

Q40. Why did Christ have to suffer death?

A. Because God's justice and truth require it:¹ nothing else could pay for our sins except the death of the Son of God.²

1. Gen. 2:17 – “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”
 2. Heb. 2:9 – “but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”
- Heb. 2:15 – “and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.”
Phil. 2:8 – “he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.”

Q41. Why was he “buried”?

A. His burial testifies that he really died.¹

1. Acts 13:29 – “When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.”
- Matt. 27:60 – “and laid it in his new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away.”
Luke 23:50[–53] – Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid.”
John 19:38[–42] – “After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and removed his body.”

Q42. Since Christ has died for us, why do we still have to die?

A. Our death does not pay the debt of our sins. Rather, it puts an end to our sinning and is our entrance into eternal life.¹

1. John 5:24 – “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and does not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.”
- Phil. 1:23 – I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better,”
Rom. 7:24 [21–25] – “Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?”

Q43. What further benefit do we receive from Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross?

A. By Christ's power our old selves are crucified, put to death, and buried with him,¹ so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer rule us,² but that instead we may offer ourselves as a sacrifice of gratitude to him.³

1. Rom. 6:6-8 – “We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, so we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.”
- Rom. 6:11-12 – “So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies, so that you obey their desires.”
- Col. 2:[11-12] – “In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by the removal of the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”
2. Rom. 6:12 – “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies, so that you obey their desires.”
3. Rom. 12:1 – “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, on the basis of God's mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship.”

Q44. Why does the creed add, “He descended to hell”?

A. To assure me during attacks of deepest dread and temptation that Christ my Lord, by suffering unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul, on the cross but also earlier, has delivered me from hellish anguish and torment.¹

1. Isa. 53:10 – “Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with affliction. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper.”
- Matt. 27:46 – “And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”