



The Work of Christ

**For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
1 Corinthians 15:3-5 (NASB)**

When Christ walked on this earth, those who observed Him were astonished. They had never seen someone perform miracles nor had they heard teaching like His. One woman touched His clothes and was immediately healed. He was amazing and powerful. People would seek Him out and gather in His home. In both gospels of Mark and Luke, we read that the people were impressed with Him.

[And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath; and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority. \(NASB\) Luke 4:31-32](#)

Even secular writers were impressed. One major comment comes from a Jewish historian. His name was Flavius Josephus (AD 37-97). He was born into a priestly, Jewish family. He was a historian for the Roman empire who wrote several famous works, including the *Antiquities of the Jews* and the *Wars of the Jews*. Here is a comment from him,

Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man. For he was a doer of surprising

feats - a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct to this day. (*Antiquities of the Jews* 18.3.3)

Another significant comment comes from multiple authors who quote documents that were written by Pontius Pilate (1 BC - circa AD 37). Pontius Pilate was the fifth Roman procurator of Judea (AD 26 - 36) under Emperor Tiberius, who lived during the time of Jesus. He sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion. The quote below refers to the Acts of Pontius Pilate, a document he wrote which is now missing. Its existence is strongly supported by three ancient authors: Epiphanius (*Heresies* 50.1), Justin Martyr (*First Apology*) and Tertullian (*Apology*).

“At His coming the lame will leap as a deer, and the stammering tongue will clearly speak: the blind will see, and the lepers will be healed; and the dead will rise, and walk.” And that He did those things, you can learn from the Acts of Pontius Pilate. *First Apology* 48.

““They pierced my hands and my feet,” was used in reference to the nails of the cross which were driven into His hands and feet. “And. . . they cast lots for His clothes, and after they crucified Him distributed it among them.” And that these things did happen, you can ascertain from the Acts of Pontius Pilate. *First Apology* 35.

In fact, when the Roman Emperor, Tiberius Caesar (AD 14-37), heard the report from Pontius Pilate, historical records indicate that he asked the Roman senate to declare that Jesus was God, but the senate refused. The message is that Tiberius Caesar believed the report of Pontius Pilate about Jesus Christ.

Man’s Spiritual Problem

Why did Christ leave heaven and come to earth? He came because every person has a spiritual problem. Discover what this means as you answer the following questions.

1. Romans 3:10-12 reveals the very serious spiritual problem that we have. Name six truths about our spiritual problem.

1. No one is righteous, not even one.
2. No one understands,
3. No one seeks for God
4. All have become useless.
5. No one does good.
6. There is not even one.

2. Romans 3:23 summarizes our spiritual problem. What is it?

Everyone has sinned.

3. If we do not believe that we have sinned, what does God say about us (1 John 1:8)?

If we say that we have not sinned, we have deceived ourselves and lied.

4. Romans 1:29-31 gives us a list of many sins, not every sin, that people commit. Write down five sins.

Unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil, and envy.

5. What is the truth about every person on this earth according to John 8:34?

Since we commit sin, we are slaves of sin.

6. Ephesians 2:1-2 reveals that every person is spiritually dead due to their sins. We are called disobedient sons of God.

Therefore, what will happen to us since we are disobedient sons (Ephesians 5:6)?

The wrath of God will come upon us since we are sons of disobedience.

7. According to Romans 6:23 what do we deserve because of our sins?

Death! That includes both physical and spiritual death.

8. Titus 1:16 tells us two things that are true about unbelievers. First, they disobey God. What is the second thing? What are we told about their good deeds?

Their deeds deny Him. That is, their so-called good deeds cannot and will not earn them heaven.

Work of Christ – Christ Died For Us

Most people who fail to understand that they are spiritually dead and consequently sin think they are a good person. They think that God will let them into heaven. They think they are going to a better place, but that is not true. One man many years ago said that he was going to live as he desired because he believed that he could convince God to let him into heaven. But he missed the fact that we make our decision about Jesus Christ in this life (Hebrews 9:27). In addition, we know that only God is good. What we think are good deeds will not please our holy God because He demands perfection (Matthew 5:48). Therefore, our good deeds cannot save us from God's wrath and hell. Only the work of Christ can save us from hell. For more insight into the work of Christ, answer these questions.

1. Matthew 1:18-21 describes the birth of Christ and why our God came to earth and took on human flesh.

a. Verse 21 tells us why Jesus came to earth. What does it say?

He came to save people from their sins.

b. What does verse 23 reveal about Jesus? Who was He?

Jesus was and is God.

2. Hebrews 2:14 describes Jesus Christ. We are told He took on flesh and blood for what purpose?

In time to die, thereby to make the devil powerless.

3. What is the message of 1 John 3:8?

Those who sin are of the devil, because the devil has always sinned.

4. In order to accomplish His purpose, Jesus had to die. Hebrews 9:22 speaks of blood.

a. What does the verse say is required to forgive our sins?

Blood must be shed in order to forgive sins.

b. How were we redeemed from sin according to 1 Peter 1:18-19?

Believers are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

5. Therefore, what did Christ do for us (Romans 5:6-10)?

Christ died for the ungodly.

6. What happened to Christ according to Isaiah 53:4-5?

Christ suffered physically and then died in order for us to have our sins forgiven.

7. John 10:17-18 tells us that Christ chose to die and shed His blood for us. Write what He said that reveals that truth?

For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

8. What three things does 1 Corinthians 15:2-4 tell us what Christ did for us?

1. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

2. Christ was buried.

3. Christ was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

DO YOU BELIEVE IN JESUS?

What does it mean to believe in Jesus? Many Christians do not really know what it means “to believe.” In the Greek, the terms “believe, trust, depend, confidence, faith, conviction, entrust, abandonment, guarantee, and persuade” all come from the same Greek word *pistis*. These are interchangeable words and concepts. If we say that we believe in Jesus, then we are trusting in Jesus. *Pistis* also has the meaning of obeying or submitting. Believing is more than an intellectual assent. James 2:19 says that even the demons know that Jesus is God. Those who truly believe have been persuaded and have abandoned or given themselves to Jesus. John 3:16 says that we must believe in Jesus and Romans 10:9 says that we must confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord. Those who have this saving faith will have their sins forgiven. That is all that God requires because there is nothing you can do to deserve the forgiveness of your sins or eternal life with God.

Work of Christ – He Returned To Life

John 19:1-30 teaches us that Jesus shed His blood and died on the cross. Verse 30 says that He chose the moment He died. Then three days after Jesus had died a physical death, He returned from the grave to life and walked again on earth among many people.

1. John 19:31-20:18 and Acts 2:24 tells us what happened to Jesus after His death. What occurred?

Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. He was resurrected.

2. According to 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, who saw Jesus after He returned to life?

Jesus was seen by Peter/Cephas, the twelve disciples, five hundred brethren at one time, James, all of the apostles again, and the apostle Paul.

3. Romans 4:25 states that Christ died so that our sins can be forgiven, and His resurrection proved that we can be declared to be righteous. But what does Romans 1:4 tell us that Jesus’ resurrection proved about Him?

The resurrection proved that Christ was and is the Son of God.

Work of Christ — His Provision

As a result of Christ's death and resurrection, every one who believes in Jesus receives many spiritual benefits.

1. What benefit for believers is described in these verses?
 - a. Acts 10:43 — **Everyone who believes in Christ receives forgiveness of sins.**
 - b. Acts 26:18 — **Those who believe receive forgiveness of sins and an eternal inheritance in heaven.**
 - c. Colossians 1:14 — **Christ died in order for us to have our sins forgiven.**
2. Justification refers to a person being declared to be righteous. That is, God considers a believer to be righteous even though in their practice they are not.
 - a. Therefore, what gift are believers given according to Romans 3:24?
Believers are justified, that is, believers are declared to be righteous.
 - b. Why are believers declared to be righteous (Romans 5:1)?
Believers are justified by faith in order to have peace with God.
3. Reconciled refers to two people being restored to a positive relationship. Therefore, what do these verses reveal?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 5:18 —
God reconciled us to Himself through Christ. This occurred at the moment of saving faith.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 —
Believers are reconciled to God the Father because He does not count their trespasses against them.
4. Jesus tells us that unbelievers are slaves to sin in John 8:34. Therefore, what happens when a person believes in Jesus Christ according to Romans 8:2?
Christ sets believers free from sin and death.
5. What two promises has God given to us in John 3:16?
 - a. What will not happen to one who believes in Jesus?
Believers will not perish, that is, experience eternal punishment.
 - b. What will happen to one who believes in Jesus?
Believers will gain eternal life.

We have discovered that by believing in Jesus, all of our sins are forgiven. We are reconciled with our God and freed from slavery to sin. In addition, we have escaped spiritual death, that is, eternal condemnation in hell. Believers are given eternal life as a gift. It does not require works, just believing in Jesus Christ and His work.

Choosing Between Hell and Heaven

Let's review briefly what must a person do in order to have eternal life?

1. What must a person do in order to have his/her sins forgiven according to 1 Corinthians 15:1-6?
 1. A person must believe that Christ died in order to forgive our sins, as described in the Bible.
 2. A person must believe that Christ was buried.
 3. A person must believe that Christ rose on the third day according to the Scriptures.
 4. A person must believe that He appeared to other people.
2. According to 1 Corinthians 15:1-2, is it possible to think you believe but not really believe? Is it possible for a person to think that he/she is a Christian and going to heaven but neither are true?

Yes. It is possible for a person to have vain faith or a false faith and go to hell.
3. Saving faith in Jesus Christ includes repentance over one's sins (Acts 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25) and a desire that God will forgive and change their life (Romans 10:9-10). Repentance and submission to God will also accompany saving faith, that is, true faith. Do you truly believe in Christ? Describe your faith in Jesus.

Saving faith, that is faith that saves, results in a person grieving over their sins and, consequently, repenting of their sins. Saving faith is also accompanied by submission to Christ. At the moment of saving faith, the person humbles himself or herself and yields to Christ. That is the message of Matthew 5:3-4.

Things To Ponder

1. How does God feel about you according to John 3:16?

God loves us!

2. What did Jesus do so that people can have their sins forgiven and go to heaven?

Our God, Christ, willingly died on the cross to become the perfect sacrifice for sin in our place, was buried, and resurrected on the third day in order to forgive our sins.

3. How would you answer someone who asks, “How can I have eternal life and go to heaven?”

Our God, Christ, willingly died on the cross, was buried, and resurrected on the third day in order to forgive the sins of anyone who chooses to believe this and then follow Christ.

3. If you are a Christian, how did you become one?

4. Are your sins forgiven? How do you know?

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Answer true (T) or false (F) to each of the following statements:

1. There are historical records from non-Christians that prove Jesus existed and did miracles. T
2. Men and women are really very good people. F
3. We commit sins because we are slaves of sin. T
4. Every person on this earth deserves to go to hell. T
5. Christ came to earth and took on human flesh and blood. T
6. Because Jesus' blood was shed, He died and was resurrected, we can have our sins forgiven. T
7. Jesus' resurrection proved that He was and is God. T
8. Jesus' resurrection reveals that believers can be declared righteous. T
9. Believers are reconciled with God. T
10. Believers are declared to be as righteous as Christ. T
11. A person can have vain faith, that is, their faith does not save them from hell. T