

Heidelberg Catechism 40-41- Proof You Were Really, Really Bad

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Your grandma is really, really bad, and so is your mother! Your wife is really, really bad, and so is your daughter! You might not like talk like this about your grandma, mother, wife, or daughter, but it is the truth. Every single person is really, really bad. I hope you believe me because I am telling you what God says in his Holy Word.

I will show you today from God's Word how bad you, your mother, and your sister are as I show you how much Jesus had to do to remove your badness.

Our headings are:

Christ had to provably die for you

Christ had to provably be buried for you

Our goals are: That having **received a full sense of what you deserved and that Christ lovingly and willing took your place, that you will walk worthily before him.**

Christ had to provably die for you

40 Q. WHY DID CHRIST HAVE TO GO ALL THE WAY TO DEATH?

A. Because God's justice and truth demand it: only the death of God's Son **could pay for our sin.**

1. So how bad were you that Jesus had to die for you instead of just taking some milder punishment?

Jesus Christ had to go all the way to death to remove the sins you inherited from your parents and your personal sins.

This condemnation to physical and spiritual death started in Eden.

Genesis 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; **17** "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die."**

Adam and Eve started to die the day they ate from that Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. **God had made Adam out of clay, and the Spirit of God blew on their bodies of clay and they became living beings.** But they sinned and started to die. And everyone born to them from that day starts the long road to death, one day closer every day.

It would take the death of the Savior, who had to take on human flesh and a human soul, for a man to get new life again.

Jesus Christ is a reverse of what happened at creation. At creation, life had to be breathed into the 1st Adam, at the cross, life had to leave the body of the 2nd Adam. This satisfied God's justice.

2. Of course many have difficulty accepting that Jesus really had to fully die. Why?

They want to force God to accept modest human punishments to fulfill his justice. Death seems too much for them as they don't think they that bad.

They think God should be like a father who keeps a bad child at home and still provide food, clothing and shelter for him.

They think God should be like many countries that do not even have the death penalty, arguing that they can rehabilitate criminals by making them penitent and putting them in penitentiaries.

They think God is too severe and he ought to be nicer to everyone – because they think too highly of themselves.

But God demands perfect holiness because he is perfectly holy. You violated Holy God's holy law...a law which reflects his holy nature. And he said that **if you sin you die, unless you have an acceptable substitute,** one better than you.

If God simply accepted money for the poor as a penalty for sins, it would mean that your sins are not so bad. But your sins are a stench in God's nostrils.

3. Further, as important as you think you may be, you couldn't die for yourself and gain eternal life!

That's how bad you were! So you needed someone who would **physically die as a substitute for you** and **was able to raise himself up from the dead** so you could inherit the new life.

Remember when Abraham stood over Isaac with his knife in his hand? The word of the Lord came from heaven saying: "Don't do that." Why? **Abraham could not kill Isaac because Isaac was not qualified to die for Abraham, himself, or anyone else!** Romans 8:3. Only Jesus was qualified. Philippians 2:8.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, **that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.**

4. Now the next question: Can we prove that Jesus really died on the cross for sinners? Yes.

a. The murderers of Jesus, the Romans and the Jews, had no doubt that he really died there.

John 19:32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus **and saw that He was already dead**, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and **immediately blood and water came out**.

Even though these murderers saw Jesus was dead, they wanted further proof. So they **pierced his side with a spear to see if his blood was separating through his blood clotting**. Living blood is warm and red, so when the spear drew blood and water (plasma), it meant the blood was no longer flowing. This was absolute proof Jesus was dead.

b. Jesus' friends and family had no doubt that he really died. John, his beloved friend, testified he saw this himself. **It was John's sorrow, but it is your joy.**

John 19:35 And **he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true**; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.

c. Reasonableness proves that Jesus died. No one wraps a warm breathing body and puts it in a tomb. They would only do that to a body that is cold. And they would not put an injured body in tight strips of cloth and seal it away in a tomb. That would have been certain death and deep cruelty by his own friends.

John 19:40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen **with the spices**, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

But he was so dead that **his friends expected a bad smell from a decaying body on Sunday!**

5. David predicted (Peter confirmed it on Pentecost) that Jesus would fully die, but his body would not rot.

Acts 2:22...Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— 23 "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 "**whom God raised up**, having loosed the pains of death, because it **was not possible that He should be held by it**. 25 "For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, **Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.**

If Jesus did not die, he could not be raised up...and so you would not have life. Jesus' resurrection is what gave you life. **Death could not hold Jesus, so death cannot hold you.** The Good Shepherd laid down his life for the sheep. You were a wayward sheep that was lost and trapped in the mouth of the Devil, but **when Jesus satisfied God's anger for you, God moved you from the lion's mouth.**

Christ had to provably be buried for you

41 Q. WHY WAS HE "BURIED"?

A. His burial testifies that he really died.

1. Jesus Christ was buried from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning, proving he died and met the justice of God, justice that belonged to you, a rotten wicked sinner.

That's how bad you were!

2. This specific burial of Jesus Christ was prophesied by Isaiah 750 years before his death...and Isaiah even prophesied that Messiah would die and be buried with the rich.

Isaiah 53:9 And they made His grave with the wicked—But **with the rich at His death**, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

Look at the fulfillment of God's Word, as Matthew recorded for us.

Matthew 27:57 Now when evening had come, **there came a rich man from Arimathea**, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to

him. 59 When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and **laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock**; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.

Along with **Joseph of Arimathea who buried Jesus**, and his **family and friends who knew exactly where to take spices for his body**, there were **others as well who testified to his burial**... including the new believer, Nicodemus. **Roman soldiers guarded his tomb**. The proof of Jesus burial is further substantiated by giving the **name of the place where Jesus was buried**. Details help to confirm truth.

John 19:38 After this, **Joseph of Arimathea**, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. 39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. 41 Now in the place where He was crucified **there was a garden**, and in the garden a **new tomb** in which no one had yet been laid. 42 So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

And notice how **this was a new tomb in which Jesus Christ was buried**. This was not common. Most people were buried in their family's tomb and one would have expected to find other dead bodies in those tombs. But with a new tomb, **no question could arise about whether it was really a certain person or not**. There was only one body there! **Jesus' burial had to be provable! It confirmed his death!**

Acts 13:29 "Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and **laid Him in a tomb**.

3. Since that day, the church has confessed Jesus not only died, but he was buried, and was resurrected the following Sunday.

We confess that every time we repeat one of our creeds. Don't every let those who criticize you for repeating creeds get under your skin. **We must never stop confessing this fact of Christ's burial, as there is no salvation or no Christianity without Christ's burial!**

1Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day...

4. You are baptized in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

Baptism symbolizes unity. It means that you were in him when he died and rose again...you were spiritually joined with him. So what he accomplished is now credited to your account. This is why you don't die as a punishment for your sins! Your death is simply your entrance into eternal life.

Conclusion:

Man was so bad – so wicked in his total being-**Jesus Christ had to provably die and provably be buried**. Only his complete death **would satisfy God's full anger against man**. Being whipped, starved, mocked, or tortured could not, as bad as they were, have satisfied God's anger.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Amazing Grace! This Amazing Grace was necessary to save a wretch like you.

2. Doesn't this Amazing Grace bring you to tears? Doesn't this make you want to sing, shout, and show the wonders of his name? Don't you want to worship him in the morning, noon, and at night? Of course, it does!

3. Warn those who think they can earn their salvation by giving money to the poor, or starving themselves, or being nice to old people. They can only be saved through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection!

Finally, if you refuse Jesus' death, you will have to die for yourself. But Christ died for all kinds of people and he offers to forgive anyone who would ask. Don't let this opportunity pass you by.