

Lesson 7

Christ's Death

Good News

In lesson five we learned that all men have sinned against a holy God. Lesson six taught us that sin results in a terrible penalty--eternal suffering in hell. However, we now move on to some very good news! In this lesson we will learn about God's marvelous love for mankind. "But God commendeth his **love** toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The good news in the Bible is that Jesus Christ died for our sins. He paid the penalty for my sin and yours. Many people think that Christ came to earth mainly to set an example or teach us how to live. However, the primary reason for the birth of Jesus Christ was that He might die on the cross for our sins. There are many religions that claim to have wonderful teachings given by some holy man. However, only the Bible tells us that the Son of God came to earth and died for our sins. Jesus Christ "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

The Necessity of the Cross

From man's point of view the crucifixion of Christ may have appeared to be an unfortunate tragedy. However, from God's point of view it was necessary for man's salvation. Those who believe God will recognize the supreme importance of Christ's death. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved **it is the power of God**" (I Corinthians 1:18). It is not enough to teach about the Deity of Jesus Christ, His birth, teachings, good example, etc. We must emphasize the most important event in all of human history--the crucifixion of Christ. "But we preach **Christ crucified**, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (I Corinthians 1:23).

Jesus Christ knew that He would die on the cross and He did so willingly due to His love for man. "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be **killed**, and be raised again the third day" (Matthew 16:21). The death of Christ was not a mistake, but a necessity. "Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be **crucified**, and the third day rise again" (Luke 24:7).

The Meaning of the Cross

Why did Christ die? The Bible repeatedly teaches that He died to pay the penalty for our sins. ("Christ died **for us**" . . . "Christ died **for our sins**" . . . "For he hath made him to be sin **for us**" . . . "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up **for us all**" . . . "Christ also hath loved

us, and hath given himself **for us**")¹ Jesus Christ was not a sinner and did not deserve to die. He died for the sins of others--yours and mine.

God is just and holy. Therefore, He cannot just overlook or excuse sin. When a crime is committed, the law demands that the criminal be punished. Christ's death on the cross fully paid the penalty that the holiness and justice of God demanded. A judge will not be satisfied until the just penalty for the crime has been paid. God, as Judge, is fully satisfied (propitiated) by the death of Christ on the cross. ("Whom God hath set forth to be a **propitiation** through faith in his blood"--Romans 3:25)

Jesus Christ is sometimes referred to as our *Redeemer*. His death on the cross brought *redemption*. This means that Christ purchased God's favor toward us by His death. He has redeemed or delivered us:

- 1) From the penalty of the law "Christ hath redeemed us from **the curse of the law**, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13).
- 2) From the law itself "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become **dead to the law** by the body of Christ . . ." (Romans 7:4).
- 3) From the power of sin "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that **the body of sin might be destroyed** . . ." (Romans 6:6).

Christ Died for All

The death of Christ is very good news for man and it is especially wonderful to know that His death was for *all* men. "Who gave himself a ransom for **all**, to be testified in due time" (I Timothy 2:6). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to **all men**" (Titus 2:11).

Is it not possible for some men to pay their own penalty? Yes, it is possible. However, this will require eternal suffering in hell since the penalty is so great that the debt can never be fully paid by an imperfect, sinful sacrifice. How amazing it is that Christ has completely paid the penalty for our sins! He was the only one who could pay the full price because He was sinless and was fully God and fully man.

Review Questions

True or False

1. Almost all men have sinned against God.

¹ Romans 5:8, I Corinthians 15:3, II Corinthians 5:21, Romans 8:32, Ephesians 5:2

2. God considered the Crucifixion of Christ to be an unfortunate tragedy.
3. Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.
4. Moses is our redeemer.

Multiple Choice

5. Man's choices include:
 - a. Being careful never to sin
 - b. Realizing that God will probably excuse most sin
 - c. Paying the penalty for sin by suffering eternally in hell
 - d. Believing that Christ paid the penalty for our sins
6. The good news in the Bible is that:
 - a. Christ died for our sins
 - b. God will overlook our sins
 - c. Men are basically good
 - d. God is too kind to punish sin
7. Jesus Christ:
 - a. Was very surprised when men came to crucify Him
 - b. Tried to avoid dying on the cross
 - c. Had hoped that His teachings would make men become good
 - d. Knew that He would die on the cross and died willingly for our sins

Fill in the Blanks

8. God cannot just overlook sin because He is ___ and ___.
9. Jesus Christ gave Himself as a ransom for ___.
10. All men are sinners, but Christ ___ for us.

For Further Study

1. A price had to be paid to redeem us. What was the price? (Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14)
2. Does the Old Testament give any indication of Christ's death on the cross? (Isaiah 53:8, Daniel 9:26)

3. How do the following verses confirm that God's plan included the death of His Son? (Isaiah 53:6, Acts 2:23)
4. Can we be certain that Christ died by being crucified? (Matthew 27:35, Mark 15:24)
5. Did Christ die because He was forced, by either God or men, to die? (John 10:17-18)
6. What did Christ have to do in order to bring forgiveness (remission) of sins? (Hebrews 9:22)
7. What information are we given about Jesus Christ in I Corinthians 15:3-4?
8. How is it possible for God to forgive men who lived before Christ died (such as Abraham and Moses)? (Romans 3:25)
9. Who did Christ die for according to the following verses? (Romans 5:6, II Corinthians 5:14, Ephesians 5:25)
10. What was Christ's attitude about dying on the cross? (Hebrews 12:2)

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