

#4

GOD'S SUPREME SACRIFICE FOR YOU

The cross was invented approximately 600 years before Christ by the Phoenicians. It was then adopted by the Egyptians and later the Romans who refined it and used it to execute runaway slaves and their worst criminals.

Crucifixion was the most painful and shameful instrument of execution ever practiced by man. It would typically take between three to seven days to die on the cross. Gangrene would form in your hands and feet where rusty nails have pierced. The pain would be excruciating as every joint of your body felt torn apart. Death ultimately would come by suffocation. You could not exhale without raising your body up. And when you did the pain was unbearable. In the shame of nakedness you were exposed to the cold at night and in the daytime you were exposed to the heat.

But what is it that makes Christ's death the supreme sacrifice above all other deaths? Many martyrs have suffered horrible deaths, some in ways that at least outwardly appear more agonizing than the death of the cross. In this lesson, we will explore these and other questions.

1. What did the chief priests and officers cry out when Pilate presented Christ to them? John 19:5-7

Note: Pilate, who represented Rome, found no fault in Jesus, so the Jews had to give a reason why they were demanding Jesus' crucifixion. They said that they had a law that condemned Christ to death. The law they were referring to was the law of blasphemy.

2. According to the law of blasphemy the Jews were referring to, what method of death was stipulated? Leviticus 24:16

*Note: In John 10:30-33, we see the Jews taking up stones **again** to stone Jesus when He said, "The Father and I are one." This proved they were aware that stoning was the method of death for blasphemy.*

3. Why then did the Jews demand Christ be crucified, which to the Jews was synonymous to hanging on a tree? (See Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29) Deuteronomy 21:22, 23

4-2

*Note: When the Jews cried out “crucify Him” they were not only demanding that Christ be put to death, but they were demanding that God’s curse be upon Him. To a Jew when one is hung on a tree they could not offer a prayer of forgiveness for all the sins he committed because he was **forever separated** from God. He was accursed. Thus those who see a man hanging between heaven and earth, would conclude him abandoned of both, and unworthy of either. This is what they wanted for Christ!*

4. How has Christ redeemed us? Galatians 3:13

*Note: God made Christ to be a curse for us. **He felt the guilt of the whole world** while on that tree.*

5. Did Jesus know that He would have to become a curse for us in order to save us? Matthew 26:36-46

Note: God could not remove the curse from Christ because He loved us and that was the only way He could save us. “He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.” This shows us how very much the Father loves us as well.

6. Who raised Jesus from the dead? Acts 5:30; 1 Corinthians 6:14; Galatians 1:1

Note: Jesus was totally dependent on His Father while in this world and He was no less dependent on the Father for His resurrection also.

7. What remarkable thing does Jesus exclaim upon His death? Mark 15:33-37

*Note: The plan was that Jesus would die for the human race and then the Father would raise Him up. **But, Jesus is crying out to His Father that He feels abandoned. What has gone wrong with the plan? Here is the point to the entire sacrifice right here...He feels that the offense of the sins of the whole world is too great for the Father to accept in His sacrifice. He does not feel his Father’s presence any longer. The hope of the resurrection went with that abandonment. He could not save both the world and Himself. He had to choose between the world and Himself...AND HE STILL GOES THROUGH WITH IT!!!***

4-3

Do you know what He is saying in this act? That He loves us more than He loves Himself! That He was willing to die eternally without the hope of resurrection so that we could live. That He was willing to be eternally separated from His Father whom He had been together in fellowship from eternity. That He was willing to sacrifice never being able to see His Father's face again, in order that we would be saved. That is how much He loved us. This is the depth of His supreme sacrifice for us.

In Psalms 22 we read the remarkable account of a crucifixion and the very words that Jesus uttered before He died. This account gives us a clue into the deep emotional pain that wracked His heart while on the cross.

8. How does Jesus describe Himself in verse 6? _____

9. What has Christ done to show us the love of God? 1 John 3:16

Note: Jesus laid down His life and was willing to be blotted out of existence that we might live in His place. This is how much the cross demonstrated God's love for us sinners. By this supreme sacrifice Jesus was telling us sinners that He loves us more than Himself.

10. How should this supreme sacrifice affect us?

1 John 4:19; 2 Corinthians 5: 14, 15 _____

Conclusion: When we see the love that Christ had in choosing us over Himself it awakens love in us. This is the right motivation for accepting Christ. Because He has shown us how much He loves us we can begin to slowly start to trust Him with our hearts and lives.

ANSWER KEY TO LESSON #4

Q. 1- Crucify Him

Q. 2- stoning

Q. 3- they wanted Him cursed of God

Q. 4- by being made a curse for us

Q. 5- Yes

Q. 6- The Father

Q. 7- “My God, my God why have you forsaken Me?”

Q. 8- a worm

Q. 9- He laid down His life for us

Q. 10- It begins to draw us to Him