

Heidelberg Catechism 40-41- How Bad Are You?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: How bad is your Mom? Most people think their Moms are good. Rarely would a person say: "My Mom is bad" or "I am really, really bad." And yet, that is the truth about every single person in this world. Your grandma is really, really bad. Your 5th grade teacher was really, really bad. Your wife is really, really bad. Prime Minister Harper is really, really bad. Every single person is really, really bad.

And today, based on the God's Word, and as explained in our Catechism, I want to show you how bad you are. But the way I will show you how bad you are is to show you how much Jesus had to do to remove your badness. You will see that Christ could not simply be embarrassed, or beaten, or crucified and then taken down from the cross, as Muslims believe, but that he had to be fully and provably dead, and he had to be fully and provably buried. Nothing short of that that would be enough punishment to pay for the great degree of your sinfulness.

Our headings are: The Reasons for Christ's Provable Death, and The Reasons for Christ's Provable Burial.

Our goals are: That having received a full sense of what you deserved 你应得的 and that Christ lovingly and willing took what you deserved, and that you will walk worthily 有价值的 before him.

The Reasons for Christ's Provable Death

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 are you? Jesus Christ had to go all the way to death because you deserved death for your inherited sins and your personal sins. Your condemnation to physical death and spiritual death started in the Garden of Eden thousands of years ago.

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 尘土, 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 the day he is born, starts the long road to death, one day closer every day. It is quite a hopeless picture. It would take the death of the Savior, who would have to take the human flesh and a human soul first. Jesus Christ had to let his clay body die, and his soul leave his body...for man to get new life again. Jesus Christ is a reverse of what happened at creation – his life had to leave his body. This satisfied God's justice. This was the crushing of the heel of the Son. This was the crushing of Satan's head.

2. Many have difficulty accepting that Jesus really had to fully die. Why? They take modest human punishments, which are meant to restore, and they want to force God to accept modest human punishments to fulfill his justice. Death seems too much for them. Let me illustrate how they think: When a father spans a child – and he should- he keeps the child in his home and gives him love, food, and comfort – as he should. Even though he knows his child is sinful, he doesn't kill his child. He uses modest punishment and is patient. Another example: When the State punishes someone for a crime the state lets him out of prison once he has served his time. In fact, many countries now do not even have the death penalty anymore, arguing that they can rehabilitate 复原 criminals. So the tendency is to think God's punishment is too severe and that he ought to be nicer to everyone. But God's demands perfect holiness because he is perfectly holy. You are not. You didn't just accidentally break a window and your Father had to pay to fix it. You violated Holy God's holy law...a law which reflects his holy nature. And he says that if you sin you die, unless you have an acceptable substitute that is better than you. If God simply accepted money for the poor as a penalty for sins, it would mean that sins are not so bad. But they are.

3. If you took the justice of God, instead of Jesus Christ, you could not be redeemed. If you died for your sins as God threatened in the Garden of Eden, you would go straight to hell, with no hope of escape, and God's justice would be vindicated 辩白. So you needed someone who would physically die for you and was able to raise himself up from the dead so you could inherit 继承 the new life he offers you as your substitute. Even the best or holiest person would not do. 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. That's what your Lord did!

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

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. Can we then prove that Jesus Christ really died on the cross? **The Bible proves that he did.**

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

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 刺 His side with a spear 枪 and immediately blood and water came out.

Even though these murderers saw that Jesus Christ was dead, they wanted further proof that Jesus indeed was dead. 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. When I worked in a lab and I left blood in a test tube overnight the next day there was a blood clot and pale yellow water-looking plasma 血浆 (91% of which is water). So when the spear drew blood and water, the blood was no longer flowing. It was dead. This is absolute proof that Jesus was dead.

b. Jesus' friends and family had no doubt that he really died. John, his beloved friend, testified that he saw this himself. It was their sorrow, but it was our 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 body that is still breathing 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...with guards there. That would have been certain death anyway...and deep cruelty by his own friends...In fact, Jesus' friends expected a bad smell from a decaying body.

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

5. And wasn't this what David predicted (and what Peter confirmed on the Day of Pentecost) that Jesus would fully die, but his body would not rot 腐烂

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.

But in Verse 23-24, Peter expressed the need for death. 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 Christ and so death cannot hold you since he died for you. The Good Shepherd had to lay down his life for the sheep. You were a wayward 任性 sheep that was lost and then trapped in the mouth of the Devil, but when Jesus satisfied 满足 God's anger for you, God moved you from the lion's mouth.

6. What are the implications of Christ's death. **You are baptized in the death of Christ.** What does that mean? Baptism symbolizes unity. If you were baptized into the death of Christ, it means that you were in him when he died...you were spiritually joined with him. So what he accomplished is now credited 归入 to your account. This is why you don't die as a punishment for your sins!

The Reasons for Christ's Provable Burial

41 Q. WHY WAS HE "BURIED"? A. His burial testifies that he really died.

1. Jesus Christ's burial from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning further proved that he died and further met the justice of God, justice that belonged to you, a rotten wicked sinner.

2. This specific burial of Jesus Christ was prophesied by Isaiah 750 years before his death...and Isaiah even 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 Saint 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 细麻布, 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 Christ, 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. The proof of Jesus burial is further substantiated by giving the name of the place where Jesus was buried.

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 没药和沉香混合的香料, 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 tomb and one would have expected to find many dead bodies in those tombs. But with a new tomb no questions could arise about whether it was really a certain person or not. But there was no confusion. There was only one body there!

As prophesied, everything about Messiah was fulfilled 成全, including his death and burial.

Acts 13:28 "And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. 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. And the church since that day confesses that indeed 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. We must never stop confessing this fact, as there is no salvation or no Christianity without it! And we confess this again today in the Lord's Supper.

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 according to the Scriptures,

Conclusion:

You were so bad – so wicked in your total being - that Jesus Christ had to provably die for you and had to be provably and humiliatingly buried. Only that would satisfy God's full anger against you. Being whipped, starved, mocked, or tortured could not satisfy God's anger. That would not have been enough for you. So Jesus had to go all the way to death and then being buried, to satisfy God's anger.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: 1. See the value of life. It is not cheap. When you hear of 110,000 human beings murdered each year, it should matter. When you hear of thousands who commit suicide, let it move you to action. When you hear of those who are dying of preventable diseases or those who are starving, work to help. 2. Christ's death and his burial were personally for you. Get into your heads and hearts the depth of that truth. If you do, your life will be the richer for it. You will love the Lord more (you can't help loving him more) and you will serve him better. 3. Warn those who think they can earn their salvation by their own works or gain their salvation by inflicting punishment on themselves that they can only be saved through Christ's good works and his suffering!

Finally, if Jesus didn't die for you...if you refuse him...then you will have to die for yourself. That's a choice you will have to make. Do you want to embrace Christ? He died for all kinds of people and he offers forgive to anyone who would receive it. May you receive his offer today.