

The Death Of Jesus Christ On The Cross: What Does It Mean To Us ?

Jesus the Christ has given an open invitation to all of the human race. *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest,”* [Matthew 11:28-30].

No matter what may be your special burden, need or problem, God has an answer for you.

But there is **only one place you will be able to find the answer**, when you understand the power that is available through the sacrifice of Jesus the Christ on the cross nearly 2,000 years ago.

The entire message of The Good News that is found in the New Testament in your Bible revolves around one unique historical event; the sacrificial death of Jesus the Christ on the cross.

Philippians 4:19 [NIV] *“And my God will meet **all your needs** according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”*

The words *“all your needs”* covers every aspect of your lives; physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

God has **not** provided many different solutions for the multitude of problems humanity has, but offers us one all-sufficient solution. By one climatic act, God provided for all the needs of suffering humanity, one all-sufficient solution.

To find rest from our trials and peace of mind we all have to look to and have faith in one thing, the sacrifice of Jesus the Christ, on the cross.

This great act by God predicted some 700 years before it happened through the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 53:6 [NIV] *“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him [the Messiah to come, Jesus the Christ] the iniquity of us all.”*

Here is the basic, universal problem of all humanity, we have turned, each one of us, to our own way and in doing so have turned our backs on our Creator God.

The Hebrew word translated here *“iniquity”* is *“avon”* and in its full meaning describes rebellion but also the punishment and evil consequences that accompanies rebellion against God. This same word *“avon”* is translated twice in **Lamentations 4:6** and **22** by the phrase *“the punishment of iniquity”*.

Isaiah 53:9 [NIV] *“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.”*

Jesus himself was not guilty of any sin, yet on him was laid by God the evil consequences of **our** rebellion. Here is the true meaning and purpose of the cross; on the cross Jesus endured the evil consequences that were justly due to us.

As a result of our rebellion, Jesus on the cross endured what was due to us so that we can then share with Him what is justly due to him for his sinlessness.

Isaiah 53:4-5 [NIV] *“Surely He took up our infirmities, and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.”*

Two truths are mentioned in this passage.

Spiritually Jesus received the punishment due to us for our transgressions and iniquities, that we in turn may be at peace with God, by being forgiven.

Romans 5:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”*

Physically Jesus bore our sicknesses and pains that we through His wounds may be healed.

Matthew 8:16-17 [NIV] *“When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to Him and He drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah. He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.”*

1 Peter 2:24 [NIV] *“He Himself bore our sins in His Body on the tree, so that we might die to sins, and live for righteousness, by His Wounds you have been healed”.*

<p>Summary:- Jesus was punished that we might be forgiven. Jesus was wounded that we might be healed.</p>
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Isaiah 53:10 [NIV] *“Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a **guilt offering**, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.”*

Jesus was made “a *guilt offering*” – an offering for sin.

This may be understood in the light of the Mosaic ordinances for various forms of sin offering.

The person who had sinned was required to bring a sacrificial offering, a sheep, goat, bull or some other animal, to the priest.

He would then confess his sin over the offering, and the priest would symbolically transfer the sin he had confessed from the person to the animal.

The animal would then be killed, thus paying the penalty for the sin that had been transferred to it.

These sacrifices foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

John 1:29, 36 [NIV] *“The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” ... “When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”*

Isaiah 53:12 [NIV] *“... because He poured out His life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, for He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.”*

2 Corinthians 5:21 [NIV] *“God made Him sin who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the Righteousness of God.”*

None of us can ever earn this righteousness for it is the Righteousness of God, far above any righteousness we could ever achieve by our own efforts.

<p>Summary:- Jesus was made sin with our sinfulness that we might be made righteous with His Righteousness.</p>
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Both the Old Testament and the New Testament emphasise that the final outcome of sin is eternal death.

Ezekiel 18:4 [NIV] *“The soul who sins is the one who will die”.*

James 1:15 [NIV] *“... sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”*

When Jesus became identified with our sin, it was inevitable that He should also experience the death which was the outcome of sin.

Hebrews 2:9 [NIV] *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the Grace of God, He might taste death for everyone.”*

Jesus bore the sin of all men, and so died the death due to all men.

Now all who in faith accept His substitutionary sacrifice are offered the gift of eternal life.

Romans 6:23 [NIV] *“For the wages of sin is death, but the Gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Summary: Jesus died our death that we might receive His Life.
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2 Corinthians 8:9 [NIV] *“For you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”*

When did Jesus become poor?

During Jesus' earthly ministry at no time did He or His Disciples lack anything.

Luke 22:35 [NIV] *“Then Jesus asked them, “When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?” “Nothing,” they answered.”*

They made a regular practice of giving to the poor.

John 12:4-8; 13:29 [NIV] *“But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, “Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.” He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “[It was intended] that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.” ... “Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor.”*

Was a man who could feed 5,000 men (plus women and children) to be considered poor by normal standards!

Jesus exactly exemplified “abundance” as defined in the Bible; He always had all He needed to do the Will of God in His own life and enough over to continually give to others not so blessed, and His supply was never exhausted.

So when did Jesus become poor?

The answer is on the cross.

Deuteronomy 28:48 [NIV] *“therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies the LORD sends against you. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you.”*

Moses summed up absolute poverty.

On the cross Jesus was:-

- a) Hungry – not eaten for 24 hours.
- b) Thirsty – **John 19:28** [NIV] *“Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”*

One of His last words.

- c) Naked – **John 19:23** [NIV] *“When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.”*

The soldiers had taken all of his clothes.

- d) Dire poverty – **Luke 23:50-53** [NIV] *“Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no-one had yet been laid.”*

After death He was buried in borrowed robe in a borrowed tomb.

2 Corinthians 9:8 [NIV] *“And God is able to make all **grace** abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work”.*

Note: This is by God’s Grace.

Very often our “*abundance*” will be like that of Jesus while He was on earth. We will **not** carry large amounts of money in our pocket or our bank account, but from day to day we will have enough for our needs, and something over for the needs of others.

Summary:- Jesus endured poverty that we might share in His abundance.
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Two of the most cruel emotional wounds that are brought on us by our iniquity are shame and rejection.

Shame can vary in intensity from acute embarrassment to a cringing sense of unworthiness that cuts a person off from meaningful fellowship either with God or with man.

Hebrews 12:2 [NIV] *“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross scorning its shame.”*

Speaking of Jesus on the cross.

Execution on the cross was the most shameful of all forms of death, reserved for the lowest class of criminal. The person to be executed was stripped naked, and exposed to the gaze and mocking of all passers-by.

Matthew 27:35-44 [NIV] *“When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.”*

In place of this shame which Jesus bore for us, remember we should have been there on the cross instead of Him. God intends us to share with Jesus His eternal glory.

Hebrews 2:10 [NIV] *“In bringing many sons to glory, it is fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation [Jesus Christ] perfect through suffering.”*

The shame that Jesus endured on the cross has opened the way for all who trust in Him to be released from their own shame. Not only that, but then He shares with us the glory which belongs to Him by eternal right.

John 17:5 [NIV] *“And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”*

There is another emotional wound that can be even more agonising than shame; that is rejection. Usually this stems from some form of broken relationship.

Earliest forms of rejection:-

A pregnant woman who entertains negative feelings towards the infant in her womb.

The child may be born with a sense of rejection that can last a lifetime.

Young children feel rejected by parents, in negative ways of harsh treatment or merely a failure to show the love and acceptance they need.

The break-up of a marriage, elderly parents neglected by grown-up children, all these cause deep pains of rejection.

God’s provision for the healing of the wound of rejection is through Jesus His Son on the cross experiencing total rejection.

Matthew 27:46, 50 [NIV] *“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken me’ ... “and when Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His Spirit.”*

For the first time in the history of the universe, the Son of God called out to His Father and received no response.

So fully was Jesus identified with our iniquity that the uncompromising Holiness of God caused Him to reject even His own Son, rejection in the most agonising form, rejection of a son by a father.

But what did this rejection open up to us? Read on...

Matthew 27:51 [NIV] *“At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”*

This symbolically demonstrated that the way had been opened up for sinful man to enter into direct fellowship with a Holy God. The rejection of Jesus had opened up the way for us to be accepted by God as His Children.

Ephesians 1:5-6 [NIV] *“He predestined us to be adopted as His Sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will, to the praise of His Glorious Grace, which He has freely given us in the One He Loves [Jesus Christ].”*

God’s remedy for shame and rejection has never been more desperately needed than it is today.

We are the ones that God wants to use to bring this to people crying out for acceptance.

Summary:- Jesus bore our shame that we might share in His Glory. Jesus endured our rejection that we might have His acceptance with the Father.

There is one final climatic aspect of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 [NIV] *“If a man guilty of a capital offence is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because **anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse.** You must not desecrate the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.”*

Galatians 3:13-14 [NIV] *“**Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written ‘cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree’.** He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the Promise of the Spirit.”*

Deuteronomy 28:15-68 Gives us an exhaustive list of blessings and curses associated with the law.

These curses may be summed up as follows:-

Humiliation - barrenness - unfruitfulness - mental and physical sickness - family breakdown - poverty - defeat - oppression - failure - God’s disfavour

Do some of these words apply to areas of your life?

To appreciate the full horror of the curse that came upon Jesus, instead of us, as we try to picture Christ as He hung there on the cross.

- a) Rejected
- b) Betrayed by one of His Disciples
- c) Abandoned by the rest of His Disciples
- d) Hung naked high up for all to gaze on
- e) His Body wracked by the pain of innumerable wounds
- f) Weighed down by the guilt of all humanity
- g) Rejected by His Father
- h) The sun withdrew its light
- i) His Life Blood ebbing out into the dusty soil at the foot of the cross

Summary:- Jesus became a curse that we might enter into a blessing.

Yet out of this physical and mental darkness, just before He expired, He gave out one final triumphant cry **“IT IS FINISHED”**

This single Greek word used here could be rendered *“It is completely complete”* or *“It is perfectly perfect.”*

Jesus had taken upon Himself every evil consequence that the rebellion in us had brought on us.

He had exhausted every curse of God’s broken law.

All this that we in turn might freely receive every blessing due to His perfect obedience.

Such a sacrifice is stupendous in its scope, yet marvellous in its simplicity.

<p>Summary:- All we have to do is to repent of the rebel that we are and in faith accept this supreme sacrifice of love that God made for us through Jesus Christ.</p>

All this can be summed up in one word, "*Salvation*".