

DID CHRIST DIE IN VAIN?

The whole Christian system centers around the death of Jesus on the cross. He “died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6, 8). He “laid down his life for us” (1 John 3:16). In spite of these and numerous like statements of Scripture, certain things, if true, would mean that Christ died in vain.

If salvation is by Law of Moses...

Paul argued: “If righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought” (Gal. 2: 21b). The Galatians had fallen victim to Jewish Christians who sought to bind at least parts of the law (i.e., circumcision, 5:2–4) upon the church. If Moses’ law could have saved, the Word need never have become flesh (John 1:14). Men had had that law for 1,500 years by the time of Jesus’ birth. The law was but a “tutor” that pointed to the Christ (Gal. 3:24); its sacrifices were but typical of the only “Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Jesus slew the authority of Moses on Calvary (Col. 2:14). All who justify religious practices by it (e.g., sabbath, priesthood, instrumental music in worship, et al.) render the death of Jesus worthless.

If religious division is right...

Though such diversity is applauded by the masses, the Bible condemns it. Jesus built only one church (Mat. 16:18), and He prayed that its members be one, as He and the Father are one (which includes/demands doctrinal unity) (John 17:20–23). He died to establish this one body (Eph. 2:16; 5:25). If Jesus is as pleased with religious division as with the one church He established, then “Christ died for nought” in that regard.

If the church is non-essential...

Jesus “purchased” His church with His blood, which He shed on the cross (Acts 20:28). *Jesus yes, the church no* is still a common concept. If one is considering only man-made counterfeits of Jesus’ church, the slogan is true, for He died for none of them. However, to include His church in this concept implies that Christ paid the price for it in vain. His church consists of those who have been saved through His death (Rom. 5:10; Acts 2:38, 41, 47).

If I am lost...

Jesus’ death will have been wasted, as far as I am concerned, if I am lost. This will not be the case for others, of course. He “gave himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:6), so all have the opportunity to be saved. But if I am lost, He may as well have spared Himself the misery of the cross on my behalf.

It behooves each of us to obey His plan of salvation (Acts 2:37–38), whereupon He will add us to His church (v. 47), thereby accepting the salvation He offers. We thus attribute for ourselves fitting value to His death.

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