christ, God's lamb, died on the cross, all the sins of the world were taken away (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus made atonement by taking the wrath of God and curse of the Law upon Himself. By doing such, He thus completely satisfied the demands of God's law and holy justice and became the perfect and eternal sacrifice for the sins of the world. Jesus died and was buried (Matthew 27; Ephesians 4:7; 1 Peter 3:19). Death could not keep Him in the grave; and on the third day He rose again, breaking the power of sin and death. The battle for our souls was won!

Since Jesus died on the cross, we can receive forgiveness for our sins. Since He rose from the dead, we can be free from the power of sin and walk in His resurrection power (Romans 6:5-6). Jesus sits triumphant at the right hand of God (Ephesians 1:20-22) reigning until all of His enemies are put under His feet (1 Corinthians 15:24-25). Because He lives in victory, we share in His victory and have His authority over the enemy.

Review:

1. What alone is the solution for our separation from God?

2. Was Jesus a victim? Was he just another good teacher or prophet?

3. What are the 3 aspects of Jesus' resurrection?