

***Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas***  
***Fredericksburg Bible Church***

*107 East Austin*

*Fredericksburg, Texas 78624*

*830-997-8834    [jthomas@fbgbible.org](mailto:jthomas@fbgbible.org)*

**B1047 – November 21, 2010**

**The Messianic Link To Old Testament Substitution**

We're going to move further into the study of the Death of the King. There are at least four links between substitutionary blood atonement and the Messiah. Before we do that there are a few things we want to understand. Let's review the events in the Confrontation with the King: we've studied His Birth and His Life now we're coming to His Death, and why are we approaching it this way? Because words get their meaning from context. And the context of these events is history. And the Bible gives us the true history. This is a unique thing about biblical Christianity, there's no other religion in the world except OT Judaism that has this feature; that is, that the OT Bible is real history. We've quoted Dr. Albright who was basically the father of American archeology. He taught many years at Johns Hopkins and after studying the ancient near east and all these ancient religions came up with this interesting observation. He said that nowhere, **NOWHERE** in all of history can you find an example of a people who made a written contract with their God, not one other people group on any other continent on the face of the earth, ever made a contract with their God! There's only one people on the face of this planet who ever had a written contractual agreement with their God and that's the Jews. It's an amazing feature. It's because the God of the Jews is the God who made the world and all things in it and He speaks. All the other gods are phonies, they don't speak. So it's only the God of the Bible that speaks and makes contracts with man. The Bible is fundamentally a contractual document. This is why often you find genealogies, land surveys and all the other boring things in the Bible. What is all this? It's an historical record to show the faithfulness of God to the contractual terms of these covenants and the unfaithfulness of His people to those same contractual terms.

In the Birth, Life and Death of the King we have further examples of God's faithfulness. Each time there's a great event in history truths are revealed about God. It's learning about these events and associating them with the doctrines that fires our imaginations and gives us the ability to think through what He's talking about. The Birth: the critical doctrines that are taught in the Birth of the King are the doctrines of God and man, with a few other doctrines thrown in. But you can't understand the virgin birth of Jesus Christ and the incarnation unless first we have an understanding of who God is and who man is and the Creator-creature distinction.

Then we came to the Life of the King and the critical doctrine here is the doctrine of revelation, that God reveals Himself. God reveals Himself in the clearest and purest way through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the only time in the history of the universe where the Creator incarnated Himself, not as a Martian, not as an animal, as a man. God didn't incarnate Himself in the form of an extraterrestrial; God didn't incarnate Himself in the form of a falcon. Why not? Because Martians and animals aren't the highest revelatory form of who God is. Man is. Man alone is the image of God. Dogs are not in the image of God, apes are not in the image of God; dolphins are not in the image of God. He only created one entity, called the human being in His image. Why did He do that? Because centuries and centuries after Genesis there would come a time when God would prepare a body and enter this world and walk the face of this planet, not Mars, not Venus, not some planet in Galaxy 572, planet earth in the Milky Way Galaxy. In all the universe, with all due respect to SETI people, this planet is the only planet that has been visited by God incarnate. And it's only in the revelation of this unique Person that we have a link with extraterrestrial life, not only contact with extraterrestrial life but with the life of the God of the universe. That's the tremendous truth that comes out of the Life of the King.

Now we come to the Death of the King and to understand the King's death it's critical to understand God's justice, a critical component of the gospel missing today, because in many so-called gospel presentations all we hear is Jesus is going to help you, Jesus is going to solve all your problems, Jesus is going to save society, Jesus does this, Jesus does that, all those may be true but that's not the gospel. Those may be results of the gospel but the gospel is that sinners, separated from God and under the just condemnation of God, can be reconciled to Him. You may not feel good about it, you may feel good

about it, and it has nothing to do with how you feel. It has all to do with God's character. People can come to Christ in an utterly unemotional way and other people have great emotions. Sometimes what happens in religious circles is that people with a lot of emotions start condemning people who don't show a lot of emotions, and saying those people aren't spiritual. It has nothing to do with that.

The issue is whether God accepts each one of us; the issue is whether God accepts me, whether He accepts you, that's the issue. And that is a legal issue; it has something to do with His character; it has to do with His justice, and throughout the death of Christ and everything we're going to talk about and associate with this, this word will come up again and again because unless God's justice is satisfied, we have no salvation. God's justice has to be satisfied; no matter what He does on the cross. What He does on the cross has to meet His justice, otherwise there's a change in God. We say God is immutable; He changeth not. He is the God who has passed sentence that the sinner shall die. That's His sentence, He can't reverse His sentence without reversing His character. So He's got to come up with another way of handling it such that the original sentence is carried out and the justice behind the original sentence isn't violated.

A lot of people have screwy ideas today. We've come to the end of a century, basically 100 years in this country when the word of God has not seriously been taught and not seriously been studied apart from a few minority groups. The mainstream of so-called Christendom has not been faithful in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to articulate a strong view of who God is. Therefore they have a very sloppy gospel, and the result is that today you can go out on the sidewalk and talk to people and they think that God is going to forgive them for their sin and pat them on the head and usher them into heaven. God does not forgive sin unless His justice is satisfied. His character is never compromised. It's so ironic that people think this way because we also live in a generation that's always talking about justice and human rights. We've got rights for everything from the whales up to the elephants; everything, that is, except the unborn baby, no justice for it. But we have all of this talk about rights and justice by the very generation which when it turns around to a relationship with God never even thinks of justice or rights.

We showed that justice throughout history, prior to Jesus Christ was tied in with blood sacrifices. Sometimes pagan religions, taking that as a basic truth passed down from Noah, have distorted this. There have been people like the Aztecs and the Incas in the western hemisphere who have slaughtered their babies; there have been people like the Canaanites in the Middle East who slaughtered each other on stone altars because of blood sacrifice. There's a universal remembrance of this on every continent. Now, we're not talking about those distortions of the truth, those cry out of a remembrance of the truth but they are not the truth. What the Scripture says from Gen 3 onward is that God is just and His justice demands death and justice is inherently restitutional, i.e. what is violated must be paid, must be paid back; that's the Biblical concept of justice.

The problem is that Adam and Eve, at the point that they sinned, had no assets. They had nothing to give, because they now have died spiritually, they haven't got life to replace the life they lost. How under a restitutionary system of justice is restitution going to be made when you have no assets for the restitution? So very quickly in the garden, God, after He announced the gospel to Adam and Eve and they believed and showed their faith, at that point God slaughtered the first animal. With all due respect to animal rights groups, God who made the animals was the first to kill an animal and He did it to provide restitution for human sin. So Adam and Eve had to stand there, they'd never seen this before, they were living in a perfect environment, there was no death, and had to watch God walk into the garden, grab an animal and slaughter it right in front of their eyes, tear the skin off the carcass and make them a set of leather clothes. So every time Adam and Eve put on their clothes, what did they think about? They had to think about the animal that was slaughtered right in front of them. And in order to be covered they had to wear this leather tunic, day after day after day, every time they put it on they would remember the sin, the death and the blood that caused that. So that's restitutionary justice.

Then the issue, once we've established that the nature of blood sacrifice is restitutionary because God's justice has been violated, then we link blood sacrifice into the OT picture of the coming Messiah. This happens in four ways. First, in the Garden of Eden God said to Eve, very strange in the original language, He says to this woman, Your sperm will be against the sperm of Satan, and the very vocabulary tells you there's something odd

about this one. That's the original language, that's what it says. How can God speak about sperm of a woman? It's because ultimately He's talking about the virgin birth. That sentence would make no sense; OT people would strain to understand that. To see the difficulty they had turn to 1 Pet 1:11 because here the apostle Peter tells us a little bit about the mind of those OT people that would read these kinds of things and have a hard time trying to understand them. He's talking about salvation, verse 10, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry." Who's the subject of the sentence in verse 10? The prophets, and who are the prophets? Isaiah, Jeremiah, Samuel, all the men who basically wrote the OT Scripture. This is a classic reference in verse 10. Has your curiosity ever led you to think about, well gee, I wonder what these guys understood when they were writing the Scriptures, what did they think of, were they listening to a dictating machine, were they making all this up out of their own minds? We can't know all of what was going on but we have verses like this that tell us how they thought about what was going on and it's very clear that though they're writing Scripture the ideas weren't coming from them, the ideas were coming from God and they couldn't understand all they were writing. He says "as to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry," they were wondering about this, this was on their minds. What was on their minds? Verse 11 is a participial clause that amplifies what was on their minds, "seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them," there's the source of the OT, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, but it's called Spirit of Christ here because ultimately Christ is the source, "seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." The Spirit of Christ was predicting the sufferings and glories of Christ. And the thing that deeply troubled these guys was this: how could the Messiah suffer and be a glorious king? That is the \$64,000 question of the OT. They never got it together. The apostle says the best of the OT prophets never could figure it out. All they knew was that there were two apparently contradictory themes in the Scriptures: that the Messiah, on the one hand, was prophesied to suffer and die, and on the other hand He would be the glorious king who would rule forever. So the Messiah is linked in to the blood sacrifice providing the restitutionary justice. As virgin born he has life in Himself and so He alone of all members of the human race has the assets to pay God.

The second linkage between substitutionary blood atonement and the Messiah is that every one of the covenants, the Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Sinaitic Covenant, required a blood sacrifice at it's founding. The reason gets back to God's character again. God is holy and just and righteous and on the other side is man and man is sinful and God can't just reach out and touch sinful man in a covenant. So there has to be a blood sacrifice to show that a holy God and sinful man can only come together in covenant and only on the basis of the shed blood of Christ. We said all the covenants of the OT, if you look at when they were founded, you'll find a blood sacrifice except one. There is one covenant that you can look but you can't find a blood sacrifice and we said that's the Davidic and ultimately it's because that covenant somehow looked forward to the blood sacrifice of the royal seed of David, Jesus Christ on the cross.

We're going to have deal with the implication of the cross later when it comes to the unbeliever, who goes eventually to hell. How does the blood of Christ affect the one who eventually dies in rejection of the gospel? How does the blood of Christ affect the material universe? How does the blood of Christ affect angels? All these are questions; there's big, big stuff associated with what happened with the cross and it's not all just about believers.

The third thing that links the Messiah to the substitutionary blood atonement is the Passover feast celebrated annually by the Jewish people. When did this begin? At the Exodus. What does it commemorate? The doctrine of judgment/salvation. In the Exodus what did you put on the doorpost to be saved? Blood. And what did the angel do when he saw blood on the door? Did he say well, the people in there did some good things, I'll let them alone? The decision of passing over and saving or going in and judging was made strictly on one thing, nobody's personality was involved; it was based on whether there was blood on the door. Every head of household had to make a decision, are we or are we not going to trust. If we put blood on the door we trust Him; if we don't trust God we're not going to do it. It has nothing to do with the kind of personality, there could have been religious people who didn't believe, and they were damned, they lost the first-born son. There could be irreligious people who did believe and they were saved. The only thing that mattered was whether they personally trusted in YHWH's promise to them, no human merit, no religious sincerity: do you trust in God's provision of blood over the door. And God wrapped that idea of

judgment/salvation on the basis of blood sacrifice in what ceremony that is still observed in most Jewish homes? The Passover, every April, or March depending on the calendar. What was Jesus doing on the night in which He was betrayed? He was celebrating Passover. The Messiah dies on Passover so He fulfills the Passover.

The fourth picture is found in Isaiah 53, halfway through the OT, one of the most famous passages in all the OT about the suffering Messiah that was to come. This is the most controversial passage in Jewish and Christian relations today, where those relations center on Scripture. There's a lot of debate over this passage. This has caused more people more problems for more centuries in the Jew/Gentile controversy than anything I know of, other than the attempted genocide that Gentile politicians have tried against the Jewish people. Let's look at Isaiah 53:1-2, "Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" By the way, the arm of the Lord is a Messianic term; it refers in the OT passages to the Messiah. Do you know why? Because the arm was what held the sword, and it was the sword which gave victory and deliverance, so it became an emblem of the Messiah. "...to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed," who is going to be the one who saves us? <sup>2</sup>For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him. Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. <sup>3</sup>He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face. He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. <sup>4</sup>Surely our griefs," and here's the key passage that is so controversial, right here, "Surely our griefs He himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." In other words, He carried our griefs upon Him and the human race who witnesses Him, or will witness Him, witnesses Him as One who Himself is cursed of God. We'll deal with that idea later, but the essence of it is that when the Jews looked at Jesus on the cross they interpreted him as a criminal suffering the curse of God. Verse 5, "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed." Here's the Messianic passage, and the question of all questions down through Jewish history has been to whom does Isaiah 53 refer? It was always taken to mean the Messiah up until the Middle Ages when the rabbis shifted to what is claimed today as 'the' Jewish

interpretation of Isaiah 53, yeah, the modern Jewish interpretation, but this is not the traditional Jewish interpretation. The modern Jewish interpretations says this speaks of the nation Israel, the nation Israel is going to suffer at the hands of the Gentiles, we're not arguing the Jewish people don't suffer, but the traditional Jewish interpretation, held all the way from Isaiah's day until the Middle Ages was that it was a single Jew who would suffer, the Messiah. In other words, it's interesting that no one even thought of interpreting Isaiah 53 this way until 11 centuries had gone by of debate between Christians and Jews. "Some Gentile Christian scholars" also "insist that first-century Jews did not recognize any vicarious suffering of the Messiah in this passage. (By 'vicarious' we mean suffering in place of others," that is the content of verse 4, "another way of saying 'substitutionary atonement'.) These scholars are opposed by most Hebrew Christian scholars," and by the way, if you're not aware of it, there are probably, percent wise, more Jews who believe in the Messiah out of the total Jewish population than there are non-Jews that believe in the Messiah. You say oh no, I don't believe that. How many Jews are there in the world? Fifteen million. In your fraction, the numerator and the denominator, if you've got a small denominator you don't need a big numerator to get a higher percent. How many people total in the whole world? Big denominator, 6.5 billion, so to get the same percent you have to have a big numerator which I don't think we have. That's an interesting point of history, that the percentage of Jewish believers among their own population is probably much higher than Gentile believers among their own. And many of them have made some of the finest biblical scholars. Alfred Edersheim was a Jewish person - the man who taught OT many years at Dallas Seminary and founded Talbot Seminary on the west coast. Dr. Feinberg was an orthodox Jewish rabbi who accepted Christ, and was a very rigorous professor. He required every preacher-boy to know the Hebrew language inside and out, and many were the men who flunked his class, because Feinberg was a no-nonsense man in the classroom. So there are a lot of Hebrew Christians. Today one of the most articulate Hebrew Christians is Arnold Fruchtenbaum, a personal friend of mine. It would be hard to find a Hebrew Christian who's read as far and deep as Arnold Fruchtenbaum today. The guy's a walking encyclopedia. He's written several books, he's trying to write a commentary on every book in the Bible, Old and New Testament. And Dr. Fruchtenbaum, when confronted with this inane idea that 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews didn't believe Isa 53 spoke of a suffering Messiah, notes that the Zohar, written about AD110," before or after Christ?

After Christ! "...the Zohar, written" after the Lord Jesus Christ, "preserves an old first-century Jewish interpretation of Isaiah 53:4." and here it is, quote, "Were it not that [Messiah] had thus lighted [sickness, pain, chastisement] off Israel and taken them upon himself, there had been no man able to bear Israel's chastisement for transgression of the law." Clearly whoever wrote that was interpreting Isaiah 53 as referring to the Messiah and not the nation Israel. Surely, there is the element of vicarious or substitutionary Messianic suffering in this non-Christian, Jewish first-century tradition. Furthermore, Fruchtenbaum points out, this interpretative tradition of Isaiah 53 continued," *continued* after AD110, "in Jewish circles well into the Christian era, occurring in remarkable places such as the Yom Kippur Musaf Prayer written around the seventh century, A.D." now we're talking six centuries after Christ, here's the prayer, "Messiah our Righteousness is departed from us. ... He hath borne the yoke of our iniquities, and our transgression... He beareth our sins...that he may find pardon for our iniquities.' The allusion to Isaiah 53 is unmistakable." Obviously Isaiah 53 is on the mind of this person in the seventh century AD. The point is that the Messiah is linked to suffering and He is linked to the substitutionary atonement.

Now we want to turn to the NT to see how the NT presents the cross. These are only highlights because we have four of these highlights to examine. The first one is in Gal 3:13. I said in Isaiah 53 there was that little statement about we "esteemed Him stricken of God." It's a prophecy of how people would interpret the cross and the death of the Messiah. Maybe if I say it this way it will be clearer; in thinking about the Messiah dying, if you were an OT person looking forward, you might have thought well, if the Messiah has to die, the only way He can die is die an honorable death for a cause, like a soldier. That's how Messiah would have been conceived. If He had to die it would have been an honorable death, a death on the battlefield, leading the armies of Israel to victory against Rome. But how did He die, this Jesus? He died like a criminal. That's the problem. We don't understand this because we come to Christianity all comfortable. We don't live in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, we don't come from that community, and the NT people struggled with this. How could the Messiah die in such an unglorious way? I mean, it's like He's incarnated today and He dies in the electric chair. Why did He do this?

In Gal 3:13 we have the apostle's explanation and it does not set well because remember when Peter heard that the Messiah was going to die he tried to fix it so it wouldn't happen, and you remember what the Lord Jesus' remark was to that. "Get behind me, Satan." Peter really must have been hurt by that kind of a response. The Lord looked right at him and said he was basically on Satan's team. Gal 3:13, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having", watch the language here very, very carefully in light of what I just said, this is the kind of death the Messiah died, it was not glorious, it is not what you would think of the coming Triumphant King, leading His armies in battle to victory, Gal 3:13 says He "redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree'—" where is that a quote from? Deut 21:23.

So guess what we're going to do? We're going to go to the OT and look at Deut 21, part of the criminal law code of the nation Israel. What we're doing is we're looking at these features in the death of the Messiah because it's out of these features that we will understand the gospel. I don't want to get to the doctrine yet; all we're doing now is paying attention to what the text says. How did the NT authors view the cross? In Deut 21:22 it says, "And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is put to death, and you [will] hang him on a tree, <sup>23</sup>his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God) so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance." The whole passage has to do with various capital punishment crimes if you're interested in some Sunday afternoon reading. You might check it out and find some gems of God's wisdom. It's not what you would expect. But if they would have followed this it would have produced wonders in society. So vv 22-23 are one case of capital punishment among many others.

They summarize what happened in any case that involved capital punishment. By the way, they also had something else, in verse 21, about the method of execution. They did it with stones. People say why didn't they just chop their head off, why did they do it with stones? We can't be sure of exactly the reasoning but it's been suggested that they did it with stones for the same reason that today when there are executions, say in a military context, a firing squad, they have multiple shooters in the firing squad. Why do they have multiple shooters? Because they're incapable of hitting the

person? No, it's because each shooter doesn't know if he was the one who killed the person. So with the stoning no person could be sure that it was their stone that killed the person. It's a horrible thing. Can you imagine being called out? We're not talking about little pebbles off the ground here; if you go to Israel you'll see what kind of stones they have, big ones, 20-30 pound stones. Those are the stones that they were dropping on you. If you get one of those, it breaks your leg, the next one breaks your arm, the next one breaks your head, that's the kind of stones they pounded you with.

Do you know who was the first one to throw a stone? The person who testified against you. That's a very sobering corrective to false testimony. You can play all kinds of games in today's courtroom because the lawyers will get you off with this little gimmick and that little gimmick, and this procedure and that procedure, and it just becomes one big maze of confusion. But they had a way of cutting to the quick in the Mosaic Law Code. Are you accusing this guy? Okay, you get out there and you throw the first stone. If you had to do that, stand up in front of the whole community and do that, I dare say that it'd produce a little caution in what you accused people of. Of course the person had a trial; it wasn't just arbitrary accusations here. Would you bring a charge against a person if you knew that as a result of this you would be the one who gets to start off the killing? In public? In front of the community? It's sobering. They had a lot of built in safeguards to this method.

But the point we're getting at today is that in vv 22-23 after they executed the person they would hang their corpse on a tree. This is another interesting insight into capital punishment and how it was done. The way God wanted it done wasn't in some high security prison somewhere with a television camera going, and maybe five people watching. It was done in public so everybody watched. Not only did everybody have to watch the execution, but the corpse had to hang there for a few hours, however long till sunset. Why's that? So everybody walking by could see it. Have you ever seen a corpse, hanging, dead, lifeless, blood all over the place, what a mess. And after a few hours, flies all over it, a mess. This is the method, and people would have to walk by, it was in the town square. If you had to go to walk to lunch you had to walk by this corpse with blood and flies all over it. This is the sobering nature of execution in Israel.

The interpretation is given in verse 23; this is Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, “His corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day,” why? Because you do not want to “defile your land,” in other words, the corpse is dirty, a corpse is filthy, a corpse speaks of sin and death, so the idea here is to just let it be exposed enough to get the point across, and then we’re going to bury it because it’s filth, we avoid a sanitation problem.

But squashed inside of verse 23 there’s a parenthesis, and that parenthesis is the theological thing that God wanted taught through execution. He said, “(for he who is hanged is accursed of God),” so when people went by they saw this bloody mess, hanging from a tree, and what did they have to think about? What did we say earlier about this? What characterizes the Biblical view of justice? Whence cometh it? The attribute of God’s holiness. So when we see a man hanging on a tree it reminds us it’s the curse of God. So the lesson focuses once again on this thing we’ll come back to over and over and over again in the study of the cross of Christ. God’s justice! And all the people who saw these bodies hanging there got another lesson on God’s justice.

Now the question is this: how do you reconcile the Lord Jesus Christ not dying a glorious victorious death, the death of a hero, but the death of a criminal who is cursed by God? Do you see why this is a stumbling block to Jews? This is a real stumbling block to someone who visualizes the Messiah as a glorious reigning king—He dies on a tree with blood and flies. He’s hanging there like God’s cursed Him? You see there’s no way we can explain this apart from what the NT does with it.

Let’s conclude by turning to 2 Cor 5:21; maybe now this verse will have a little more power to it. People read the NT and you get this kind of thing in a college classroom a lot, where somebody has read 55 journals about the concept of death and the Christian religion or something, and they come out with this stupid view of Jesus Christ’s death, it’s an accident, or it was a plan gone wrong, or something. But when they get to a verse like 2 Cor 5:21 they just can’t make sense of this. That’s why we’ve spent 15 minutes going over Deuteronomy; Deut 21:22-23 teaches us why you have the truth of 2 Cor 5:21. “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” “He made Him to be sin,” that’s the explanation the Christian has for why the corpse of Jesus Christ had to go

through the same kind of treatment as the most foul criminal of Israel, because on the cross that's what Christ became. This is an amazing thing! This is absolutely amazing! "He humbled Himself and became obedient," remember that passage in Phil 2, in the kenosis passage. What does it say, "He became obedient to the point of death," and then what does it say, "even death on a cross." Now do you see what the NT keeps saying the death, the death on the cross? There's a horror behind it because the NT writers knew Deuteronomy. Jesus would die not just a death, but He died such a death that when He becomes sin for us He was being judged by God. So why did He become sin? That's the question the NT leaves you with. If you don't accept that Jesus Christ substituted for our death, then why did He die? How was He ever captured and executed? Here we're coming to another point. Jesus Christ was not killed by the Romans, Jesus Christ was not killed by the Jews, Jesus Christ chose the exact moment of His death. Another stunning thing! Few people notice this about the NT text, but as He hung there on the cross He chose the exact moment to die. When He said "It is finished" He took some liquid stuff to deaden the pain and said that's it, I'm checking out, I finished the work.

Nobody has ever died like that, and the fact of the matter was that this Roman army officer who had witnessed hundreds and hundreds of executions stood there and he looked at this, and he'd never seen a man die like the Lord Jesus Christ, never, he had never seen anything like this before. This isn't some wimpy guy, this is a Roman soldier; he watched executions all the time, that was his job. Never had he seen anybody die like this, with such power, everything under His control, but He was on the cross, and there He was, naked, blood, flies, and all this blackness, and His body was hanging there. And the Jews said, wait a minute, how could the Messiah die this way, what a horrible, embarrassing way for Messiah to die. But is it embarrassing? It's not embarrassing ultimately. It's only embarrassing if we fail to comprehend why He did what He did, and then all of a sudden we're embarrassed, we're ashamed because it's our sin that He was bearing in His body on that tree. It wasn't His. He did it for us. That's fundamentally what was happening on the cross.

[Back To The Top](#)

Copyright (c) Fredericksburg Bible Church 2010

