

What Jesus Said His Death Would Mean

Jesus knew that His mission on earth was to become a perfect offering for the sins of mankind. Anticipating His own death, He often explained others what He had come to do. Sometimes He said it straightforwardly: “The Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again” (Matt. 20:18-19). Other times, He used parables or illustrations to describe the significance of His death. Consider some of the portraits of Christ’s death in the Gospel accounts:

He would be the Builder of the church (Matt. 16:16-18) – “On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). The death of Jesus made it possible for Him to build His church (Eph. 5:25-27).

He would be the Vineyard Owner’s Murdered Son (Matt. 21:37-40) – In the parable of the vinedressers, Jesus presents Himself as the son of the Vineyard Owner who is cast out and killed by the Owner’s wicked servants.

He would be the Rejected Stone (Matt. 21:42-44) – “The stone which the builders rejected has become the Chief Cornerstone” (Matt. 21:42). Christ’s death and resurrection confirmed that He is the only Foundation upon which wise men may build.

He would be the Ransom of our souls (Mark 10:45) – The Lord explained that He had come to, “Give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

He would be God’s gift to the world (Luke 2:30-32) – While He was yet an infant, Jesus was called, “The Lord’s salvation” (Luke 2:30). His own mother was told that a sword would also pierce her soul – the anticipation of her Son’s death (Luke 2:35).

He would be a murdered Prophet (Luke 13:33) – “It cannot be that a prophet should perish outside Jerusalem” (Luke 13:33). Jesus is much more than a prophet, but He identified Himself with those who had been persecuted for preaching God’s message.

He would be the Lamb slain to take away sin (John 1:29) – As His earthly ministry began, John spoke of Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb who would take away the sin of the world.

He would be the Temple destroyed and rebuilt in three days (John 2:19-21) – The temple was a place where God dwelt among men in a covenant relationship. Jesus said of His physical body, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

He would be the Healing Serpent lifted up in the wilderness (John 3:14) – “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”

He would be the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11-18) – The difference between a hireling and a good shepherd is found in one's commitment to the sheep. Jesus anticipated His death by saying that He would lay down His life for His sheep.

Thank God for so many images concerning the significance of His Son's death! **--JB**