

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We trust the reality that God is love (1 John 4:8). Love is other-centered, not self-seeking. The full representation of the love of God came in human flesh through the person of Jesus Christ, who created all things in the universe by the word of His mouth, lived a life of service to humanity and saved us from our sins, our rebellion, our own desire to live without Him. By His death and resurrection we have assurance of a future without pain, hurt and selfishness.

We also trust the ancient scriptures hold the evidence for the story of this passionate God, how He intended the world to be, what happened to get the world in the mess that it is in and if this mess is ever going to end.

Throughout these studies from the books of the bible we will see enough evidence that can give us assurance God loves us deeply, has won the hearts of most of the universe, except for this little planet, but His light is shining on the heart of humanity brighter and brighter each day. As restored followers of Christ, we will also show outwardly how to live a life of other-centered love, helping others in physical, material, emotional and spiritual need.

INTRO

As we're closing the book of John, we come to the climax of the narrative, culminating in the death and resurrection of Christ. These two events have marked the history of mankind in such a way that a new religion emerged in the world, with over 2 billion followers today. Not only that, but the entire calendar of Western civilization is also fully influenced by the life of Christ.

In chapter 17, we read the prayer that Christ offers up to the Father with his disciples. Powerful words and petitions are proclaimed in favor of the eleven present there (Judas was with the Roman soldiers about to betray him), and Christ also prayed for all who read his prayer and accept the gospel message from that day on.

John 18 shows the events that lead to the condemnation of Jesus, from Judas' betrayal, to the pre-trial in the home of two Jewish leaders.

In chapter 19, we see the end of the trial, and what takes place when Jesus is given into the hands of the Romans. The chapter ends with the death of Christ.

1) CHRIST'S PRAYER

John 17:1-26

And this is eternal life: that they may know You... (V. 1-4)

When many hear the words eternal life, they tend to equate it with time, living forever seems to be the most obvious answer. But Christ said that eternal life is not to be defined as a period of time, but as the quality of a relationship with Him. When Christ says that eternal life is to know the Father, the only true God and the Son, He always uses the expression that was used elsewhere in the Bible for intimacy. Ever since the creation account in the book of Genesis, the bible used the expression to describe the intimacy of Adam and Eve that produced a baby (Gen. 4:1 *). What Christ was saying is that to know God is to be intimate, to know His purpose and share our life with Him. That was what Christ defined as eternal life. He glorified the name of the Father on earth since He had ended all the work that the Father had given Him, and this work is specified in the following verses.

notes:

* - Some modern translations interpret the word "know" as to have intimacy / sexual relations, since the context shows that we should interpret as such, but the original word in Hebrew is "yada", which means to know.

I have manifested thy name ... (V. 6-12)

Christ introduced the world to His purpose, manifesting God's name. In the Bible, the name is always synonymous with character. Christ is the exact representation of God's character, larger than all the others who came to speak about Him. Nobody could present who God really was, except God Himself, Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-3).

Those who, through their word shall believe in me ... (See 20-26)

Christ prayed on behalf of all those who would accept His word. That includes you and me. He insisted that everything he had presented during his three years of ministry on earth would be remembered by his disciples for our benefit today. His desire is that we have the same union that He has with the Father (v. 21, 23), Christ knew the Father and showed us the kind of God we serve. The biggest piece of this demonstration is narrated by John in the following chapters. *

2) THE BETRAYAL OF JESUS

John 18: 1-11

Judas appeared in the garden, where Christ would always pray, with a group of Roman soldiers, estimated at about 200. When Christ used the words "I Am", as he had used before, all the soldiers fell before Him. Many theologians call this event a theophany, a divine manifestation through the humanity of Jesus. In the other occasions He used the term, it only caused the fury of the Pharisees, but this time was different. Judas chose to betray Jesus for money, but bringing that army of Romans, perhaps he was thinking that Jesus would finally react and would command the Jews in revolt against the Romans. Although this claim has not much evidence to support it, the fact that Judas did not come with a few soldiers gives us indication that perhaps he still had hope in the manifestation of a warrior Messiah, which did not happen. The other gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) show that Judas went out and outraged by betraying an innocent person ends up taking his own life.

3) THE PRE-TRIAL OF JESUS AND PETER'S DENIALS

John 17:12-27

In the Jewish laws of the time, included in the Mishna, under the section Sanhedrin, it was illegal to conduct a trial at night, but the Jewish leaders did just that. Not only that, but the same section of the Mishna shows that no one could be sentenced to death in just a day of trial, they also had to have at least two witnesses who agreed among themselves to have Jesus condemned, something that the other gospels demonstrate did not happen. John does not write about the encounter of Jesus with Herod nor the back and forth with Pilate. It was more important for him to show the hypocrisy of the Jews to conduct a pre-trial night outside the Sanhedrin and the rapid dialogue between Christ and Pilate.

v. 36 - Jesus said that His kingdom is not of this world, otherwise his followers would fight. There are two ways that these words can be interpreted, one is that since Christ's kingdom was not from here, it made no sense for his followers to fight. Another is the fact that since his kingdom is not like the ones from here, it is a kingdom where his followers should and do not fight. His kingdom is a kingdom of peacemakers. (Matt. 5:9).

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*"Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work.

The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. That men might have salvation, He came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature.

The Father was revealed in Christ as altogether a different being from that which Satan had represented him to be. Said Christ, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." The love of Jesus, expressed for the fallen race in his life of self-denial and sufferings, is the manifestation of the Father's love for a sinful, fallen world... Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,—to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, "I have manifested thy name." "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men." E. G. White, Signs of the Times, 1/20/1890.

What goes on with Pilate shows us all the level which humans can get from cultivating hatred, envy. Those Jewish leaders should be following the laws they boasted so much about keeping, but they were those who asked for Barabbas, the criminal, rather than Christ the Son of God.

The denial of Peter in chapter 18 serves as a lesson to us all. Both he and Judas betrayed the trust of Christ, of course for different reasons. Peter failed three times in a row as Christ had predicted. Yet we read in the other Gospels that Peter left that place (after he had eye contact with Christ) and wept bitterly. Very unlike Judas who decided to kill himself.

4) THE PUBLIC HUMILIATION OF JESUS

John 19:1-16

Not only was Christ condemned, but he was also subjected to the typical Roman punishment (the whipping), mockery from the Roman soldiers, together with the beating he suffered at various times. Even Pilate finding no charge against Christ, succumbed to pressure by the power of the crowd, and let Jesus go to the cross.

Theologically speaking, why didn't Jesus react to all this? He was led to death as a sheep to the slaughter, without speaking a word of outrage, indignation or anger (Isa. 53:7).

5) JESUS ON THE CROSS

John 19:17-27

Christ was hung on a cross. This type of death was the typical Roman way to show who is boss. It was a form of public humiliation, where criminals were naked and spent days slowly dying of hunger, thirst, cold and lack of breathing. John presents here a prophecy that was fulfilled found in Psalm 22:18, the psalmist says they would cast lots for his tunic, exactly what happened in verse 24.

Even amid the utter agony that Christ felt, He still had time to tell the beloved disciple who was there with Mary, the mother and Jesus and Mary Magdalene, that this disciple (John) was now to be her son and she was now to be his mother. (V. 27).

6) THE DEATH OF CHRIST

John 19:28-37

John continues to present the Old Testament parallels that prove even more the truth that Jesus really had to suffer and die as he did. (V.28, 36-37). They did not break his legs (as they usually did if they needed the criminals to die faster), since they used their legs to catch a breath. They also pierced his body with a spear, both events narrated by John and presented as the fulfillment of prophecy.

When Christ cried out "It is finished" (v. 30), he won the battle against evil. What is the theological significance of Christ's death? Why did Jesus have to die? The answers to these two questions are crucial for the life of any person who wants to serve and have a relationship with Christ. What did the death of Christ accomplish for the world and for you and me individually?

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7) CHRIST'S BURIAL

John 19:38-42

Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Christ, but John says that only in secret, for fear of the Jewish leaders. He provided a new tomb that had never been used. The theological tradition is that this tomb was worthy of a very rich person, very interesting, considering Jesus stripped of all His glory to come to this earth to live among the poorest and humblest of that region. However, shortly after his death, one of his disciples thought that He deserved at least a more dignified funeral than all the events that led to His death. A great lesson to the other disciples who all disowned Him after the prayer in the Garden before His crucifixion. We can only imagine how the story would have been if all his disciples had followed Him from the garden to the cross and were giving him solace, comfort and affirmation in the most difficult moments of Christ's life.

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