

QUESTION 24

WHY WAS IT NECESSARY FOR CHRIST, THE REDEEMER, TO DIE? Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By his substitutionary atoning death, he alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness and everlasting life.

Bible Passage: Colossians 1:15–23

Memory Verse: Col. 1:21–22

Big Idea: There is no possible way for people to be reconciled to God except through the atoning death of Jesus.

Virtue: Love

Before you start:

We don't like the idea of punishment generally, but the concept of someone being wrongly punished for something he didn't do will be deeply offensive! You might have a keen sense of what is fair, and question why Jesus had to suffer and die for sins that he didn't commit. This lesson will help the us comprehend why the sinless Jesus had to be punished for our sins, and why this was the only way God could redeem a people for himself. By focusing on how God was pleased to have his fullness dwell in Jesus and that Jesus himself knew the purpose of his life and death, this lesson should further equip you to understand substitutionary atonement.

Things to remember:

- Caution should be taken when questioning God's plans and purposes! The Bible says that God's ways are higher than our ways and warns that we should not lean on our own understanding, or else we might arrive at incorrect assumptions.
- It is important to understand the cost and consequences of sin and rebellion.
- We will, on occasion, hear people declare that there are many ways to God. This is not what the Bible teaches. All people need to understand who Jesus is and why he came to earth.

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INTRODUCTION TO QUESTION 24

If you have access to Netflix, play the short clip from Chitty Chitty Bang Bang that shows all the children who have been captured by the Child Catcher held in the dungeon. (The scene starts at 2:13:08.)

The children in the movie need to be freed, but they are not able to do it themselves. The characters need someone to save them, to release them from captivity and to allow them to enjoy freedom. They need a way out. They would find freedom only through someone releasing them, and that the same is true for those who are held captive by sin and death. Freedom for those who are enslaved by sin and death can be gained only by someone paying a great price for their release. Remember, there was only one person who could pay that price, and this question will help to understand why Jesus Christ had to die, and that there was no other way sin could be dealt with.

TEACHING OUTLINE

Begin this time by asking yourself if you think God had to redeem anyone. God was not obliged to rescue anyone from sin and death, but that he chose to do so out of love. God does not need humans, but humans need God! God chooses to redeem people because he is loving, kind, and gracious.

How does this knowledge— that God was not obliged to rescue us— affects your view of God?

Once God determined that he would provide a path to redeem people, the only way he could do that was by sending Jesus to die on the cross.

Read Colossians 1:15–23

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

QUESTION 24

*21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,
22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present
you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,
23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the
hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation
under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.*

Paul is writing to Christians in Colossae, and he wants to help them to understand the supremacy of Jesus Christ. In verse 19, Paul reminds the Colossians that Jesus is fully God. Paul also declares that through Jesus all things would be reconciled to God. Paul says in this verse that God was pleased to be at work in this way. God was pleased that Jesus would be the one Mediator and Redeemer between heaven and earth. The redemption offered by Jesus was the only way out; there was no other way for humans to become friends again with God.

Paul declares in verse 20 that Jesus achieved peace between humans and God through shedding his blood on the cross. Paul acknowledges clearly that it was necessary for Jesus to die on the cross; this was how God decided he would restore the relationship between himself and humanity. Paul explains to the Colossians that they once were enemies of God who had broken his laws and had done things that displease God—all of which deserve God's judgment and punishment. But Paul says that those who are Christians—those who trust in Jesus Christ for redemption—need not fear God's judgment. They should not fear God's punishment either because when Jesus died on the cross, he freed people from sin and death. How?

He stood in the place of sinful man and took judgment we deserved. He suffered their punishment in their place by dying on the cross. Jesus paid the price to redeem sinners so that they could know life in relationship with God. Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" in Mark 10:45 .

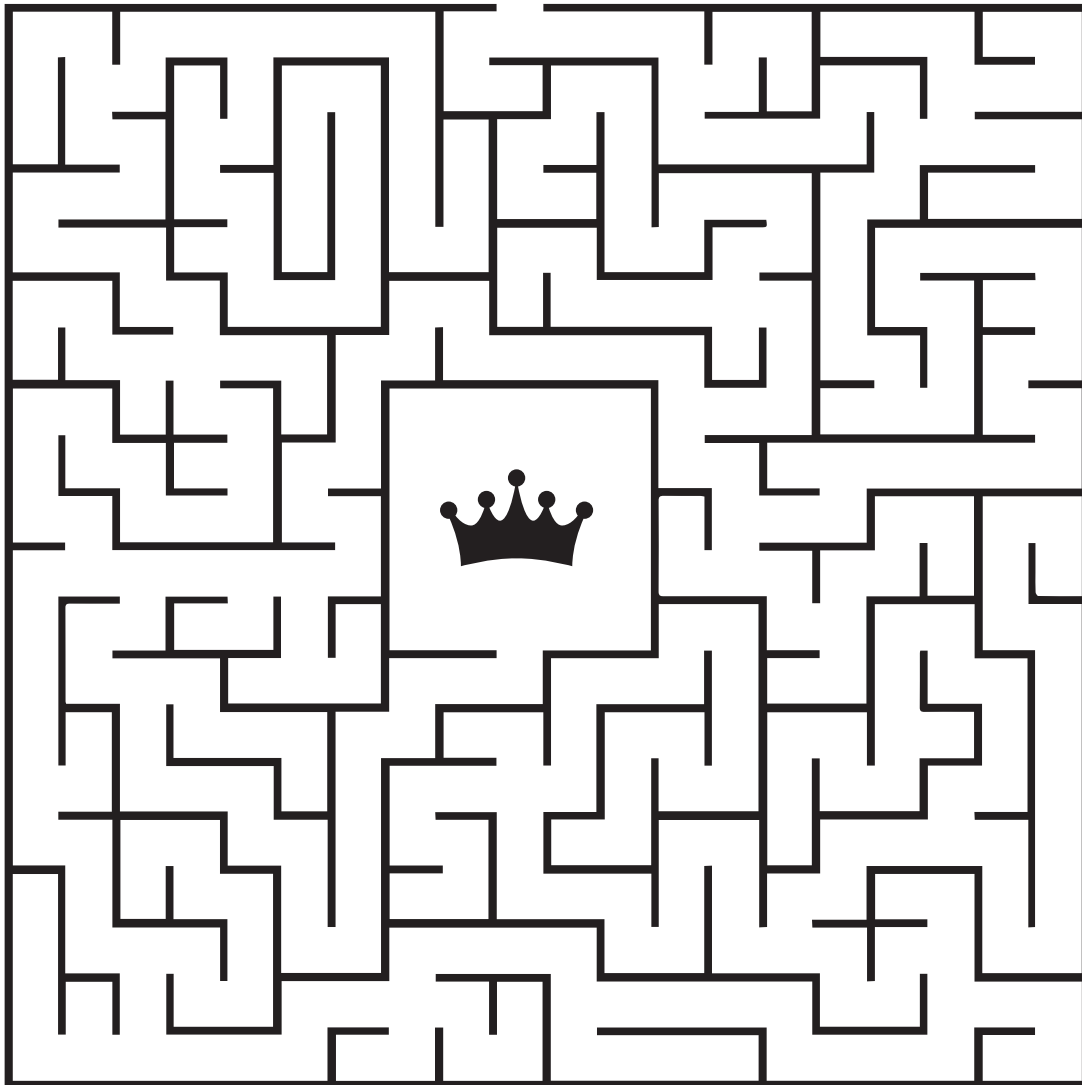
There is a cost for rejecting God, for rejecting his rule, and for living without regard for him. The cross demonstrates the cost clearly. Sin is serious, and God had to take sin seriously in order to deal with it. It does seem unfair when someone has to take the punishment for something that he or she hasn't done. It was Jesus's decision to take the punishment for the sins of others, even though he had never sinned. God demanded a perfect sin-offering to be sacrificed in order for the punishment to be satisfied. Jesus was the only one who fit the bill. Only the blood of Christ would really be able to redeem people.

QUESTION 24

ACTIVITY (FOR KIDS)

Find the path to the center of the maze.
There is only *one* way!

START
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There is only one way to be redeemed and only one way to return to a relationship with God, and that is through Jesus Christ. Acknowledge that people at times question why Jesus had to die, and this lesson should help us understand more fully why Jesus's life and death provided the only way for us to be made right before God. Read John 14:6 for : "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

QUESTION 24

ACTIVITY (FOR KIDS)

You will need some old magazines, sheets of paper, scissors, and glue.

Make word collages by cutting out letters from the magazines and sticking them on the paper to make words. The words should sum up their heart's response to God as they consider his amazing love in redeeming his people.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(Allow for several answers within your group before reading the provided response.)

- 1. If God didn't have to redeem anyone, why did he choose to?** God longs to be in relationship with his creation. He wants us to know and enjoy his goodness, so he brought us back into friendship with himself.
- 2. Did Jesus die to reconcile and redeem everyone?** Jesus's death redeems only those who turn to him in repentance and faith. Jesus's death does not redeem those who reject him.

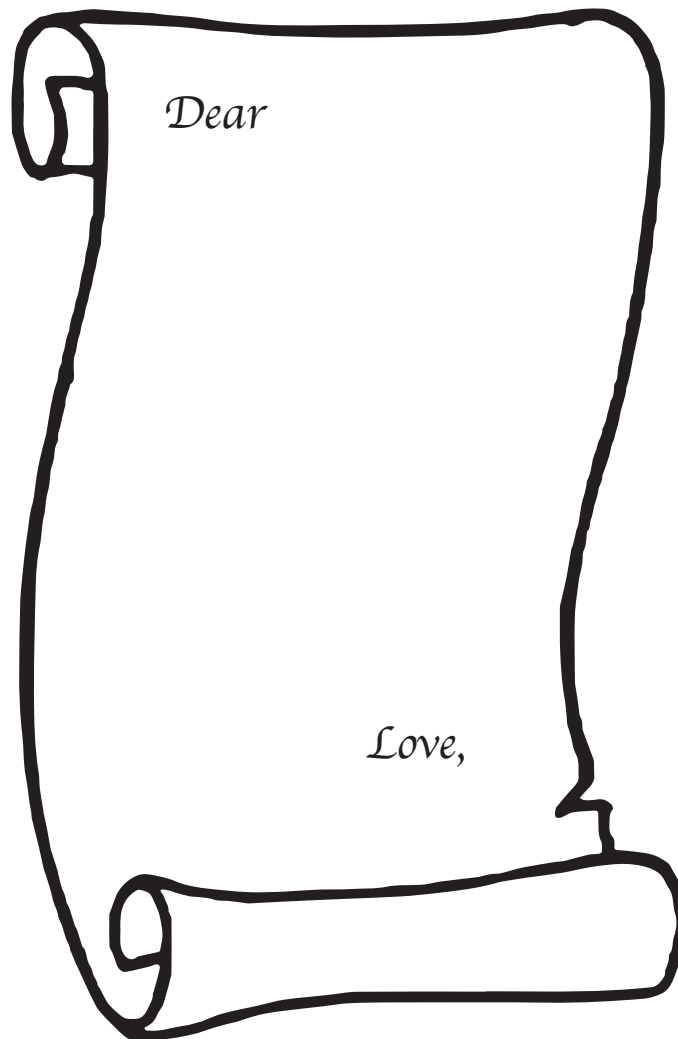
More to consider:

- Use this opportunity to think about your own life and how this question and answer affects you personally.
- Is it clear to you why Jesus's death was necessary?
- Does considering the magnitude of what Jesus did on their behalf increase your love for him.
- How could you pray for and speak to those who don't understand the necessity of Christ's death.

QUESTION 24

VIRTUE VISION: Love

Respond to God's great love as displayed in Jesus by writing a love letter to him. You might be able to use some of the words from your collage. Consider how understanding God's love for you affects how you might love others. God's love was costly and sacrificial. How can you love others sacrificially?



Memory Verse

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

(Col. 1:21–22)