

## THE SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH OF CHRIST

### **TEXT: I PETER 2:21-25**

#### **Introduction:**

1. I am going to preach tonight on one of the greatest doctrines in the Bible -- the substitutionary death of Christ (cf. I Peter 2:24).
2. The great preacher CH Spurgeon said, "Morality will keep you out of jail, but it takes the blood of Christ to keep you out of hell."
3. Tonight I would like for us to consider the price for our redemption and the purpose for it. The price was the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:18, 19).
4. The purpose behind our Lord's sufferings is found in I Peter 2:24 -- "that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness."
5. D. Edmund Hiebert, in his commentary on I Peter, points out that the word "sins" is in the dative case, and "indicates the relationship that has been terminated."
6. Romans 6:2 says we "are dead to sin."
7. Romans 6:7 says, "For he that is dead is freed from sin."
8. Romans 6:11 says, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."
9. "But alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). First Peter 2:24 says, "that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness."
10. "Wisdom, righteousness and power, Holiness this very hour My redemption full and free, He is all I need."
11. This righteousness Peter refers to in verse 24 is only possible because of our Lord's substitutionary death. The believer was identified with Christ in His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.
12. Having been risen with Christ, we have been enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit to walk in newness of life.

#### **I. CHRIST IS OUR EXAMPLE (2:21-23).**

1. When I say, "Christ is our example," I do not mean we can be saved by following His example.
2. Regrettably, some people teach that, and some people believe that.
3. One liberal church has in their church bulletin: "We are a compassionate community of spiritual seekers, inclusive of all. Through Christ's example, we are joyfully and intentionally living out God's love while seeking inspired ways to offer healing and wholeness to our world."

4. I could preach all night on that. First of all "inclusive of all" usually means you do not have to be saved to be a member. Furthermore, it often means they accept impenitent homosexuals.
5. Secondly, they are not really following Christ's example. This reminds me of the time an old-fashioned Baptist preacher preached a message on hell. A lady came up to him after the service and said she did not like that kind of preaching. She said the preacher ought to just stick with the Sermon on the Mount.
6. Well, there is a lot more to the Bible than the Sermon on the Mount. But this preacher opened up his Bible to the Sermon on the Mount and read Matthew 5:29, 30: "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."
7. First Peter 2:21 says, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."
8. Peter is speaking here to people that are already saved -- those that have been called out of darkness into God's marvellous light (2:9).
9. The word "example" here in I Peter 2:21 is an interesting word. It literally means a copy-book that a student uses to practice his penmanship. Strong's Concordance says this copy-book includes all the letters of the alphabet, and is "given to beginners as an aid in learning to draw them."
10. The student seeks to reproduce the original as closely as possible. When the student traces the model or copies it carefully, his writing is neat and legible. But the further he moves away from the model, the more his handwriting worsens.
11. The lesson for us: we need to stay close to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our "example" (2:21).
12. Tonight we will baptize some new converts. They will be following the Lord's example, and will be obeying Him by being baptized.
13. Our Lord gave us His example when He was baptized by John the Baptist (cf. Mark 1:9, 10; John 3:23).

14. There is a famous painting by an Italian artist named Francesco Trevisani (1656-1746), showing John standing on a big rock, and our Lord standing in shallow water that barely covers his feet.
15. John the Baptist is portrayed pouring water out of a little cup onto our Lord's head. That is not following the Bible!
16. In the context of I Peter 2:20-23 (and in the context of the entire epistle), Christ is our example regarding enduring suffering.
17. Our Lord left the splendor of heaven to come down to this cruel, sin-loving world in order to suffer and die for you and for me (2:21).
18. He suffered betrayal, ridicule and scorn. He was misunderstood and He was reviled, but the Bible says, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (2:23).
19. Our sinless Saviour "was wondrously free from the lust of self-vindication" (William MacDonald).
20. Psalm 69:4 says, "They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty."
21. This Messianic prophecy is quoted in John 15:25.
22. Our Lord was hated without a cause. He was buffeted, spit upon, whipped and scourged, and nailed to a cruel cross.
23. Yet He bore it all patiently, and He cried out from the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).
24. Stephen followed our Lord's example. When he was being stoned to death, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60a).
25. Christ left us His example (2:21). Is He your example?
26. Or are you like that fellow with the bumper sticker that says: "I don't get mad. I get even"?
27. Our Lord was perfectly sinless because He is God (2:22).
28. First John 3:5 says, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."
29. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."
30. Only the Lord Jesus Christ could be our perfect Substitute because He is sinless.

31. Many people make the mistake of attempting to follow Christ as their example, without first trusting Him as their Saviour.

## **II. CHRIST IS OUR SUBSTITUTE (2:21-24).**

1. This is the heart of the Gospel (I Cor. 15:1-4).
2. Earlier I referred to believer's baptism. A person can be mistaken about baptism and still go to heaven.
3. A person can be mixed up about Bible prophecy and still make it to heaven.
4. A person can use different Bible translations and still be saved.
5. But if a person is wrong about the Gospel, he cannot be saved.
6. That is why cult members are lost.
7. That is why Masons are lost. When a Mason dies, they have a special Masonic funeral service and at this service they claim their Masonic "brother" is in heaven because he died a good Mason.
8. The apostle Paul said, "As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:9).
9. By the way, that young man who brutally killed his mother in Brooklyn the other day killed her with a sword he brought home from his Masonic lodge.
10. Masonry is demonic just like Islam and Mormonism.
11. The heart of the Gospel is the substitutionary death of Christ.
12. Galatians 1:4 says, Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."
13. Again, notice the price and the purpose -- "that he might deliver us from this present evil world."
14. Our Lord's death was substitutionary (I Peter 2:24; 3:18).
15. Our Lord's death was sacrificial. He suffered for us (2:21).
16. Our Lord's death was redemptive (I Peter 1:18, 19).
17. Our Lord's death was pre-determined. Peter said in Acts 2:23, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."
18. Our Lord's death was voluntary. Our Lord said in John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."
19. He said in John 10:17 and 18, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man

taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

20. Our Lord's death was expiatory. Because of His shed blood, our guilt is removed and we are reconciled with God (cf. II Cor. 5:17-21).
21. Peter says in I Peter 2:24 that our Lord was crucified "on the tree." This is another way of saying on the cross. The word translated "tree" literally means "wood."
22. Peter uses this word "tree" twice in the book of Acts.
23. Peter said in Acts 5:30, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree."
24. And Peter said in Acts 10:39, "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree."
25. The apostle Paul said in Acts 13:28-30, "And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead."
26. Referring to our Lord's substitutionary death, Paul wrote in Galatians 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."
27. Paul is quoting Deuteronomy 21:23, "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;)."
28. Strong's Concordance says the Greek word translated "tree" means: "wood; that which is made of wood; as a beam from which any one is suspended, a gibbet, a cross."
29. This Greek word, *xylon* (ksoo-lon), is not the usual Greek word used for tree. It is only used to refer to the cross, except for three verses in the Book of Revelation, where it refers to the "tree of life" (Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14).
30. There can be no tree of life without the cross. Jesus said in John 12:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."
31. The Pentecostals teach there is physical healing in the atonement. They have based their argument upon Isaiah 53:5 and I Peter 2:24.

32. "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" (Isaiah 53:5).
33. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24).
34. But the idea here is spiritual healing, i.e., having your sins forgiven. In Psalm 41:4, David says, "Heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee." David is speaking here of spiritual healing. This is healing of the soul, not the body.
35. Such healing is moral and spiritual, not physical. It is a cleansing from sin and the consciousness of it.
36. In Hosea 7:1, God says, "When I would have healed Israel..." The context indicates spiritual healing, not physical healing.
37. In Hosea 11:3, the Lord says, "but they knew not that I healed them." When people are healed physically they know it. But oftentimes people are healed spiritually and they forget all about it!
38. Consider Hosea 14:4. "I will heal their backsliding." Backsliding is not a disease of the body – it is a spiritual disease.
39. Therefore, when the Bible says, "With His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5), the healing is not the healing of the body, but the healing of the sin-sick soul.

### **III. CHRIST IS OUR GOOD SHEPHERD (2:25).**

1. Peter's reference to "sheep going astray" (2:25) is the last of six references to Isaiah 53 in this passage. This reminds us of the importance of that chapter.
2. The Lord Jesus Christ is the "Shepherd and Bishop" of our souls (2:25).
3. Shepherd means "pastor." Bishop means "overseer."
4. Pastors are "under-shepherds." Christ is the "chief Shepherd" (I Peter 5:4).
5. Jesus said in John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."
6. He said in John 10:27-29, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. Is the Lord Jesus Christ your "good shepherd"?
2. Is He your Saviour?
3. He died on the cross as your substitute.
4. There is an old story about a drawbridge engineer and his son, back in the days before modern technology and computers made the job obsolete.
5. The man operated a drawbridge that spanned the Mississippi River. He used a control panel of levers and switches to set into motion a huge set of gears that either lifted the bridge so that boats could pass underneath, or lowered it back into its original position so trains could cross the river. He had a set schedule that he followed day in and day out.
6. One day this bridge operator took his young son to work with him. The little fellow greatly admired all of the switches and gears, and he beamed with pride as his father explained how he did his job.
7. But after a couple of hours of observing his father work, the boy grew bored, so his father sent him out to play. A short while later, the bridge operator realized that it was almost time for him to lower the bridge so the 5 p.m. commuter train could cross. But, as he was about to pull the switch that would lower the bridge, he glanced out the window to see that his son had apparently been climbing on the gears; and his foot was stuck. The little boy was wedged between the huge gears -- trapped and unable to free himself.
8. The engineer was about to run down to help his son when he heard the train whistle in the distance. Suddenly he realized that he did not have enough time to free his son, return to the control box, and then lower the bridge in time for the passenger train to cross safely.
9. But if he pulled the switch to lower the bridge, his little boy would be crushed in the massive turning gears in which he was entangled. He was forced to make a horrible choice: either his son would be killed, or the whole trainload of passengers would plunge to their deaths in the river below.
10. The engineer knew what he had to do; so he reached for the lever and pulled it; and, in so doing, sacrificed the life of his son so that the people on the train would live.
11. As he agonized over His son's death, he looked up to see the passenger train rumble by. With tears streaming down his face, he looked through its windows to see hundreds of people sitting on the

train. Some were talking; some were reading the newspaper. All were oblivious to the sacrifice he had made on their behalf.

12. It is a sad story and a good illustration. However, I should point out that our Lord's death was not a terrible accident (cf. I Peter 1:20; 2:24).