

TEACHING GOAL

To study the humiliation of Christ which was incurred by His death and His estate following His death, before His resurrection.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?
- A. Christ's humiliation consisted in His being born and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death on the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

S.C. 27; L.C. 46-48; W.C. of F. VIII; Savoy 8; Young 48

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: The accounts of the crucifixion. Matthew 26:1-27:56; Mark 14:1-15:41; Luke 22:39-23:49; John 18:1-19:37

Support Passages: Psalm 16:10, 68:18; Acts 2:22-28, 4:23-28, 13:32-37; Ephesians 4:9; I Peter 3:18-19

BIBLE STORY

The crucifixion of Christ taken from the passages above

.MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:19-20, ESV)

APPLICATION

The crucifixion of Christ becomes ours when by faith we receive Him as Lord, and when we truly repent from our sins. Then we are crucified with Him.

SUMMARY

It is not difficult at all to understand the humiliation of crucifixion. A criminal would be taken to a public place, sometimes beaten and then tied to a pole, stripped of his clothing and raised up above shoulder height for all to see. In the case of the Lord Jesus, however, the crucifixion was all the more humiliating for He was nailed to the cross. He was treated much more roughly than the common criminal would be. He was not only taken before Pilate, the Roman civil governor, but He was also taken before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish religious government composed of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes. There He was spit upon, beaten with fists and slapped. He was dreadfully mocked for He was asked to prophesy concerning the identity of His tormentors, which in effect was treating Him as if He were a common fortune teller or oracle. "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11).

"Our standards specify 'the wrath of God,' as a distinct particular of the burden of sorrow which Christ, for our sakes, humbled Himself to bear. The word wrath is the familiar Scriptural term to express any manifestation of the displeasure of God against sin. Christ, although in Himself perfectly holy, bore our sins. He was 'made sin' (II Corinthians 5:21); or, treated as a sinner. He was 'numbered with the transgressors' (Isaiah 53:12), not only in the judgment of men, but in the dealing of God with His soul when He stood in the place of sinners. Such Psalms as the sixteenth, fortieth, and especially the twenty-second, which treat of the sufferings of the Messiah, represent Him as passing through all the experiences consequent on the punishment of sin, save those which have their source in the sinfulness of the sufferer. We therefore find that even such language as that in Psalm 40:12, 'Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me,' may not inappropriately be taken as the language of His holy soul .

The words uttered by our Lord upon the cross, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' show that He was suffering under the hiding of His Father's face. What that experience was it is impossible for us to understand. Yet as in other cases He suffered anxiety, fear, a sinking of the heart, and other natural states of mind incident to the circumstances in which He was placed; so also He suffered all that a holy being could suffer that was enduring the divinely appointed penalty for sin, which penalty He sustained for His people. Into the relation between His divine and human nature as revealed in these experiences, it is in vain for us to inquire. As that relation was consistent with His human nature's being ignorant, with its progressive development, with all its natural affections, with its feeling apprehension in the presence of danger, and dread in the prospect of death , so it was consistent with the feeling of depression and anguish under the obscuration of the favor of God. As the sufferings of Christ were not merely the pains of martyrdom, but were judicially inflicted in satisfaction of justice, they produced the effect due to their specific character.

This of course does not imply that our Lord suffered as the finally impenitent suffer. Their sufferings are determined by their subjective state. The

loss of the divine favor produces in them hatred, venting itself in blasphemies (Revelation 16:1--11), but in Christ it produced the most earnest longing after the light of God's countenance, and entire submission, in the midst of the depressing and overwhelming darkness." ¹

It is with much more difficulty that we approach the nature of Christ's state of being between His death and resurrection. We must agree with many reformed writers that His descent into hell (Hades) should be conceived as His lying in the grave under the power of death for three days. The phrase found in the Apostles Creed, namely, "He descended into hell," is not found in Scripture. It was introduced much later in the fourth century and then only in the creed. We must steadfastly resist the Roman Catholic notion that Christ entered hell during this period and led the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, etc., into heaven. We must reject the doctrine of purgatory as being ungodly and unbiblical. While it is true that David's bones were in the grave (Acts 2) nevertheless his spirit returned to God and was not in purgatory but heaven (Ecclesiastes 12:7, II Corinthians 5:1-10). Did not Jesus Himself promise the penitent thief that he would that very day be with him in paradise?

The word for hell used in Acts 2:27 is not the word for eternal fire, but simply the unseen world beyond death. The passage in I Peter, though very difficult (3:18) means that Christ preached to sinners in the days of Noah who are now in hell because they did not repent. This has no reference to Jesus' death.

¹ Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965, Vol. II, p. 614