

Bible Basics Conference 2010: Results of Christ's Death

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Well, good morning everyone.

The subject, as you know, is the results of the death of Christ, and you will imagine that when we tried to divide the subject into a limited number of sessions, that it was a very difficult task, and we felt that in a way each one had too little time, and also there were others to cover. But nonetheless, hopefully we can discover and rediscover some of the beauties and glories of this work of Christ. Now the theme of the first session is God Satisfied and Made Manifest, and I would like [00:01:01] to start by reading a verse from John's Gospel in chapter 13.

John's Gospel, chapter 13, and verse 31.

Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

Now we'll come back to this verse, but a question that arises is, what does it mean that God has been glorified, that he has been made manifest, and that he has been satisfied? [00:02:07] Now I think it's very helpful to go back, as so often actually, to the book of Genesis to understand this, because you find that before the flood, the food of men consisted of fruit and vegetable, green herbs, and so forth, Genesis 1, 29, 30.

And it was only after the flood that men were allowed to eat meat. Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you, Genesis 9, verse 3.

Now what had changed? Well from this time onward, it was possible for men to enjoy meat, to eat meat.

Now in order for them to eat meat, something had to happen, and death had to occur. [00:03:06] In a way, what happens now is, the new thing is that now there is food, there is nourishment out of death.

And perhaps this can be a little heading, or subheading for our conference, nourishment out of death.

And the exercise is that this may be priestly food that will result in priestly worship.

But perhaps one or two say, well, why shouldn't we be looking rather at something that concerns us more directly?

Why should we look at God glorified? It's a slightly abstract subject perhaps to some.

Now it is true that the work of Christ has wonderful results for us. [00:04:06] And in every session that we go through, you will find a new facet of the death of Christ. You will find that we were bond slaves and needed to be redeemed. You will find that we were guilty and we needed to be justified. And all these things are not exactly the same as you will hear. But apart from all these wonderful things that the death of Christ means for us, there are results for others. For example, there are results for the people of Israel, for other nations, for Old Testament believers.

Job could speak about the Redeemer. And there are results, in fact, for the whole universe. But isn't the first and foremost question that we should ask, what does it mean for [00:05:01] God? In fact, the Bible is God's book.

It's a book in which he reveals himself. And we read this book because we have come to love him. I don't know if we have any engaged people here, but if we do, or actually I do, we have.

I know we have. I know we do.

If there is a letter coming, or perhaps these days it's an email, and it comes from that other person, I can't imagine that email goes unread.

And if that email says something that doesn't concern you directly today, and it doesn't tell you what you need to do, you would still read that email. And you would find it very interesting. Now, if God sends us a letter, shouldn't we read that in the same way? It's good to ask, what should we do? [00:06:02] And what does this chapter mean for me? But the first question should be, what did God want to say? Why did he write this?

Now, interestingly, when he talks about the sacrifices, picturing the work of his son, he also starts with what concerns him. He doesn't start with the sin offering, which perhaps we would have started with, or the trespass offering. He starts with the burnt offering, that which ascends to God and gives pleasure to him. Now, I mentioned earlier that we need to go back to Genesis in order to understand what it means that God has been glorified. Why was it necessary? Well, we find...

Actually, sorry, that's the trouble with slides.

[00:07:01] You have to talk about what's on the slide. I'll come back to this other Genesis verse in a minute. My apologies, but at least now everybody's awake. Before I come to what happened in Genesis and why it was necessary for God's honor to be restored, there's one other point from Genesis I want to mention before. And actually, I should mention before, it's good we have slides. And that is that there is a figure of the death of Christ even before sin came into the world. Now, the

figure, as you know, is the deep sleep that fell on Adam, a picture of Christ who went into death.

And as a result, Eve was formed. And in this way, God gave a picture of his counsel, that his son should go into death and that on this basis, he could have formed Eve out of dust, I have no doubt. [00:08:02] But God wanted it to happen this way, to give a picture of the fact that death was necessary to form a bride for Christ.

Now, what does this mean? This means that if we have a limited view of the death of Christ, and your answer to the question, why did Christ die, is well, to save me from hell.

That is true, and it's wonderful indeed, but it's a limited view.

God gave this picture of the death of Christ before sin came, before there was even sickness or death or tears or anything.

And even then, it was in God's mind, and of course, it was in his mind and plan before he gave even this type.

But now, finally, the other thing from Genesis, what happened? [00:09:03] Man was tempted by the serpent.

And one aspect of this story, which perhaps we don't think about that often, is that this event, when Satan, in the form of the serpent, tempted man, and man listened to the serpent, was a multiple insult against the honor and glory of God.

You might say, why? The serpent just said, you know, have some fruit there. But really, the serpent said, has God said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden? In other words, does he not even allow you to eat freely of your own garden? God gave you this paradise. It belongs to you. How can God be so unrighteous and not allow you to eat?

The serpent also said, between the lines, of course, Satan is never that blunt, but [00:10:06] between the lines, the serpent said, God is a liar. Now why is that? Because God had said, the day that thou eatest from this tree, thou shalt surely die. And the serpent said, thou shalt not surely die. Don't worry about it. In other words, God is a liar.

But thirdly, the serpent said, for God does know that in the day he eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods.

Now, that's true, isn't it?

God knew that, that their eyes would be opened. That was true. Now, that they would be as gods, I don't think that would be true, only in the sense that they would know good and evil. But the point the serpent is making is that God is not good.

[00:11:04] The serpent says, you would get an awful lot of benefit from eating from that tree, and God doesn't want to give it to you. God is not good.

Now that was at least a threefold insult. God is unrighteous. God is a liar.

God is not good.

Now that was a terrible insult. And the attributes of God were completely distorted and darkened, obscured. And you might say, well, how could that be put right? Well, with regard to righteousness, it could have been put right very quickly. What God would have to do would be to judge Adam and Eve immediately and to cast them into hell forever.

And that would have corrected one distortion, unrighteousness. But what you wouldn't have seen is anything of his love, of his mercy, of his goodness.

[00:12:08] And how could this come out?

And in a measure, God's love came out in history and his goodness. Think of how he dealt with Abraham, with Israel, with different people. But ultimately, we have to recognize that God waited for 4,000 years.

Imagine that. He had been insulted in that way, and he waited 4,000 years. And then it happened that Christ came and put this right. And this is the verse we read from John's Gospel. Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. Remember, this is part of the Lord's farewell address to his disciples. Judas had just left, and the Lord, anticipating his death, says, [00:13:03] now is the Son of Man glorified.

But he also says, and God is glorified in him. Now, what does it mean to be glorified? And I have to apologize to some very patient hearers here who may have heard me say this once or twice before, but I still think that the best picture for glorification is the rainbow.

The white sunlight has properties that we cannot see with the human eye.

And it's only when this sunlight is refracted in the tiny drops of rain that suddenly the different wavelengths come out. That means the different colors of the light, and that's what you see in the rainbow. Now this is, to me, this is a beautiful picture of what happened at the cross. It was in the water of judgment.

[00:14:03] Think of all these millions of drops of rain. It was in the waters of judgment that the attributes of God were revealed, just as in the rainbow the different colors of the light come out.

And Christ is, in a way, you know, I don't know what comment you would have expected. He was about to go to the cross, Judas had just left to do his dirty work, and you might have expected Christ to say, now all is over and I'm going to die. But he doesn't say that. He says, now is the Son of Man glorified. He says, the greatest event ever is going to take place. The full attributes, the full character of the Son of Man and of God is going to be revealed.

Now, this should mean something to us. [00:15:03] It certainly means a lot to God, because the Lord goes on to say, if God be glorified in him, that's in the Son of Man, in his death, God shall also glorify him in himself. And that will happen.

God will make sure that Christ one day will be recognized and reign over the earth and over the universe. But God says, the work is really too great for me to wait for another 2,000 years.

Something needs to happen now. I have been glorified in such a way that I will straight away glorify him. And how did God do that? By raising Christ up and giving him a place of honor at his right hand. Now, we mentioned the rainbow, the idea that glorification means to bring out the colors, [00:16:04] the attributes. Now, let's mention just some of them. We don't have much time. But let's start with a wonderful theme, the theme of God's love. Romans 5 verse 8 says, but God commends his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Now, this is the ultimate proof of God's love to us that he gave Christ when we were sinners. But it's not only the love to us. If you go on to John 3, 16, it says, for God so loved the world.

In other words, God says, the work of my Son is so great and my love is so great, it can't be restricted to Abraham, it can't be restricted to Israel, it can't be restricted to a few. God showed that he loved the whole world, and that's why he gave his Son. [00:17:04] Now, when it says he gave, ultimately, this included giving him on the cross, giving him into death.

But the cross is not there to, let me put it this way, the cross proves that although it showed the perfect love of God, God would still be righteous. He would not overlook sin.

And you read in Romans 8 that what the law could not do, and that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

Sin was and is irremediable, it cannot be mended, it can only be ended and judged.

[00:18:03] Now, how could God judge sin in man whilst at the same time showing love?

If he had judged Adam and Eve, he wouldn't have known about that love. It could only be done by judging someone as man whom God had given himself, namely his Son. And this is what happened in the three hours of darkness when Christ was made sin and God condemned sin in the flesh.

At this time, you also see God's holiness.

Psalm 22 starts with this great paradox that one who has always pleased God is forsaken of God, although in history those who trusted God had never been forsaken by him. [00:19:04] My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent. And then you have the key, you have the solution to this paradox in verse 3, but thou art holy.

That's why Christ had to be forsaken by this holy God.

Now what did this mean for the Lord to enter into these hours of darkness and into this judgment?

In John's Gospel, you don't find Gethsemane, but you get a glimpse of what this prospect of death and judgment meant for the Lord in chapter 12. [00:20:04] Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.

But then the sentence goes on, and he says, but for this cause came I into this hour. Father, glorify thy name.

The deity of the Lord did not mitigate his trouble in any way. You might say the converse is true. He had an infinite capacity to feel it.

His perfect knowledge, and that includes foreknowledge, and his infinite holiness caused him to shrink from this hour.

And yet his prayer was not to be saved from this hour, but that the Father might be glorified in this hour.

And the answer is a voice from heaven.

[00:21:02] Glorified in death. It sounds like a contradiction in terms, really. Death is the least glorious thing, really, that we can think of. And yet it is true that God was glorified in the death of Christ. There's a beautiful verse, which you all know, in Ephesians 5, verse 2, which says, Christ has loved us and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

So you find that it is for us, this divine love. But the other side is that his sacrifice and his offering is toward God. And that's the perfection of his motive.

It was unto death.

And the verse mentions the sweet-smelling savor to bring out the beauty and the fragrance that this sacrifice had in the eyes of God.

[00:22:02] In John 17, the Lord says in verse 4, I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Now when he says I've glorified thee on the earth, this is his life and death together. I would not restrict this to his life.

But in his life and in his death, he brought glory to God.

Now when I say to God, this is what we spoke about a moment ago. Strictly speaking, in this verse, it's a slightly different aspect. Here it is that he glorified the Father. Now with God, we perhaps tend to think more of the holiness and the righteousness, also the love of God.

But the other thing that happened is that the Father was revealed on the cross. The whole heart of the Father's love was revealed.

[00:23:01] And incidentally, not incidentally, I should say note as well, it happened on the earth. Remember, the earth is the platform in the moral theater of the history of mankind.

It's the platform on which the moral question is decided. And in this corner of the universe, God had been dishonored in such a terrible way. And Christ says, you know, on this earth, where you've been dishonored so much, this is where I brought glory to thee.

Now the Old Testament contains wonderful pictures of this aspect of the work of Christ, dealing with the fact that it was actually God-ward, and it meant fragrance.

It meant a sweet odor to God.

[00:24:01] And even when Christ atoned for sin, God looked on him with deepest satisfaction. Now I can only hint at this now, but I hope Nick will be able to sell you some very good books on the offerings, the sacrifices in the Old Testament. And one really to study is, well, study them all, but perhaps one to start with is Leviticus 1. You find there that the sacrifice had to be without blemish. Because God says, if anything has to speak of my son, it has to be perfect. And it's then offered at the entrance of the tent of meeting where God dwells, and it says it's for his acceptance. In other words, God says, the offering of my son, the sacrifice, is so perfect. He has glorified me so much.

If you are connected with him, if you put your hand on this offering, you will be accepted. I cannot hold back blessing anymore.

[00:25:02] The whole favor that I have towards my son, I now have towards you if you are connected with him.

Then the blood is presented, the sign of death.

But then they had to flay the burnt offering to show that it was not only outwardly perfect, but every inward part was perfect. And God says, so to speak, the life and death of Christ did not only look perfect from the outside, but it was indeed inside. And they had to cut it into pieces. Every aspect deserves contemplation, and then they had to put it on the fire, on the altar, exposed to this judgment, the heat of fire. But it was there, on the cross, that Christ brought this glory to God.

And it mentions the head. You can think of the thought life of Christ. [00:26:01] Even then, there was no thought that would not have been to the honor of God. It mentions the fat, the energy that actually made him to go to the cross and accomplish that work.

And the inward parts, speaking of the emotions. What are our emotions like when we are under pressure? But with the Lord, even the inward parts were perfect. The legs, speaking of his walk, bearing his cross, he went up to the cross. Now, these parts had to be washed with water to make sure that they were clean, because only then could they speak of Christ, who was clean. And this all had to be burned on the altar, not outside the camp, on the altar, and it all ascended up to God.

And as we read in Ephesians, it gave this sweet-smelling savor. Now, just two more short thoughts.

[00:27:04] In Genesis 22, it's not the first time where you have an altar, not the first time where you have a sacrifice.

But what we learn here for the first time is that this burnt offering is actually given by the one who is the son.

Abraham had to offer his son as a burnt offering.

And the other thought is from Exodus 29, where God says, you know what I want? I want a burnt offering in the morning, and I want a burnt offering in the evening. And the next day, I want a burnt offering in the morning and a burnt offering in the evening, and I want that every day. And it really shows that what God desires is that some praise for the perfection of this work of his son, in which

God has been manifested, rises up to God every morning and every evening of our lives.