

3. The Sacrifice for Sin



Read

- Genesis 22:1-14

Background

After the Exodus from Egypt, God gave Israel an elaborate sacrificial system. Years later the temple in Jerusalem was built on Mount Moriah. Every Jew who brought a sacrifice to the temple, was reminded of the story of Abraham and Isaac. Not man, but God Himself, would provide the sacrifice to atone for sin.

Foreign to our culture, sacrifices penetrate the whole Bible. Here are the main points: (1) Sin causes a separation between God and human beings that can only be overcome through death. (2) God wants to live with us and therefore provides a sacrifice to bridge the gap. The New Testament writers understand all the sacrifices of the Old Testament to point to and have their complete fulfilment on the cross of Jesus.

Reflect

What is the significance of a sacrifice? Why does the Bible find such a sacrifice necessary?

4. The Ideal King, the Messiah



Read

- Jeremiah 23:5, 6

Background

The first king of Israel, Saul, was not a success. He was replaced by David, a shepherd boy who from low status and persecution rose to the highest position. Though far from perfect, David thus became the symbol of the true King, the perfect one to come, the Messiah. The word *Messiah* means “the anointed one,” because kings were anointed to take their position on the throne. This title is applied to Jesus in the New Testament.

Reflect

What makes Jesus a better candidate for kingship than anyone else? How will His kingdom be realised? Is a perfect kingdom really possible?

5. Redeemer and Friend



Read

- Job 16:19 and 19:25-27



Comment

Speaking about the victory over death, Job uses the term “redeemer.” In the Old Testament laws the Hebrew word, *go'el*, denotes the person who as the nearest of kin releases a person from slavery by redeeming him/her from debt. Therefore Job speaks about his redeemer as his friend, the one who is closest to him. The concept was significant because Israel itself was redeemed from the slavery in Egypt.

Reflect

Name areas where humans are bound? What kind of slavery do we need to be redeemed from?



Number 3. Far From Crazy The Purpose of Prophecy

ClearView

Bible study guide

“Truthful prognosis is difficult—especially about the future!” But there seems no end to those who try. We have become accustomed to adjust our lives to the weather forecasts, whether good or bad or trustworthy. Some people risk their wealth on economic prognoses of the days ahead. Others build their decisions on less materialistic forecasts, such as astrology.

The year 2000 witnessed a major revival in prophetic speculation. Around the world religious cults of all types predicted dire events to take place as the numbers in our calendar changed. Some had a huge impact on major sections of Christianity. This emphasis on prophecy should not, in itself, surprise us. Study guide number 1 showed us that the Christian church from the very beginning was built on prophetic messages. The hope of the soon return of Jesus Christ lies at the very core of its teachings.

This study guide seeks to answer the question “What is the central purpose of biblical prophecies?”

1. To Generate Confidence in Jesus



Read

- John 13:19
- 1 Corinthians 14:3



Comment

Note that prophecy becomes significant after fulfilment when we, looking back, are able to see how Jesus has been leading through past events. The main purpose is not to make us able to calculate the details of the future. Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 14 what should be common for all genuine prophets: their messages are to strengthen, encourage and comfort believers.

Reflect

How does this purpose compare with prophets and prophecies you know about?

2. To Build Hope for the Future



Read

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Reflect

What is most important to Paul in his description of the promised future?