

The Death of Christ



Lord's Day 16: Heidelberg Catechism



Heidelberg, Germany

A Quick Overview

I. Misery

II. Deliverance

God the Father



God the Son

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Sacraments

Holy Baptism

The Holy Supper of Jesus Christ

III. Gratitude

The Ten Commandments

The Lord's Prayer

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended to heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

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Last Week:

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way?

Yes. By this I am convinced that he
shouldered the curse which lay on me,
since death by crucifixion was cursed
by God.

Tonight's Questions:

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40. Why did Christ have to suffer death?

Because God's justice and truth require it: nothing else could pay for our sins except the death of the Son of God.

Our Death & His Death

“...but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

Genesis 2:17

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:8

A Substitutionary Death

But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. **Hebrews 2:9**

Our Sin, Condemned in the Flesh

For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. **Romans 8:3-4**

41. Why was he buried?

His burial testifies that he really died.

Dead and Buried

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds...

Dead and Buried

Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

John 19:38-42

Died, Buried, and Raised

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Acts 15:3,4

The Tomb of Christ

He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Isaiah 53:9

When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. Acts 13:29

42. Since Christ has died for us,
why do we still have to die?

Our death does not pay the debt of our sins. Rather, it puts an end to our sinning and is our entrance into eternal life.

From Death to Life in Christ

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.

John 5:24

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;

Philippians 1:21-23

Eternal Life with Christ

For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

I Thessalonians 5:9-10

43. What further benefit do we receive from Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross?

By Christ's power our old selves are crucified, put to death, and buried with him, so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer rule us, but that instead we may offer ourselves as a sacrifice of gratitude to him.

United with Him in Death

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin...

United with Him in Death

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. **Romans 6:5-11**

Instruments of Righteousness

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Romans 6:12-14

Living Sacrifice/Fragrant Offering

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **Romans 12:1**

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:1-2

44. Why does the creed add,
“He descended to hell”?

To assure me during attacks of deepest dread and temptation that Christ my Lord, by suffering unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul, on the cross but also earlier, has delivered me from hellish anguish and torment.

Unspeakable Anguish

And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. **Luke 22:44**

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

Matthew 27:45-46

Just to let you know...

The doctrine of Christ's descent into hell was unusual, and perhaps unique, in its ability to undermine and cut across confessional allegiances. Although Catholics, Lutherans and Reformed all contributed to the debate, it was a topic on which party lines shifted. In an era which we are used to thinking of as marked by confessional certainty, . . . [this is] an area of Christian doctrine in which the confessional compasses spun out of control.

David Bagchi, *“Christ's Descent into hell in Reformation Controversy”*

Another Reformed Perspective

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, *He descended into hell.*

Westminster Larger Catechism, Q/A 50

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

The frequent New Testament affirmations that Jesus was "raised from the dead" presuppose that the crucified one sojourned in the realm of the dead prior to his resurrection. This was the first meaning given in the apostolic preaching to Christ's descent into hell: that Jesus, like all men, experienced death and in his soul joined the others in the realm of the dead. But he descended there as Saviour, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there.

Perhaps a better explanation?

Christ descended into Hades so that you and I would not have to. Christ descended to Hades so that we might ascend to heaven. Christ entered the realm of death, the realm of the strong enemy, and came away with his keys. The keys of Death and Hades are now in our Savior's hands. And God his Father has exalted him to his right hand, and given him another key, the key of David, the key to the heavenly Jerusalem. He opens and no one will shut, he shuts and no one will open (Rev. 3.7).

"He Descended into Hell," Charles E. Hill, RTS
Orlando, FL

The Source of our Salvation

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 5:7-10



Let us
pray