

## WHY BAPTISTS BELIEVE WHAT BAPTISTS BELIEVE, PART 5

### ***JESUS'S DEATH***

The amazing 33-year ministry of Jesus came to a tragic end. We've all read that story at the end of the Gospels. Jesus died on a Roman cross, crucified between two thieves. By all accounts it was a gross miscarriage of justice. He was obviously an innocent man who was killed. But it all part of the Father's plan, wasn't it? So then, *[Question 14]*, "Why was it necessary for Jesus Christ to die for us?" To answer that question, we're going to look at some passages you are familiar with.

Because we have all **sinned**. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The result of that sin is physical and spiritual **death**. We humans are both spirit and body. We have two aspects to our nature. "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 (Romans 5:12). Our iniquities **separated** us from God. "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. (Isaiah 59:2). We faced the **wrath** of God. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..." (Romans 1:18).

So that was the situation we faced. Unfortunately, this is the problem: We cannot save ourselves. And why is that? Because God's standard is **perfection**. Jesus teaches, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48). Not just very good, but perfect! That's the requirement. The Bible makes it clear that **nobody** is righteous. "None is righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10 Paul quotes from Psalm 14 & Psalm 53). In fact, all of our good works are referred to as **filthy rags**. I like the NIV and NKJV translations: "All of us have become like one who is

unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags..." (Isaiah 64:6).

So, God intervened, and He provided a way for us to be saved...

*[Question 15]* Romans 5:8 says this - "But God shows His **love** for us in that while we were still **sinner**s, Christ **died** for us." He saved us right where we were.

This passage goes on in verses 9-10 to tell us result of Jesus' death on the cross for all those who believe. "Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life" (Romans 5:9-10).

In these verses there are three verbs mentioned...

*[Question 16]* **Justified** - This is a legal term. I'll talk more about this in a minute. **Saved** - We are saved from God's wrath, the penalty of sin. **Reconciled** - Our relationship with God was restored. We are no longer God's enemies, but rather, His children.

Back when we studied the Gospel of John, I did a whole lesson on what Jesus' death on the cross means for us. And in that lesson, I pointed out 5 key definitions we Christians need to know. Here they are:

**SUBSTITUTION** - Jesus died in our place.

**REDEMPTION** - Jesus paid the ransom or purchase price for our salvation.

**PROPITIATION** - Jesus' death satisfied the holy wrath of God against our sin.

RECONCILIATION – Re-establishing a right relationship between us and God.

JUSTIFICATION – A legal term meaning we are declared righteous.

You need to understand something. Justification is NOT being handed a “Not Guilty” verdict. It goes much further than that. We are actually vindicated and declared righteous. We are found in Jesus, not having a righteousness of our own that comes from the law, but that which comes through our faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. HIS righteousness! Jesus’s righteousness. The perfect Son of God’s righteousness. The fact is that we ARE guilty. We ARE sinners. But because of Jesus and what He did on the cross we get all the benefits that a perfectly righteous person deserves. That is shouting ground!

*[Question 17]* This is a series of True – False questions.

True or false? Jesus was the sinless Savior (2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 John 3:5). Based on these verses Jesus Christ WAS and is the sinless Savior, so this statement is **True**.

True or false? Jesus enjoyed His experience on the cross (Hebrews 12:2). No, Jesus Christ did NOT enjoy His experience on the cross, but rather He endured it, despising the shame. So then, this statement is **False**.

True or false? Jesus is one of many ways to the God (John 14:6, Acts 4:12). These verses tell us that Jesus Christ is NOT one of many ways to the God, but He is the ONLY way. So, this statement is **False**.

True or false? Jesus’s death made peace between us and God (Colossians 1:20). Yes, according to Colossians the death of Jesus DOES give believers peace with God. So, this statement is **True**.

True or false? Jesus died only for good people who love Him (1 Peter 3:18, Romans 5:6). No, according to these verses Christ died for the UNRIGHTEOUS and the UNGODLY. So, this statement is **False**.

What must we do in order to be saved?

The Philippian jailer asked Paul that very question in Acts 16:30, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul's response in the very next verse was what? "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

*[Question 18]* So then, what must we do in order to be saved? There is only one thing - **believe in the Lord Jesus**. All those other things listed are good things, worthwhile, even things the Bible says that we ought to do. But they WILL NOT and they DO NOT save you. This is what the Baptist Faith and Message says under the heading of "Salvation": "Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior... There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord..."

You all know John 3:16 and a lot of you know John 3:17. I love John 3:18 - "Whoever believes in Him [Jesus] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

*[Question 19]* So then, what two kinds of people are described here? Those who are **believers** in Jesus and those who do not believe in Jesus, **unbelievers**. There is no fence-straddling on this issue. Either you believe or you don't. Those who believe in Jesus are not condemned. They are not judged. They will not face the fiery judgment of Hell. Those who do not believe, on the other hand, are condemned already.

As unpopular as it might be to preach today (you just don't hear that many sermons on Hell any more), those who do not

believe are condemned and what the Bible teaches is that they will spend an eternity in Hell. The Baptist Faith and Message doesn't say a lot about Hell but it does state the following under the heading "Last Things": "The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment." By the way, this is what Jesus taught also. Just go to the last part of Matthew 25 where He talks about "eternal fire" and "eternal punishment."

But the plain truth is that God doesn't want anyone to go to Hell. "The Lord does not wish that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). That's why He did what He did. That's why Jesus came and went through that terrible ordeal on the cross and died. "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

*[Question 20]* This verse says, "These things I have written to you who **believe** in the name of the **Son of God**, in order that you may know that you have **eternal life**." John writes similar words at the end of his Gospel in John 20:31.

Baptists believe absolutely that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved and to have eternal life. We believe that this is consistent with what the Bible teaches and that there is no other way to heaven.

I want to close by reading Acts Chapter 4. If you will remember Peter and the other disciples had been arrested for preaching the gospel and they brought them in before the Jewish leaders. They were in the process of defending themselves when Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, declares to the high priest and the rulers of the synagogue... "Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by Him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become

the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12). Peter would later use this same reference of Jesus being the cornerstone in his first epistle.

So, who is Jesus to you? Is He your Savior and Lord? If He is not, He wants to be. And He can be if you will only believe what He says. Take action and call upon Him to save you.