

# Heidelberg Catechism 40-41- Evidence of How Bad You Were

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. And today, based on the God's Word, and as explained in our Catechism, God will show you this.

**But the way I will show the great degree of your badness is to show you how much Jesus had to do to remove your badness.** (If you look at a bar-b-cue brush that is crushed and blackened with crud, you know how dirty the grill was!) Jesus could not simply be embarrassed, or beaten, or crucified and taken down from the cross before he died, as Muslims believe. He had to be fully and provably dead, and 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:

**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? Jesus Christ had to go all the way to death to remove your inherited sins and your personal sins.**

Your condemnation 定罪 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. **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.

### **2. 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.

**They think God should be like a father who spanks a child,** keeps the child in his home, and gives

him love, food, and comfort after. But the unregenerate 未重生者 **are not God's children but enemies!**

**They think God should be like President Obama** who recently cancelled the sentence of hundreds of convicts, after a little punishment.

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

**Because man thinks highly of himself,** he thinks God is too severe and that he ought to be nicer to everyone.

**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 says 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 sins are not so bad.**

### **3. But you, as important as you think you are, couldn't die for yourself and gain eternal life – only eternal death.**

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 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 prove that Jesus really died on the cross? 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 that Jesus Christ was dead, they wanted further proof. So they **pierced 刺穿 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, it meant the blood was no longer flowing. This is absolute proof 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 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 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 **with the spices**, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

#### **5. David predicted (what Peter confirmed on the Day of Pentecost 五旬节) 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 好牧人 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’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. 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 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, 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. 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 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!

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. 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 信条. 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! (Also, it is likely that those who criticize you for repeating the creeds likely have no idea of the necessity of Christ's burial.) And we confess this 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 ...

**4. You are baptized in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.** Baptism 洗礼 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!

### **Conclusion:**

You were so bad – so wicked in your total being 全人 - that Jesus Christ had to provably die and provably be buried. Only his death would satisfy God's full anger against you. Being whipped, starved, mocked, or tortured could not have satisfied God's anger.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. See the value of physical 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, help them.

**2. See the value for spiritual life. Christ personally died for you because he valued your soul.** 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 giving money to the poor, or starving themselves, or being nice to old people. They can only be saved through Christ's death!

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. But Christ died for all kinds of people and he offers to forgive anyone who would ask.