



Cherrequine Bible Doctrine Ministries

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THE SUFFERING OF CHRIST

The suffering of the Lord Jesus lasted throughout His whole life, though they culminated in His trial and death on the cross. He experienced the ordinary sufferings of living in a fallen world. He was weary (John 4:6), thirsty (19:28), hungry (Matthew 4:2), sorrowful (John 11:35), and lonely (Matthew 26:56). He felt great grief at human sin and its terrible effects (Matt. 23:37; Mark 3:5; 8:12; John 11:33-35, 38).

He endured human opposition and intense hatred against Himself (Luke 11:53-54; John 15:18, 24-25). He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3).

Moreover, He "learned obedience through what He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8); that is, His moral strength and ability to resist temptation increased with the successful meeting of each more difficult temptation, especially those connected with hardship and suffering. He experienced the sufferings of enduring great temptations without yielding (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 11: 53-54; 22:28; Hebrew 2:18; 4:15; I Peter 2:21-23), especially in the Garden of Gethsemane just prior to His death (Matthew 26:37-38; Hebrew 5:7; 12:3-4).

Here it must be remembered that one who does not yield to temptation most fully feels its force, just as someone who successfully holds a heavy weight overhead feels its force much more than someone who drops it at once.

His humiliation increased in intensity at the time of His trial and death. Physical sufferings connected with crucifixion were terrible, as were the mocking and shame connected with such a death. But even worse were the sufferings in spirit that Jesus experienced when God the Father put on Him the guilt of our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; I Peter 2:22; Isaiah 53:6). The Father turned away His face, so that Jesus was left alone with the blackness of sin and guilt upon Him (Matthew 27:46). Then, as Jesus fulfilled the role of propitiatory sacrifice (Romans 3:25; I John 2:2; 4:10), He bore the fury of the intense wrath of God against sin, and bore it to the end.

The penalty for sin was the spiritual death of Christ (Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23). It was necessary that Jesus Himself die to bear our penalty. His death was not similar to ours. His human spirit and soul was separated from His body and passed into the presence of the Father in heaven (Luke 23:43, 46).

Thus, He experienced a death that is like the one we, as believers will experience if we die in this present age. The knowledge that Jesus has gone through death before us should remove from us the fear of physical death (I Corinthians 15:55-57; Hebrews 2:14-15).

It is not correct to say that Jesus' divine nature died, or could die, if "die" implies a cessation of activity, a cessation of consciousness, or a diminution of power (John 2:19; 10:17-18). Yet by virtue of union with

Jesus' human nature, His divine nature experienced what it was like to go through spiritual death. Whether the divine nature was ever itself the object of divine wrath against sin is not explicitly stated in Scripture.

Jesus' body was laid in a tomb (Matthew 27:59-60), and He continued under the state of physical death for a time. Thus, Jesus' humiliation was complete in that He suffered all the punishment and shame due to fallen mankind as a result of Adam's original sin.

It does not seem correct to say that Jesus descended into hell, at least not according to any sense in which that phrase can be understood today, apart from spiritual meanings which may be assigned to the doctrine of victorious proclamation.