

Advanced Bible Correspondence Course
Lesson 16: The Humiliation of Christ

LORD'S DAY 16

Q.40. WHY WAS IT NECESSARY FOR CHRIST TO HUMBLE HIMSELF EVEN UNTO DEATH?

ANSWER: BECAUSE WITH RESPECT TO THE JUSTICE AND TRUTH OF GOD (A), SATISFACTION FOR OUR SINS COULD BE MADE NO OTHERWISE THAN BY THE DEATH OF THE SON OF GOD (B).

(A)GENESIS 2: 17; (B)ROMANS 8:3-4; HEBREWS 2: 14-15

Sin had to be paid for

Death had to come upon Christ because of God's justice and because of His truth. To Adam He had said: "*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" (Genesis 2:17) Hath God said it, and shall He not do it? His truth would then be violated. There was no other way for the sins to be paid for but by the death of the Son of God. Christ became the Surety. Just as a surety pays for the debt of someone who cannot pay himself, so Christ took all the debts of His people for His own account.

From eternity

Christ had already been the Surety from eternity. He had taken all the guilt and punishment of the elect upon Himself. Therefore Christ had to suffer everything that His people would have had to suffer. This included death, to its fullest extent – not only physical, but also spiritual and eternal death.

Indispensable

Christ is indispensable for each of us. If we die without being converted and outside of Christ, we ourselves will suffer eternally for our sins in hell. A poet once said, "Without Christ there is no life, but eternal destruction of the soul."

Q.41. WHY WAS HE ALSO "BURIED"?

ANSWER: THEREBY TO PROVE THAT HE WAS REALLY DEAD (A).

(A)ACTS 13:29; MATTHEW 27:59-60; LUKE 23:53; JOHN 19:38

In the grave

The death of Christ is of great significance. It is only through this death that God's justice is satisfied and we are reconciled with God. We must be certain that He died. That He was buried means that He was in the grave and was therefore among the dead.

Because of sin

It is written of Christ, "*And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulcher.*" ((Acts 13:29) The burial is not only proof of the death of the Lord Jesus, but also a step of His deep humiliation. Man was created by God to live and not to die, but because of the fall, God spoke to Adam and in him to each person, "*For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*" (Genesis 3:19). That is his deepest humiliation. This humiliation has also been Christ's portion. He was also in the grave. Christians follow the example of Christ – for that reason they reject the practice of cremation.

Q.42. SINCE THEN CHRIST DIED FOR US, WHY MUST WE ALSO DIE?

ANSWER: OUR DEATH IS NOT A SATISFACTION FOR OUR SINS (A), BUT ONLY AN ABOLISHING OF SIN, AND A PASSAGE INTO ETERNAL LIFE (B).

(A) MARK 8:37; PSALM 49:7; (B) PHILIPPIANS 1:23; JOHN 5:24; ROMANS 7:24

Payment

Christ's death was a payment for His people's sins. He suffered and died instead of His people. Why then do His people still have to die? For them, death is no longer a punishment for their sins. For those who are Christ's through faith death is no payment for their sins, but an abolishing of sin and a passage into eternal life. An abolishing of sin means that at their death they are forever delivered from sin. After a life long fight against sin, at their death they obtain complete victory over sin. For them death is their deliverance. Then God's people become perfect.

Everlasting life

Death is also a passage into eternal glory; that is everlasting life. In order to enter heaven, God's children must pass through the valley of death. After death God grants them that life which they already possessed through faith. Christ has said, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life*" (John 5:24).

Death brings them into a life of everlasting communion with God.

Q.43. WHAT FURTHER BENEFIT DO WE RECEIVE FROM THE SACRIFICE AND DEATH OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS?

ANSWER: THAT BY VIRTUE THEREOF OUR OLD MAN IS CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED WITH HIM (A); THAT SO THE CORRUPT INCLINATIONS OF THE FLESH MAY NO MORE REIGN IN US (B), BUT THAT WE MAY OFFER OURSELVES UNTO HIM A SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING (C).

(A) ROMANS 6:6; (B) ROMANS 6:6-12; (C) ROMANS 12:1

Crucifying the old man

What significance do Christ's suffering and death have in the experiences of the life of faith? By His power our old man is crucified, dead, and buried with Him. So these words speak of the virtue of Christ's death on the cross in our lives.

The cross of Christ also has a crucifying effect on sin and the old man. Crucifying is sin-killing. That is a painful process. Each person who has learned to look upon the cross of Christ under the burden of his sins will see how terrifying sin is, which will kill the love of sin. The purpose of "being crucified, dead, and buried with Him" is that the evil lusts of the flesh and the evil thoughts will no longer reign in us. They are still present, but God's people are not slaves of sin.

Paul wrote, "*Knowing this, that our old man (that is, the man before regeneration) is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin*" (Romans 6:6).

Thankfulness

God's children have been crucified with Christ and live to sacrifice themselves as an offering of thanksgiving. They dedicate their lives unto Him to show thankfulness unto Him for the sacrifice of Christ, by which they have been reconciled. Not sin, but Christ reigns in them. They desire to consecrate their gifts, their talents, yea, their whole lives to the Lord Jesus. He entered into death for them in order that they should live through Him.

Q.44. WHY IS THERE ADDED, "HE DESCENDED INTO HELL"?

ANSWER: THAT IN MY GREATEST TEMPTATIONS, I MAY BE ASSURED, AND WHOLLY COMFORT MYSELF IN THIS, THAT MY LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY HIS INEXPRESSIBLE ANGUISH, PAINS, TERRORS, AND HELLISH AGONIES, IN WHICH HE WAS PLUNGED DURING ALL HIS SUFFERINGS (A), BUT ESPECIALLY ON THE CROSS, HATH DELIVERED ME FROM THE ANGUISH AND TORMENTS OF HELL (B).

(A) PSALM 18:4-5, 116:3; MATTHEW 26:38, 27:46; HEBREWS 5:7;

(B) ISAIAH 53:5

Hellish agonies

By the descent into hell the Heidelberg Catechism means the hellish agonies which Christ suffered before His death. For as Surety He had to undergo temporal, spiritual and eternal deaths. He had to suffer the hellish pains, which is the eternal punishment. He bore this hellish anguish in all His sufferings, but especially on the cross. His suffering in Gethsemane was so severe that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood. On the cross He had to cry out, "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" (Matthew 27:46)

The temptations are fierce assaults of Satan. Satan challenges our title to heaven. The Lord Jesus knows that His people have temptations. The psalmist says, "*The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow*" (Psalm 116:3).

Consolation

The Lord Jesus suffered these hellish agonies so that God's children, in all their souls' agonies, would believe that the everlasting punishment would never come upon them. That is their comfort and assurance. The prophet Isaiah spoke in amazement, *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:5).

Questions:

1. What is the connection between the death of Christ and Genesis 2:17?

2. a. Why did Christ have to be buried?

b. Where in the Bible do we read about His burial?

c. Who buried Him? Read John 19

3. What does it mean that the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus were substitutionary?

4. What is 'abolishing of sin'?

5. a. What is the old nature in a child of God?

b. What must happen to this old nature? Read Romans 6:6

6. a. What does it mean that He descended into hell?

b. What is the comfort of this article?

Evaluator: _____