

## BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS

### Why did Jesus Christ have to die?

#### BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT REDEMPTION

**When you have read this article you will know the answers to these questions:**

1. Why do people die?
2. Why did Jesus die?
3. What must I do to be saved from death—and how does this depend on the death of Jesus Christ?

We must turn to our Creator if we want to understand the great truths about life and death. God answers our questions in His Word, the Bible.

#### **1. Why do People Die?**

Adam was created when “the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). Eve, who became Adam’s wife, was created when “God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man” (2:21,22). From the beginning, God gave the man and woman ‘free will’. They could choose between obedience to God’s command or disobedience (sin). God could have made Adam and Eve obey him. But how would that have given God pleasure? Human parents are happy when their children love them and choose to obey them. God works in exactly the same way with us, His children. He wants each of us to choose to obey Him because we love Him. That is why God gave Adam and Eve free will. After placing Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, God gave them very clear instructions: “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (2:17). Sadly, Eve was tempted. She ate the fruit of that tree and persuaded Adam also to eat. They had broken God’s commandment. Soon they learned a vital lesson: God keeps His word. The terrible result of disobedience by Adam was, “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food, until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return” (3:19). Adam was condemned to death. This is why people die. As the human race descended from one man, Adam, we have inherited his nature. We are all mortal—which is simply a word of Latin origin that means “deathful”. The plain truth is expressed in the Letter to the Romans: “As sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death came to all men, because all sinned” (5:12); “the wages of sin is death” (6:23); and “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:23). So the Bible teaches us that not only have we inherited a mortal nature from Adam, but like him we have disobeyed God; we have sinned and so deserve this condemnation from God.

#### **2. Why did Jesus die?**

The Bible teaches us that God is a consistent God who is always true to His Word. Death came upon all men because of Sin and every time we attend a funeral service we pay witness to this fact. There is nothing we can do by ourselves to overcome the sentence of death. But God is also a merciful God who does not want people to perish, but to share eternal life with Him in His Kingdom. It was the life and death of Jesus Christ which made this possible. God so loved the world that He sent His only Son: he came to save people from sin and death. Jesus was the Son of God but he had a human mother, Mary. From her he inherited a similar nature to ours. He was tempted to disobey God—to sin. But because he loved his Father so much and respected the words and commandments of God, he never gave in to temptation and died sinless, the only man ever to achieve this. What was broken by Adam was healed by Jesus’ victory over sin and death—Jesus died to save people from their sins. Such was the love of Jesus for his Father, and us, that he willingly made the ultimate sacrifice. He suffered an agonizing death upon a cross. He was willing to lay down his life for his friends. He was perfect. Many Bible passages prove the truth of these statements: **1 Peter 1:18,19**—“It was not with perishable things that you were redeemed ... but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” **Hebrews 9:26**—Jesus “appeared once for all ... to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.” **1 Peter 3:18**—“Christ died for sins—once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.”

**1 Thessalonians 5:10**—“He died for us so that ... we may live together with him.” No wonder God said, “This is my Son, whom I love: with him I am well pleased. Listen to him” (Matthew 17:5). It helps us to understand why Peter says, “Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Because Jesus was sinless, he did not remain in the grave. God brought him back to life again after 3 days and gave him immortal life. This victory of Jesus over sin and death and his resurrection from the dead

are the most important events in world history. God has promised that all who believe in Jesus as their Saviour and follow his example in their lives can share his victory. They too will be changed from mortal people to immortal beings. They will be made like Christ. This will happen when he returns to the earth to establish God's Kingdom.

### **3. What must I do to be saved?**

We must start by being completely honest with ourselves. We need to acknowledge to God in prayer that we have sinned and that we can do nothing to save ourselves. At the beginning of his ministry Jesus taught his disciples, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:2). Being "poor in spirit" means being humble, knowing our need of God and His forgiveness. We then need to understand how God can save us from our sins through His Son. This can only come from a prayerful reading and thinking about the Bible, the word of God. The knowledge we gain must touch our hearts so that we really want to become people like Jesus. If this happens to us then we must be baptized in water as a sign that we truly accept his life and death as the way in which we can be saved. Jesus told us that this is an essential step for true disciples (Mark 16:16). Finally we need to live lives as faithful disciples of Jesus—following his pattern of behaviour in all we do. If we do these things, when Jesus returns he will greet us with the wonderful words, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).