

## **“God So Loved The World” Bible Study**

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)*

### **Study #5: The Cross of Christ**

In our last study we looked at the cross in the light of the supreme sacrifice Christ made in behalf of the fallen human race. In this study we are going to consider how and why it was necessary for the human race to be included in the death of Christ on His cross.

As sinners everyone of us is under the curse and condemnation of the law (Romans 3:19; Galatians 3:10). And the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). According to the Bible, Jesus bore this curse of the law for us when He died on the cross. This is what we studied in our last lesson. However, the fact is that no law, God’s or man’s, will allow an innocent person to die in the place of a guilty one. According to the Bible, the father is not to be punished for the sins of the son and neither is the son to be punished for the sins of the father (see Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20). How then could Christ, who committed no sin, legally die for the sins of the world when the law of God does not allow the innocent to be punished for the guilty?

This is the great ethical issue that surrounds the cross of Christ. And unless we clearly understand how God solved this problem, we will never be able to fully appreciate the good news of the gospel or experience its full power to save us from the sin problem. That is why this is a most important study.

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#### **1. How many have to die because of Adam’s one sin?**

1 Corinthians 15:22 (first part) \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** As we saw in study #3, the reason all die because of Adam’s one sin is not because God holds us guilty for Adam’s sin, that would be unethical. All die because the human race is the multiplication of Adam’s life (see Acts 17:26) and therefore inherit from him a life that has already sinned and stands condemned to death.

#### **2. When was this condemned life of the human race executed and in whom?**

John 12:31-33 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** At the cross the world (human race) was executed or judged in Christ. God could do this because Christ was the second Adam or mankind. Just as God created all humanity in Adam so that by his representative sin he ruined all his posterity, so also God united all humanity to Christ at the incarnation so that He could be the Saviour of the world.

#### **3. How many were implicated in the death of Christ?**

2 Corinthians 5:14 \_\_\_\_\_

#### **4. What did God make Christ to be in order to make us sinners righteous?**

2 Corinthians 5:21 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** When Christ assumed our corporate sinful humanity at His incarnation He became the second Adam (mankind) and qualified to be man's representative and substitute. This gave Him the legal right to live and die on man's behalf. It is in this sense that Christ was made to be sin for us that we may be made the righteousness of God in Him. This constitutes the "in Christ" truth that we studied in lesson #3.

**5. Who died when Jesus bore our sins in His body on the tree (cross)?**

1 Peter 2:24 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** According to the Greek text, the language in which the New Testament was written, we *actually* died when Christ bore our sins on the cross in His body. This is because Christ could not bear our sins without bearing us. As a result, by dying in Christ, the very root of our sin problem, our sinful nature, was dealt with. This is the healing power of the cross which makes holy living possible in the life of the believer.

**6. What does the apostle Paul say about himself regarding the law of God?**

Galatians 2:19 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Because we are all sinners, we must all die. Jesus did not come to do away with the death sentence that hangs over our heads but to fulfill it (see Matthew 5:17). Since "all died" in the death of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14), Paul acknowledges that he died to the law *in Christ* so that now he may live for God.

**7. When did Paul die to the law?**

Galatians 2:20 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** It is through the cross of Christ that we sinful humans were executed and have been set free from our sin problem. As a result, we may experience justification as well as live a life pleasing to God. The cross of Christ is what sets us free from both the guilt and punishment of sin as well as from the power and slavery of sin.

**8. How long does the law of God have dominion over us?**

Romans 7:1 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** All humanity is born under the law and because everyone of us has failed to perfectly obey it, the whole human race stands guilty and condemned under the law (see Romans 3:19). This condemnation hangs over us as long as we are living. Since the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), it is only when we die that we are set free from the condemnation of the law.

**9. How did God set us free from under the law?**

Romans 7:4 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** God set us free from under the law by our death in the body of Christ. As we saw earlier, the death of Christ was a corporate death so that all humanity died in Christ on His cross. When we by faith accept Christ's death as our death, we experience justification from the condemnation of the law and are set free. By His resurrection we were also raised in Christ with His life, married so to speak to Him, and this makes it possible for us to bear fruit pleasing to God (see John 15:5-8).

**10. How should one who has been delivered from the condemnation of the law serve God?**

Romans 7:6 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** The unbeliever who is still under the law tries to obey God's rules out of fear. This is what it means to serve in the letter. The believer however, who has accepted Christ and has been delivered from the law, serves God out of love. This is serving in the spirit, since the spirit of the law is love (see Matthew 22:35-40; Romans 13:10).

**11. What truth does Paul bring out regarding those who believe in Christ?**

Colossians 3:3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** As we shall see in our next study, a Christian is one who has died to the old life of sin and has risen in Christ to serve Him in newness of life which the believer has received through the new birth experience.

**12. In order for us to live with Christ what must first happen to us?**

2 Timothy 2:11 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** There are too many Christians who want to live with Christ without first dying with Him. This is called cheap grace. This is not the teaching of Scripture. In this sinful world, we begin with life and end up with death. In God's kingdom it is the very opposite. We begin by dying to the old condemned life and end up with the immortal life of Christ (see Romans 6:8-11). This is what conversion is all about.

**13. What must take place before we can experience freedom from sin?**

Romans 6:7 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** A condemned criminal can only be justified from his crime after he has paid the penalty for that crime. In the same way we cannot experience justification in Christ unless we first identify ourselves by faith with the death of Christ on His cross. The word "freed" in this text in the original is the word "justified" or "acquitted." Hence, the cross of Christ is the power of God unto salvation from the condemnation of the law (see 1 Corinthians 1:17, 18).

**14. Besides acquitting us from the condemnation of the law, what else does the cross of Christ free us from?**

Romans 8:2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Sin is a dual problem. It is the transgression of the law which condemns the sinner to death. Sin is also a law or a principle that resides in our sinful natures and which makes it impossible for us to live the holy life (Romans 7:14-25). Through the cross of Christ, we are delivered from both of these problems. Our death in Christ does not only justify us but it also strikes at the very root of our sin problem.

**15. Because the cross of Christ frees us from sin itself, what kind of life should a believer live?**

Romans 6:22 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** While the cross of Christ liberates us from the condemnation of sin it does not give us the liberty to live as we please. When we accept Christ and Him crucified as our Saviour, we are accepting both salvation from the guilt and punishment of sin as well as salvation from the power and slavery to sin.

**16. What did Jesus say to those who refuse to take up the cross and follow Him?**

Matthew 10:38 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Since the death of Christ on His cross was a corporate death in which all humanity died in Him, to accept or follow Christ is to accept His cross as your cross.

**17. How often must the believer take up the cross to follow Christ?**

Luke 9:23 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Many Christians make the mistake of separating the cross they have to bear from the cross of Christ. This mistake leads to another error; equating the cross with the hardships of life. In Scripture there is only one cross that saves. It is the cross of Christ. When we are baptized into Christ, the cross of Christ becomes the believers' cross. It symbolizes self-denial and not the hardships of life, which all people, believers and unbelievers have to put up with.

**18. What example did Jesus give from nature that explains the principle of the cross?**

John 12:24 \_\_\_\_\_

**19. How did Jesus apply this truth to the believer?**

John 12:25 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** The principle of the seed is the principle of the cross. Just like the seed must die in order for it to spring up to life and bear fruit, so also, we must die to the old life of sin in order for us to experience the new birth which brings forth fruit unto God. This is the principle of the cross of Christ.

**20. What did Paul say about the same principle of the seed?**

1 Corinthians 15:36 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Christianity is not an improvement or a modification of the old life of sin we were born with, but the exchange of our old life that died on the cross of Christ for the eternal life of Christ which God gave us in His Son (see 1 John 5:11, 12).

**21. What attitude must a Christian have towards the flesh or the sinful nature which has been surrendered to the cross of Christ?**

Galatians 5:24 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** It was a French preacher of the 19th Century who said that all Christians are “born crucified.” By this he was referring to the true meaning and significance of Baptism, which will be study #7. Before you accept Christ, it is important that you know the cost of discipleship. As the German martyr Dietric Bonhoffer once said, “when Christ calls you to follow Him, He calls you to die.”

**Conclusion:** This study brings us to the conclusion of the objective facts of the gospel. Everything necessary for our salvation from the sin problem has been taken care of by the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the good news of the gospel.

In this gospel God has redeemed, reconciled, and justified unconditionally all humanity in His Son Jesus Christ (see Romans 5:10, 18). But because God created us with a free will, He does not force this salvation on us. Therefore, to experience the good news of the gospel there needs to be a human response. That human response is faith. Hence, salvation as a subjective experience is conditional.

This is what this Bible course is all about. God so loved the world (the human race) that He gave us His only Son, at infinite cost to Him but as a free gift to us. In this gift we have salvation full and complete. However, only those who believe will not perish but have eternal life. As you enter the next phase of our studies dealing with our human response to the gospel, may you be willing to meet the conditions for accepting the gift of salvation.