

Lesson 4

What Has God Done About Sin?

In the first place we need to keep in mind that God does not have to do anything about sin. He could let us pay the wages of our sin with our own death and send us all to hell. But He did not do that, for which we are grateful. God saw that we cannot come to Him so He came to us. The Son of God came to earth as a man to pay the wages of our sin with His own death. In a later lesson we will learn more about the person of Christ. But for the purposes of this lesson we will simply say, that Christ is perfect God and perfect man in one person. It is important that He is perfect God because only God would not have any sin of His own for which He would have to pay. It is important that He is perfect man because only man could die for sin.

SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH

We saw in the last lesson how the wages of sin is death; this is a spiritual law and cannot be changed. It is because God is holy that the wages of sin must be paid. God cannot allow anyone into His presence who still has sin. The wages of sin can only be paid by one who is without any sin of His own.

By His dying in our place we can then be allowed into the presence of God. The Scriptures teach us, that this is exactly what the Son of God has done. **"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God." (I Peter 3:18a)**. He is the one who did not have any sin of His own to pay for so He could pay for ours. **"He God) made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21)**.

A key passage of Scripture for understanding this truth is in **Romans 5:6-9**. There we see that while we were helpless that at just the right time, or just in the nick of time, Christ came to die for us. The unusual thing about this is that we were His enemies. All those who are in sin are the enemies of God. So when Christ died for us, He died for His enemies. This is contrary to what man would do. Some might die for a good man who is loved or well respected. It is hardly reasonable that anyone would die for a moral man, just because he was a moral man, but perhaps. But nobody would die for their enemies so that their enemies might live. This is where the love of God is put on display, that Christ died for His enemies, those who did not deserve His love.

THE LITTLE WORD 'FOR'

The key word in all of the Scriptural passages we have looked at is the little word *for*. It means, "on behalf of" or "in the place of". We might illustrate it in this way. Suppose that you were dying of cancer and I came and told you that I would take your cancer cells away from your body and put them into my body. Now, what would happen to you? You would live. What would happen to me? I would die. I would die in your place because I took what was causing your death and placed it in me so I would die. This is what the Lord has done for us. He took what was killing us, *sin*, and placed it upon Himself and then died for that sin.

BUT HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD!

If our Lord had just died then there would not be any eternal life. But He rose from the dead and in so doing He conquered sin and death. **"But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep (1 Corinthians 1 5:20)**. Being the "first fruits" means that He is the first of all those who will come after Him. We who have trusted in Him will follow Him into eternal life. We have life after death because He lives, **"because I live, you shall live also" (John 14:19b)**. This is our hope, that we know we will live forever with the Lord.

BUT WHY DID GOD DO ALL THIS?

At the beginning of this lesson we said that God did not have to do anything about sin, but He did. So now, after explaining what He did, we will ask the question, why did He do it? The answer is simply that God is love (**1 John 4:8h**). Love is a part of the character of God. But how would He prove it or demonstrate it? We saw in **Romans 5:14** that He demonstrated His love in that Christ died for us, His enemies. In creation we see the power of God; in the wages of sin we see the holiness of God; and in the cross we see the love of God. God is love and He loved the whole world. **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16)**. He loved and gave His only begotten Son, the one He loved the most. God's love is active not passive. God's love was not given to those who love Him but to those who did not love Him, **"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10)**.

Think about it, we all are loved by God. We have done nothing to deserve it and everything contrary to it, but God still so loves each and everyone of us. In the next lesson we will learn how we appropriate God's love.

Bible Reading: Romans 5:6-11; 1 John 4:7-11

Questions for Review:

1. Why is it important to understand that Jesus Christ is fully God?
2. Why is it important to understand that Jesus Christ is fully man?
3. What is so unusual about Christ dying for us?
4. What does the word 'for' mean?
5. How did Christ pay the wages of our sin?
6. Why is it Important that Christ arose from the dead?
7. If Christ is the 'first fruits' what then is the fruit?
8. What is there about God that He would do all this?
9. What is there about mankind that God would love them?
10. In what way does God Love?