The Uniqueness of Christ's Death

Selected Scriptures
Good Friday Service – 4/10/09

Introduction:

I. No other Death was <u>Planned</u> like Christ's Death

II. No other Death was <u>Predicted</u> like Christ's Death

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Introduction:

Christianity is inseparably anchored to a unique Savior
(Jesus Christ is LORD, NOT a mere teacher, political leader, or military deliverer)

What sets Christ apart from Moses, Muhammad, and Buddha?

- Christ is unique in His Birth (He was the Virgin Born Son of God who came from Heaven)

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

- Christ is unique in His Nature & Character (He was perfectly holy and without any sin)

Hebrews 7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;
1 Peter 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

- Christ is unique in what God the Father said about Him

Matthew 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
Matthew 17:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

- Christ is unique in the honor and worship He received

John 5:23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.
Matthew 2:11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

- Christ is unique in His message & miracles

John 7:46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.
Mark 1:22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

- Christ is unique in His death and resurrection
    1. Christ would die at just the right time (at Passover)
    2. Christ would die in just the right way (by crucifixion and the shedding of blood) *Zechariah 12:10 "…and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him…"*
    3. Christ would die and the earth would become darkened and an earthquake would occur at just the moment His spirit left His body. (Mt. 27)
    4. Christ would rise again with an incorruptible body. Acts 13:35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

What other religion has a Savior who was virgin born, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death and rose again on the third day?

I. No other Death was Planned like Christ's Death

Who Crucified our Lord? Was it the Romans? The Jews? You and Me? God the Father!

God Chose the Plan of Salvation

God's marvelous plan of salvation was not an afterthought--after Adam and Even sinned--nor was it something that just happened by accident.

God sovereignly and purposely designed a just (righteous) plan of saving mankind before the world began.

1. He chose to send His Son (Is. 42:1; Mt. 12:18; I Pet. 2:6)

Isaiah 42:1
Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Matthew 12:18
Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

1 Peter 2:6
Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

2. *He chose to sacrifice His Son (Mt. 26,39, 42; I Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8)*

Matthew 26:39
And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Matthew 26:42
He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

1 Peter 1:20
Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Rev. 13:8 ….the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

II. No other Death was Predicted like Christ's Death

Christ's death for sinners was a predicted event

1) Abraham by faith said to his son Isaac: "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:8). Note: Abraham's offering of Isaac on Mount Moriah was not only a test of faith (Heb. 11:17-19), it was a foreshadowing of God offering up His "only begotten Son" (Heb. 11:17; Jn. 3:16).

2) Isaiah, who lived over 700 years B.C., foretold of Christ's substitutionary death with these words:

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (53:6)

"The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (v. 6)

"For the transgression of my people was he stricken" (v. 8)

"Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (v. 10)

"He shall bear their iniquities" (v. 11)

"He bare the sin of many" (v. 12)

3) Daniel, speaking of the Messiah's death, said: "Messiah [shall] be cut off, but not for himself" (Dan. 9:26).

III. No other Death was <u>Performed</u> like Christ's Death

Matthew 27:27-44

V. 45-54

These verses are among the most awesome in the Bible.

God is making a powerful statement by three supernatural events that occurred on the day Christ died.

The crucifixion lasted a total of six hours (from 9:00 a.m. [Mk. 15:25} until 3:00 p.m.). Verses 45-54 focus on the last 3 hours.

Whether Wednesday or Friday, this was no normal day in human history.

A. Unique Sign # 1 DARKNESS (v. 45-50) (The Sin of the World Had Been Paid For)

V. 45

The last 3 hours of Christ's death on Calvary are the most important and significant moments of human history.

During these short 180 minutes (or 10,800 seconds), the most vital work for humanity was accomplished.

After the scorning of the crowd and after the saving of the penitent thief (Lk. 23:43), a mysterious, eerie darkness started to fall upon the earth.

A "shepherd stands staring at the now blackened sky. Only seconds before he had stared at the sun. Now there is no sun. The sky is black. No thunder. No lightening. No clouds. The sheep are restless. The feeling is eerie. What is this hellish darkness? What has happened?" (Max Lucado)

Perhaps a scream is heard in the distance. Many, pointing to the sky, momentarily forget about those on the crosses. Then the crowd begins to break up and hurry toward the gates. The men cease their work, and the women fling their shawls over their heads and run with their children to get shelter from what seems to be a brewing storm.

People in fear say: "What is this? What's going on?"

What is amazing is that noon time is the time that the sun is at its highest point, at its zenith.

The means God used to darkness the earth is uncertain. We know that *"the sun was darkened."* (Lk. 23:45)

A prolonged eclipse is one answer, or a miraculous Heaven-sent darkening of the sun is another.

"Over all the land" - the word *"land"* can also mean "earth" (SEE: quote from Jim Bishop, *"The Day Christ Died"*, p. 327).

This darkness "was as though all of creation was sympathizing with the Creator. There were three days of darkness in Egypt before the Passover (Ex. 10:21-23) and there were three hours of darkness before the Lamb of God died for the sins of the world" (Wiersbe, p. 103).

The darkening of the sun marks the time of God's Judgment. God's Son was judged for our sin! (NOTE: The "Day of the Lord" will be initiated by darkness! - Joel 2:31; Rev. 6:12, 17; cp. Amos 5:20; Zeph. 1;14-15).

God's judgment of those in hell involves darkness (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Mt. 8:12).

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" - This is a quote from Psalm 22:1; read Ps. 22:1, 7-8, 13-18).

From 12:00 - 3:00, Christ fully drank of that bitter cup He so much dreaded. (SEE: Mt. 26:36-42).

The phrase *"exceedingly sorrowful"* (Mt. 26:38) indicates an unfathomable depth of anguish and sorrow.

What was that *"cup"?* It was the spiritual suffering (the *"travail of his soul"* - Is. 53:11) as He took upon Himself the full brunt of the sin of the world (Is. 53:4-6).

The contents of this cup involved the poisonous, toxic, dark, putrefying, cursed sin of the world that Jesus took upon Himself (II Cor. 5:21).

This horrible cup of agonizing pain and suffering was a cup given by God the Father. Jesus was *"smitten of God, and afflicted"* (Is. 53:4).

"The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (is. 53:6)

"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; he hath put him to grief. . . [the Father made] his soul an offering for sin" (Is. 53:10)

The most horrible contents of the cup of which Jesus drank was the momentary yet infinite separation between He and the Father.

As Jesus *"bore our sins in his own body on the tree" (I Pet. 2:24)*, the Father as it were turned His back on His Son and forsook Him. For the first time in eternity, a split, a schism, a separation between the Father and the Son occurred.

At no time in history or eternity past had the Son ever been abandoned. from the Father.

Christ experienced not only a physical death, but during those 3 hours on the cross He "tasted" a spiritual death (which involved the separation of his soul from the Father.

God the Father and the Son had known perfect intimacy in eternity past. Together, the triune Godhead planned creation. *"Let us make man in our image."*

Together, the Father and Soon created the universe - *"by whom also he made the worlds"* (Heb. 1:2; cp. Col. 1:16; Jn. 1:3)

The Father and Son both confused the languages at Babel (Gen. 11:7); the Father and Son both desired that a prophet be sent to preach to Israel - Is. 6:8).

Together the Father and Son had an unfathomable love (Jn. 17:23-24, 26). Since they shared the same nature, they knew each other more fully and completely than any other could (Mt. 11:27). While on earth, Christ desired nothing more than to please the Father (Mt. 3:17; Mt. 17:3; Jn. 8:29).

The Father and Son had a unity that was so personal and intimate (Jn. 17:21, 23) because together they were one in essence and nature (Jn. 10:30).

Yet on the cross an abandonment occurred.

Jesus *"endured the cross despising the same"* (Heb. 12:2)

He was made a *"curse for us"* in order to remove us from *"the curse of the Law."* (Gal. 3:13).

"The Bridge Story"

V. 50

What did Jesus cry out with a loud voice? Two cries -

1)*"It is finished"* (Jn. 19:30)

2)*"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"* (Lk. 23:46)

B. Unique Sign # 2 THE TORN VEIL (v. 51a)
(A New Covenant Had Been Provided)

As the sun begins to shine again, a man rushes into his house. His wife, huddled with her children and about to blow out the flame in her lamp, hears him breathlessly say: *"The temple curtain. . . torn!"*

V. 51

"Behold" - Look! See! God is grabbing our attention to a significant fact.

Each year on "Yom Kippur" (the Day of Atonement) the High Priest would enter where no one else was allowed. He would go into the Holy of Holies with blood to make atonement for Israel. This was the most somber of all Jewish holy Days. (Lev. 23:26-32). Such mourning and gloom over their sin perfectly corresponds to the dark and somber day Christ died.

The "*veil"* - was the curtain which separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place and the rest of the Temple (In the holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat).

"Josephus reported that the veil was four inches thick, was renewed every year, and that horses tied to each side could not pull it apart. (cited by Ryrie).

"top to bottom" - this phrase shows that the Old Testament priesthood was completely and totally done away with and that we now have complete and total access into God's presence.

The tearing of the Temple veil symbolized the fact that believers (after Christ's one, final, and complete sacrifice) now have direct access into God's presence through Christ (SEE: Heb. 10:19-22)

C. Unique Sign # 3 EARTHQUAKE (v. 51b-53)
(God's Power Over the Grave Had Been Promised)

V. 51

The third climactic sign that occurred was *"The earth shook and the rocks split open."*

One of the most powerful ways for God to make a statement is to send an earthquake.

The timing of this quake has great significance. It occurred at the same moment Christ *"yielded up the ghost."*

So as the draw people's attention to the great significance of Christ's death, God sends an earthquake marking the finality and completion of Christ's work on earth, and marking Christ's grand exit from this world. (EX: the noise and power of the thrust a rocket makes when it launches off of the earth).

The New Covenant had been provided!

Note the parallel: The earthquake at Mount Sinai (when the O.T. Covenant was given - Ex. 19:16ff).

The earthquake at Calvary (when the N.T. Covenant was provided)

V. 52

"The graves were opened" - The earthquake caused the stones to roll away from the burial caves.

NOTE: the connection between this earthquake and the graves opening, and the earthquake and Christ's grave opening (Mt. 28:2).

The last clause of V. 52 must be connected to v. 53. Although the graves were opened at Christ's death, this resurrection of many saints did not occur until after His resurrection. (since Christ is the *"first fruits of them that slept"* - I Cor. 15:20).

IV. No other Death was <u>Productive</u> like Christ's Death

All of Christ's life on earth had been building up toward this great climax. This 3 hour period (a "baptism" of death) was the goal and purpose of His entrance into the human race (Lk. 19:10; I Tim. 1:15).

What do you do with that day in history? What does it mean to you?

If God sent darkness and turned his back on his one-of-a-kind Son, if God ripped the Jewish temple veil in two; if God split the earth's rocks open and flung open the graves, then this was the most critical moment in history!

1.Have you accepted the fact that your sins were paid for on Calvary?

2.Have you understood that a new and living way has been provided for you?

3.Have you trusted in the finished work of Jesus Christ and his promise off life after death?

Scriptures emphasizing the fact of Christ's substitutionary death

"This is my body which is given <u>for</u> you" (Lk. 22:19)
"This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed <u>for</u> you" (Lk. 22:20)
"The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give <u>for</u> the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51)
"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life <u>for</u> the sheep" (Jn.10:11)
"I lay down my life <u>for</u> the sheep" (Jn. 10:15)
". . . He (Caiaphas) prophesied that Jesus should die <u>for</u> that nation. . . and not for that nation only . . ." (Jn. 11:51-52, cp. 18:14)
"Christ died <u>for</u> the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6)
"Christ died <u>for</u> us" (Rom. 5:8)
"He . . . delivered him up <u>for</u> us all" (Rom. 8:32)
"Christ died <u>for</u> our sins" (I Cor. 15:3)
"For he hath made him to be sin <u>for</u> us" (II Cor. 5:21)
"Christ . . . gave himself <u>for</u> our sins" (Gal. 1:4)
"Christ . . . loved me, and gave himself <u>for</u> me" (Gal. 2:20)
"Christ [was] . . . made a curse <u>for</u> us" (Gal. 3:13)
"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself <u>for</u> us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2)
"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself <u>for</u> it" (Eph. 5:25)
"Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . died <u>for</u> us" (I Th. 5:10)
"Who gave himself a ransom <u>for</u> all" (I Tim. 2:6)
"He by the grace of God should taste death <u>for</u> every man" (Heb. 2:9)
"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice <u>for</u> sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).

"Christ also suffered <u>for</u> us" (I Pet. 2:21)
"Christ also hath once suffered <u>for</u> sins" (I Pet. 3:18)
"Christ hath suffered <u>for</u> us in the flesh" (I Pet. 4:1)
"He laid down his life <u>for</u> us" (I Jn. 3:16)

Jesus stated His purpose for coming with these words:
Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Paul stated the purpose for Christ's coming with these words:
1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Fanny Crosby's testimony about redemption:

"Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through His infinite mercy,
His child, and forever, I am."

Philip P. Bliss wrote this song about redemption:

"I will sing of my Redeemer
And His wondrous love to me;
On the cruel cross He suffered,
From the curse to set me free.

Sing, oh, sing of my Redeemer,
With His blood He purchased me,
On the cross He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt, and made me free."