

“THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST”

INTRODUCTION: *“Christ died for sins, once for all. The just for the unjust...”*, so writes the apostle Peter.

1. *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)*
2. Therein lies the whole Gospel in one verse
 - a. Atoning death
 - b. Victorious resurrection
 - c. Humiliation and exaltation
3. **Westminster Shorter Catechism:** Question 27 and 28
 - a. *Q. 27. Wherein did Christ’s humiliation consist?*
A. Christ’s humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time. (Westminster Shorter Catechism #27)
 - b. *Q. 28. Wherein consisteth Christ’s exaltation?*
A. Christ’s exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day. (Westminster Shorter Catechism #28)
 - c. *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. (1 Cor. 15:1-4)*
4. “Christ *died* for sins.” In those four words is an infinite depth of wisdom, mystery, and wonder.
5. The problem is this: *We have heard this so much, we have read this story so many times, we have seen so many artists’ renditions and have so symbolized the Cross that the full import of these four words has been lost to us.*
6. Jesus *died* because of my sins, your sins and the sins of all His elect people everywhere and over all time. *God in human flesh died...because of me... you...all of us!*
7. **Charles Wesley** attempts to capture the amazing mystery behind this historic and redemptive fact in his hymn “*And Can It Be*”

*And can it be that I should gain
an interest in the Savior's blood?
Died he for me? who caused his pain?*

*For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

*'Tis myst'ry all: Th' Immortal dies:
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
to sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore;
let angel minds inquire no more.*

*No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
and clothed in righteousness divine,
bold I approach th' eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.*

8. What sobering words: “...and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” (John 19:30)
- The old **King James Version**; “...he gave up the ghost.”
 - Jesus was dead.
 - We killed the Son of God, and we did so willingly!

9. **John Charles Ryle**: *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of John*; vol. 3; pp. 364-365.

Above all, let us never forget, as we read of Christ's death, that He died for our sins, as our Substitute. His death is our life. He died that we might live. We who believe on Christ shall live for evermore, sinners as we are, because Christ died for us, the innocent for the guilty. Satan cannot drag us away to everlasting death in hell. The second death cannot harm us. We may safely say, - “Who can condemn me, or slay my soul? I know well that I deserve death, and that I ought to die, because of my sins. But then my blessed Head and Substitute died for me, and when He died, I, His poor weak member, was reckoned to die also. Get thee behind me, Satan, for Christ was crucified and died. My debt is paid, and thou canst not demand it twice over.” - For ever let us bless God that Christ “gave up the ghost,” and really died upon the cross, before myriads of witnesses. That “giving up the ghost” was the hinge on which all our salvation turned. In vain Christ's life and miracles and preaching, if Christ had not at last died for us! We needed not merely a teacher, but an atonement, and the death of a Substitute. The mightiest transaction that ever took place on earth since the fall of man, was accomplished when Jesus “gave up the ghost.” The careless crowd around the cross saw nothing but the common death of a common criminal. But in the eyes of God the Father the promised payment for a world's sin was at last effected, and the kingdom of heaven was thrown wide open to all believers. The finest pictures of the crucifixion that artists have ever painted, give a miserably insufficient idea of what took place when Jesus “gave up the ghost.” They can show a suffering man on a cross, but they cannot convey the least notion of what was really going on, - the satisfaction of God's broken law, the payment of sinners' debt to God, and the complete atonement for a world's sin.

10. Jesus *had* to die on the Cross to atone for sins and to save sinners. There was no other way of salvation. No Plan B for redemption. No escape clause for Christ or for us.

- a. *And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." (Matthew 26:39)*
- b. *And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." (Luke 22:41-42)*
- c. Answer? A) It was **not** possible for Jesus not to die and still save sinners: B) God was **not** willing to save mankind in another manner.
- d. *"And why not?" we ask.*
- e. One simple answer: *The Law of the Universe demands that sin – any one sin or all sin – be punished by death.*
 - i. *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 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." (Genesis 2:16-17)*
 - ii. *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*
 - iii. *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)*

11. *"Too hard!" we cry out. "Not fair!" we whine. "Not Just!" we protest. But God answers our protest.*

- a. Turn to **Ezekiel 18**
- b. *The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.*

"If a man is righteous and does what is just and right— if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual impurity, does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, does not lend at interest or take any profit, withholds his hand from injustice, executes true justice between man and man, walks in my statutes, and keeps my rules by acting faithfully— he is righteous; he shall surely live, declares the Lord GOD.

"If he fathers a son who is violent, a shedder of blood, who does any of these things (though he himself did none of these things), who even eats upon the mountains, defiles his neighbor's wife, oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore the pledge, lifts up his eyes to the idols, commits abomination, lends at interest, and takes profit; shall he then live? He shall not live. He has done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon himself.

"Now suppose this man fathers a son who sees all the sins that his father has done; he sees, and does not do likewise: he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife, does not oppress anyone, exacts no

pledge, commits no robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, withholds his hand from iniquity, takes no interest or profit, obeys my rules, and walks in my statutes; he shall not die for his father's iniquity; he shall surely live. As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what is not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity.

"Yet you say, 'Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?' When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

"But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die.

"Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live." (Ezekiel 18:1-32)

- c. Rule #1: Sin brings death. *"The soul who sins shall die."*
- d. Rule #2: Repentance and righteousness are always an option.
- e. Rule #3: God is just and merciful: *"For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone," declares the Lord, "so turn and live."*

12. It is we who are not just. It is we who are not righteous. It is we who brought sin into the world. It is we who are responsible to do what is right and live.

13. **But we do not.** And for that reason, Jesus Christ steps in as the Second Adam to undo what we have done:

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:19-26)

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6-8)

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:12, 15-19)

14. **Hamartiology** is the study of the doctrine of sin. And such a study tells us that sin brings with it **five side effects**:

- a. The five *parameters* of sin
- b. Known as *The Five P’s* of sin: **The dominion of sin**
 - i. *Penalty*: sin makes us guilty.
 - ii. *Pollution*: sin fills us with shame.
 - iii. *Pathos*: sin causes much suffering.
 - iv. *Power*: sin always leads to death.
 - v. *Perdition*: sin results in the ruin of the soul and to eternal damnation.
- c. The Horror of sin is much greater than Adam and Eve ever imagined...
- d. ...and far worse than you and I can understand.

15. **Jesus Christ died for sins in order to remove all five parameters of sin from mankind.**

16. **John 19:16b-42** is the story of the *crucifixion of Christ* and how Christ bore these 5 *P’s of sin* in his own self in order to destroy sin, once for all.

- a. *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)*
- b. *We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set*

free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:6-14)

- c. *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)*

17. **Notice:** John does not dwell on the *details* of Christ's crucifixion nor do the other evangelists: Matthew, Mark, or Luke.

- a. Matthew: 35 verses; Mark: 20 verses; Luke: 31 verses; and John: 26 verses.
- b. **James Montgomery Boice:** *Gospel of John: vol. 5; pp. 1333-1334.*

We do not want to dwell on the Crucifixion itself, for John does not do so and neither do the other Gospel writers. We need only note that there was no more terrible death than crucifixion. It is interesting, however, that as John tells the story of Christ's crucifixion he does so with great restraint, not at all emphasizing the physical aspects of the Crucifixion. One reason for this is that the physical aspects were well known to his contemporaries and so needed little elaboration. But the more important reason is that John (like the other Gospel writers) has more important things to emphasize.

- c. The **significance** of the crucifixion is its effect upon *sin, sinners, and God.*

I. THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND THE PENALTY FOR SIN (John 19:16b-22)

So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." (John 19:16b-22)

- 1. One thing that happened to Jesus when He became the Savior of sinners is that He bore the **guilt** of sinful men – even though He was **not** actually guilty of any sin.
 - a. *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)*
 - b. Jesus experienced all of fallen human life the same way we do except for one thing...
 - c. *Jesus never sinned*

- d. Nevertheless, Jesus was found guilty of our sin!

*All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all. (Isa. 53:6)*

2. Christ became *guilty* in our place:

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

3. This is why John spends so much time (as do the synoptic authors) in showing the *travesty* of Jesus' trials before...

- a. The High Priest, Herod, the Sanhedrin, and Pontius Pilate
- b. A mockery of justice: an *illegal* Jewish trial – no witnesses on Christ's behalf, not proper procedure
- c. A *legal* trial before a Roman Governor (Procurator) but an unjust decision: Not guilty but condemned to death
- d. "*I find no guilt in Him*" (three times)

Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber. (John 18:38-40)

Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him." (John 19:4-6)

- e. "*I find no guilt in Him...so he delivered Him over to them to be crucified.*"

4. These **trials** of Christ are permitted by God for four reasons:

- a. To establish the innocence of Christ
- b. To display the injustice of the world
- c. To set forth the guilt Christ bears for us
- d. To remind us that sin has **legal consequences** both before God and before men.

5. There is a new stream of theology that downplays the *forensic* or *legal* dimension of Christ's atonement and our justification. But the authors of the New Testament will **not** let us forget this truth.

- a. God is judge and sinners are guilty.
- b. Christ is sent to die for sins in order to accomplish two things.

- i. **Propitiation:** to satisfy the justice of God and to soothe the Divine Wrath

- ii. *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.* (1 John 2:1-2)

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:23-26)

- iii. **Expiation:** to cover the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ

- 6. The result? Christ's righteousness is *imputed* to the believer and the believer's sin and guilt is *imputed* to Christ:

- a. Double imputation (*the divine transfer*)
- b. A legal process: *Christ declared guilty though indeed He is not; sinners declared righteous though indeed they are not.*
- c. The legal aspects of sin and salvation

For until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. (Romans 5:13 NASB)

And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness. (Romans 4:5)

- d. The result is our declaration of **forgiveness** in Christ!
 - i. *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* (Romans 8:1)
 - ii. Guilty and condemned? No!
 - iii. Christ has borne our guilt and paid our penalty.

- 7. We are not free to turn salvation and justification into a psychological healing, a covenantal relationship or a communal benefit. *Salvation and Justification involves law, law-breaking, guilt, condemnation and legal punishment.*

- 8. **Truth we must face:** No one ever "get's away" with sin. Someone always pays for it – now, later or on Calvary. The wages of sin's guilt is death. Christ pays our penalty because Christ bears our guilt. Christ was put on trial, unjustly, and found guilty, unfairly, in your place. Christ was tried by God and graciously punished so you might escape your own guilt.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)

II. THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND THE POLLUTION OF SIN (John 19:18, 23-24)

There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things. (John 19:18, 23-24)

1. Sin always involves great **shame**. It is, quite frankly, embarrassing, humiliating and demeaning to be caught in sin.
2. There is a *dirtiness* that belongs to sin that theologians describe as...
 - a. Depravity, defilement, decadence
 - b. They speak of sin's **pollution**: *The contamination with the stain, shame and debilitating spiritual sickness of sin.*
 - c. **Total depravity**: Every facet of a person's being that has been defiled and damaged by sin.
 - i. *We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. (Isa. 64:6)*
 - ii. *Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." (Zech. 3:1-4)*
 - iii. *In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. (Isa. 4:2-4)*
 - iv. *"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. (Mal. 3:1-2)*
3. This may be the surest evidence of our depravity of mind: *We consider honorable, fun and even good for us the very things that God says are our shame...sin!*
 - a. Adultery, fornication and homosexuality are *perversions* that we consider "harmless," "sexy," or "normal."

- b. We glory in material things and are embarrassed by spiritual things.
 - c. We'd rather our pastors be "cool" and worldly, like us, than godly – "geeks."
 - d. We laugh at filthy talk but blush at Jesus' name.
 - e. We are uncomfortable in church but at home in a drinking den.
4. *I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. (Daniel 9:4-8)*
5. To atone for our sin, Jesus Christ needed to bear our **shame** by becoming **polluted** with our sinful filth. To be blunt: *The cross was horribly humiliating to Jesus Christ.*
- a. Beaten and treated with cruel contempt
 - b. Marching through town with a cross-beam and to the jeers of the crowd
 - c. Stripped completely naked before the public
 - d. Crucified between two condemned thieves, murderers and insurrectionists
 - e. Rejected by the people in favor of Barabbas
- He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors. (Isa. 53:3, 12)*
- f. "numbered with the transgressors": the fellowship of shame; the two thieves, all of us
6. The **humiliation of sin** is part of the wages of sin that Jesus Christ bears for us: *The Lord of Glory put to open shame for you and for me!*
- For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. (Hebrews 6:4-6 NASB)*

7. **This is why** Christian parents, Christian pastors and Christian Churches do not practice *shame* nor visit *humiliation* upon sinners. Jesus has already been shamed for our sins! We do not punish with shame!
- a. *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:1-2)*
 - b. *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)*
 - c. Paul warned the Corinthians against shaming a fallen brother who was repentant:
Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. (2 Corinthians 2:5-8)
 - d. Do we discipline? Yes. Do we sometimes suspend people from the Lord's Table? Yes. Do we even excommunicate people? Sadly, sometimes, yes.
 - e. *But we do so as privately as possible with as little shame as possible, hoping to move them to repentance and out of their embarrassing sins.*
8. God is not a God of *shame*, but rather a God of *mercy*...
- a. *Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (Isa. 1:18)*
 - b. **Elvina M. Hall:** *"Jesus Paid It All" – "Jesus paid it all; all to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow."*
 - c. *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)*

III. THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND THE PATHOS OF SIN (John 19:25-27)

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. (John 19:25-27)

1. Sin always causes **suffering**. That is why this section of Scripture – John 18-19 – is called the *Passion of Christ*.
 - a. There is a **pathos** to sin.
 - b. “*Pathetic*”: one reduced by pathos/suffering to a pitiful and pitiable state
 - c. Jesus suffered physical, social, emotional, and spiritual pathos as He suffered for our sins.
2. Two classic Old Testament Scriptures foretold of this great suffering, by Christ, due to our sin:

- a. *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*

*Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?
O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.*

*Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.
To you they cried and were rescued;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*

*But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.
All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;
"He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"*

*Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.
On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother's womb you have been my God.
Be not far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is none to help.*

*Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.*

*I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.*

*For dogs encompass me;
 a company of evildoers encircles me;
 they have pierced my hands and feet—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me;
 they divide my garments among them,
 and for my clothing they cast lots.* (Psalm 22:1-18)

b. John quotes from Psalm 22:18 in this passage:

c. *He was despised and rejected by men;
 a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
 and as one from whom men hide their faces
 he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

*Surely he has borne our griefs
 and carried our sorrows;
 yet we esteemed him stricken,
 smitten by God, and afflicted.
 But he was wounded for our transgressions;
 he was crushed for our iniquities;
 upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
 and with his stripes we are healed.
 All we like sheep have gone astray;
 we have turned—every one—to his own way;
 and the LORD has laid on him
 the iniquity of us all.*

*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
 yet he opened not his mouth;
 like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
 and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
 so he opened not his mouth.*

*By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
 and as for his generation, who considered
 that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
 stricken for the transgression of my people?
 And they made his grave with the wicked
 and with a rich man in his death,
 although he had done no violence,
 and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

*Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
 he has put him to grief;
 when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
 he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
 the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and
 be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
 make many to be accounted righteous,
 and he shall bear their iniquities.*

*Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors. (Isa. 53:3-12)*

3. Christ's suffering (passion/pathos) was *infinitely* horrible because of the weight of the whole world's sin upon His soul and the infinite capacity of His soul for response to God, sin, and punishment.
4. There was no way for God to atone for sin without *hurting* Jesus Christ, for our sake.
5. And there is often no other way to deal with our sins against others without it hurting a lot of people.
6. *But because of Calvary suffering turns to healing!*

*Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his stripes we are healed. (Isa. 53:4-5)*

IV. THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND THE POWER OF SIN (John 19:28-37)

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness— his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They will look on him whom they have pierced." (John 19:28-37)

1. Sin carries with it great **power**, and that power is **death**.

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. (1 Corinthians 15:56)

2. In fact, there is no greater power than death except for the power of Christ's resurrected life and His atoning death:
 - a. *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:*

*"Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory?
O death, where is your sting?"*

*The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us
the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)*

- b. *We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has
dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he
lives to God. (Romans 6:9-10)*
- c. *The last enemy to be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15:26)*
3. For all the wages of sin to be paid, Jesus had to **die**.
4. **Please Note:** Nothing *kills* Jesus. Christ gave up His own life, in His own way, and in His own time.
 - a. **KJV:** *"He gave up the ghost"*
 - b. **ESV:** *"He gave up His Spirit"*
 - c. *Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my
spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:46)*
 - d. i.e., Jesus released His soul to God in heaven (*"This day you shall be with Me in paradise"*)
when He had paid the full penalty, borne the full measure of shame, suffered all sins'
ravages.
 - e. *"It is finished":* Greek *tetelestai*: "Paid in full!"
5. Then, *"The last enemy to be conquered is death"* Jesus grabbed hold of death and took it into the
grave with Him.
 - a. **John Owen:** *"The death of death is the death of Christ"*
 - b. Jesus broke the power of sin when He broke the power of death in His resurrection.
6. **St. Augustine** (*Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of John: J.C. Ryle; vol. 3; p. 364; footnote*)
*Not against His will did the Saviour's spirit leave His flesh, but because He would, and when He
would, and how He would. Who is there that can even go to sleep when he will, as Jesus died when
He would? Who thus puts off his clothes when he will, as Jesus unclothed Himself of His flesh when
He would? Who goes thus out of the door when he will, as Jesus, when He would, went out of the
world?"*
7. But the atonement from sin was not yet complete. One thing was lacking: Sin's *perdition*

V. THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND THE PERDITION OF SIN (John 19:38-42)

*After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was 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 away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture
of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it*

in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. 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. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. (John 19:38-42)

1. In death, Jesus' body was separated from His soul. His body was dead; His soul was alive. Jesus lived in the "intermediate state" for 38 or 39 hours.
2. **Intermediate state:** That condition of life where one's soul is in heaven with God, while our body awaits in the grave the day of resurrection.
 - a. In Hebrew: *sheol* (grave; place of the dead)
 - b. In Greek: *hades* (netherworld, underworld, place of the death)
 - c. In Latin: *inferiorum* (world of shadows; place of the dead)
 - d. In Old English: *hell* (the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of sheol or hades or inferiorum – the place of the disembodied dead)
 - e. **Apostles' Creed:** "He descended into hell"
 - i. Does **not** mean that Jesus was punished in hell's torment or fire
 - ii. Nor does it mean Jesus went to hell to preach to the condemned people or fallen angels there
 - f. **James I. Packer:** "Growing in Christ; p. 56.
The English is misleading, for "hell" has changed its sense since the English form of the Creed was fixed. Originally, "hell" meant the place of the departed as such, corresponding to the Greek Hades and the Hebrew Sheol. That is what it means here, where the Creed echoes Peter's statement that Psalm 16:10, "thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades," was a prophecy fulfilled when Jesus rose. But since the seventeenth century "hell" has been used to signify only the state of final retribution for the godless, for which the New Testament name is Gehenna. What the Creed means, however, is that Jesus entered, not Gehenna, but Hades—that is, that he really died, and that it was from a genuine death, not a simulated one, that he rose. Perhaps it should be said that "descended" does not imply that the way from Palestine to Hades is down into the ground, any more than "rose" implies that Jesus returned to surface level up the equivalent of a mine shaft! The language of descent is used because Hades, being the place of the disembodied, is lower in worth and dignity than is life on earth, where body and soul are together and humanity is in that sense whole.
 - g. The **final stage of Christ's humiliation;** Jesus' downward movement from glory to the Cross...
 - i. Birth in human flesh as a man
 - ii. Subjection to sinful parents, rabbis, and authorities
 - iii. Bad treatment by those to whom ministered
 - iv. The opposition of the Jews (disrespect)
 - v. Betrayal, false trials, abuse, condemnation

- vi. Suffering and crucifixion
- vii. Death, burial, body in the tomb

h. **Westminster Larger Catechism; Q. #50**

Q. 50. Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death?

A. Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day; which hath been otherwise expressed in these words descended into hell. (WLC #50)

3. Here is Christ's final *degradation* due to our sins: He lay in a borrowed grave, body separated from Spirit (soul) for the better part of 38 hours: 3:00 pm Friday to sunrise on Sunday.
4. Jesus, as a "criminal" should have been buried in the common grave for "defiled" persons. Only the heroic actions of two members of the Sanhedrin, **Joseph of Arimathea** and **Nicodemus**, prevent this from happening.

- a. Yes, the same **Nicodemus** of chapter 3...

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (John 3:1-5)

- b. Two Pharisees who have become converts of Christ
- c. **D. A. Carson:** *Gospel of John: Pillar NTC; p. 629.*

Under Roman law, the bodies of executed criminals were normally handed over to their next of kin, but not so in the case of those crucified for sedition. They were left to the vultures, the culminating indignity and shame. The Jews never refused to bury any executed criminal, but instead of allowing the bodies of such sinners to be placed in family tombs, where they might desecrate those already buried, they provided a burial site for criminals just outside the city. Doubtless the request of the authorities that the bodies be taken down (v. 31) assumed that they be buried in this common grave. As a member of the Sanhedrin, however, Joseph used his rank to gain access to Pilate, and thus stood out from his fellow councilors. Only John mentions the part Nicodemus played. Nicodemus was most likely himself a member of the Sanhedrin and the Evangelist takes pains to call to mind one of his previous appearances in the Fourth Gospel – he is the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. John may be telling us that by this action Nicodemus shows he is stepping out of the darkness and emerging into the light.

5. Jesus pays the *full price* for our sins. He even remains in a disembodied state (for 3 days) – soul torn from body – as we will remain for years, or even ages, between our death and resurrection.
6. **Please note:** Just as the first Adam ended eternal life and brought death into the world in a garden (Eden), so the last Adam brings death to an end and eternal life to the world in a garden.

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. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. (John 19:41-42)

7. A note of calmness and sadness ends this terrible story of the *Crucifixion of Christ*.
 - a. *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)*
 - b. *“put to death in the flesh”* – a dead body in a grave
 - c. *“made alive again in the Spirit”* - resurrection to new life
8. **This man, Jesus, honored as a dead prophet would soon emerge from the grave as the glorified and living Lord of all.**
9. **Lesslie Newbigin:** *The Light Has Come; p. 260.*

Jesus is dead, and those who perform the last rites do so in the belief that the story is finished. It is dangerous to follow a living prophet, but safe and pious to honor a dead one. The good work must be done before the Sabbath begins. They do not know that it will be the last Sabbath of the old creation and that on the first day of the week a new creation will begin. The Word through whom all things were made cannot be consigned to the past and cannot become merely the object of pious reverence but will be the living subject who rises from the dead to become the author of life to all who believe. Reverence for a dead prophet is part of the old creation. Joseph, Nicodemus, and the costly materials of their devotion still belong to the world which is passing away. That chapter comes to an end on the Sabbath when Jesus lies in the tomb. A new creation will come forth from the tomb, and then the only fitting attitude to him who is its author will be “My Lord and my God!”

CONCLUSION: Christ died for sins...

1. And in so doing, He paid the full and complete wages of sin for those who believe in Him as the Lord of glory...
 - a. The *penalty* of our guilt and condemnation
 - b. The *pollution* of our shame and depravity
 - c. The *pathos* of all sin’s sorrows and sufferings
 - d. The *power* of sin, known as death
 - e. The *perdition* of sin: separation of soul from body
2. That last payment made by Christ is still outstanding: **Perdition**
 - a. Those who prefer to honor Jesus as a nice, good and godly dead prophet will suffer *eternal perdition*.
 - b. *Perdition:* The ruin of the soul, damnation to hell, separation from God forever

- c. *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:41, 46)*
- d. Those who believe in Jesus as God in the flesh, the Savior of sinners and the resurrected Lord of glory will enter into eternal life.
- e. *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)*

3. John and his fellow evangelists do not go into great detail concerning Christ's crucifixion.

4. And there is much about Christ's atonement that remains a deep mystery of the **Covenant of Redemption** between the Father and the Son.

5. But, this we know, by the word of the apostles:

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)

6. And those who believe in this truth join with a myriad of voices in heaven to sing the new song of the Lamb!

a. *And they sang a new song, saying,*

*"Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth."*

Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" (Revelation. 5:9-13)

b. **Charles Wesley:** *"O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing!"*

*O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!
Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life, and health, and peace.
He breaks the power of canceled sin,
he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean;*

*his blood availed for me.
He speaks, and listening to his voice,
new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.
Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,
your loosened tongues employ;
ye blind, behold your savior come,
and leap, ye lame, for joy.*