

# Christ's Twofold Estate

## Lesson 6: The Nature of Christ's Death, Acts 2.23; 4.27-28

We've looked at our Lord's humbling incarnation and humbling life, and now we come to the deepest moments of His entire humiliation as we look at His death. And to begin, we want to consider the nature of it.

Christ's death was the *principal part of His humiliation*. From the moment He took a body to Himself in the womb of the virgin, He started on a trajectory of humiliation and suffering and obedience that would lead Him to the accursed cross on Calvary. But, as Flavel says, this *principal part of His humiliation* is also the *chief pillar of our consolation*. Because to expand on Paul's words in 1Cor 15, if Christ didn't die the death He died—an atoning death for us—then *we're still dead in our sins, our faith is in vain, and we of all men are the most to be pitied*.

**Doctrine:** *Christ was not only put to death, but to the worst kind of death, even death on a cross.* So let's consider a few factors and see how He who became a curse for us, suffered in His body and soul all the curses of the moral law in His death.

- I. It was a *violent* death, Isa 53.8
  - A. He was cut off from the land of the living.
  - B. It was unnatural, since He was not only in the prime of His life, but there was no sin in Him to justify Him suffering its wages, Ezk 18.4; Rom 6.23
  - C. It was sacrificial. That which dies on its own could never be offered to God, but only that which is in its full strength and health is acceptable, Dt 15.21; Mal 1.6-10
- II. It was a *painful* death, Acts 2.24
  - A. His senses were more acute than ordinary and they continued to be through all His sufferings. They were never dulled or blunted, Mt 27.34
  - B. His death contained the greatest pains imaginable because they were intended to equal all the misery that our sin deserved.
  - C. Imagine suffering all the pains of the damned elect at once. Imagine the sorrows in His soul, the torturing pains in His body, the beatings, the blows, the piercing of the thorns, the scourging that tore His flesh, the boring through His hands and feet with nails, and all the evil and all the malice and all the rage that devils and men could inflict upon Him.
  - D. And yet Hebrews 12 says He endured the cross; and Paul says, He laid Himself down, gave Himself up, offered Himself in our place. No man took His life from Him, Jn 10.18. He volunteered for this.
- III. It was a *shameful* death, Heb 12.2
  - A. He was stripped naked and exposed as a spectacle of shame. He was condemned to death as a vile criminal. He was killed in the worst and most torturous manner conceived by the bloody Romans.
  - B. And yet, He not only endured it, but for the joy set before Him, despised the shame. He slighted and cast out of His mind all the disgrace poured onto Him by His enemies; He contemned all the blasphemies, all the taunts, all the reproaches, all the shameful treatment He received from sinners, and even the most shameful death of the cross itself, between two wretched and despicable thieves, suffering it all without any emotion of anger or vengeance or hatred or malice or murmuring ever rising in His heart; but instead, praying, *Father forgive them*; and instead living out His resolution in the Garden, *Not my will, but yours be done*.
- IV. It was a *curse*d death, Gal 3.13

- A. To be hung shamefully on a tree to die, helpless and despised, in the sight of men was evidence that he was cursed by God, Dt. 21.22-23. And that capital punishment in Israel which foreshadowed Christ's suffering was fulfilled in His death as He died not only in a cursed manner, but under the curse of the transgressed Law of God.
  - B. Cursed was the man who hung there, but Christ was doubly cursed, bearing in His body and soul the wrath of God for our covenant breaking.
- V. It was a *lingering* death.
- A. Others died on the cross gradually. Dying by degrees, as their sense of pain is blunted toward the end until they give up the ghost. But Christ stood under the full pains of death in His full strength until the very end. This is evident by the mighty cry He made when He breathed His last, Mk 15.39; Mt 27.50
- VI. It was a *helpless* death.
- A. Sometimes the dying were given remedies and reliefs in the midst of their pains to numb their senses and dull their awareness. And if they hanged there for an extended time, they'd break their legs to hasten the end. But Christ had none of this.
  - B. More importantly, He was forsaken by the Father, Mt 27.46. All help of consolation and comfort and countenance and love and joy and acceptance were entirely removed, leaving nothing in its stead but darkness, loneliness, emptiness, hopelessness, helplessness—everything meant by Hell, everything brought on by the sins for which He died.

### Lessons for Application

Look at the suffering of our Saviour for us and know:

- I. There is forgiveness for sinners, Col 1.14. The price has been paid for all that we owe. It is now *just* for God to forgive, 1Jn 1.9; Rom 3.23-25
- II. There is no condemnation for those who believe, Rom 8.33-35; 5.1. He was condemned in our place, cut off for us, forsaken on our behalf, Rom 8.1-3, 38-39; Hos 2.19; Jer 32.40
- III. There is no curse in our death, 1Cor 15.55-57. There may be much pain, much suffering, much loss, many tears, and even much fear. But there will be no curse. And where there is no curse, blessings abound. Death is our friend, taking us away from all the misery we'll ever know, our chauffeur to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, our threshold to glory, our entrance upon an eternity of happiness. Death may frighten, but it cannot hurt.
- IV. There is hope and help with every cross of suffering we carry. He alone bore the cross born of cursing so that we'll never bear anything but crosses born of blessing, Ps 89.28-37
  - A. All our crosses will be laid down at death. No cross can last longer than this momentary, vaporous, brief life. No crosses in heaven.
  - B. Christ bears the heavier end of all our crosses, carrying alone the curse and judgment of it, so that we can enjoy the blessing and help of it. And truth to tell, Christ carries more than the heavier end, because He carries and upholds us and our burdens as well, Gen 46.3-4
  - C. All our crosses are washed in His blood and sanctified unto us, Rom 8.28
- V. There is endless cause to give praise to God for Jesus Christ. His sufferings bought all our mercies, purchased all our blessings, and secures our final victory and glory. "Prime favors come to us swimming in His blood." Let all this endear our Saviour to us and make us in a deep sense of His love for us to say, "Thanks be to God for Christ our Lord."