



What Did Jesus Do for You on the Cross?

“He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ’s cross.” (Colossians 2:14, NLT)

Imagine that you lived in the time of Jesus. One day your master caught you stealing and threw you into prison. Years passed. Then the happy day came when you had served your sentence and officials released you from prison. As you left, a prison official handed you a certificate with an important word stamped on it: *Telosisi*, meaning paid in full. You carried the proof everywhere you went. If someone asked, “What are you doing out of prison?” You showed them the certificate. *Telosisi* is the last word Jesus shouted from the cross. *“It is finished!”* (John 19:30b, NLT) What debt had he paid? What had he finished? What does it mean for you?

God uses many words, often unfamiliar, to help us understand what Jesus did on the cross. Although these may be difficult to understand, hang in there! Knowing and understanding what Jesus did for you will change your thinking and your life.

Jesus the Redeemer

Jesus redeemed you. *“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.”* (Ephesians 1:7, NIV) What is redemption? It is buying back something or someone for the purpose of setting it or them free. In the Greek world, this occurred in the *agora*, the market place (like a mall today) where people transacted business. One of the chief commodities in the ancient market was a slave. The Bible says you were once a slave. “All have sinned,” so everyone, including you, was in the slave market of sin.

Picture yourself in this slave market of sin. You cannot run away or buy your way out. Apart from Jesus, you are a helpless sinner. Only the sinless Jesus can pay the price demanded by the Father. What was the purchase price? It was his blood, his life, his death. *“Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.”* (Hebrews 9:22b, NLT) Although unbelievably costly, Jesus paid the price and set you free from the power of sin. You are now free to choose whom you will serve. *“Our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.”* (Romans 6:6, NLT) Can you imagine the joy of a slave when the purchaser removes his chains? Why not express your joy and thanks to Jesus for removing your sin chains, for being your Redeemer?

Jesus the ransom

Jesus gave his life as a ransom (payment for the release of someone) for you. (I Timothy 2:6, NIV) You might think about kidnappings and ransom notes when you hear the word ransom, but in biblical times, a ransom was the price paid to release a slave from the slave market. Jesus paid the ransom price for you.” *For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.*” (I Peter 1:18-19, NIV) How do you think a freed slave would act toward and relate to the person who freed him? How will you act toward and relate to Jesus who freed you from slavery?

Jesus the Justifier

Jesus’ death justified you. Justification is a legal courtroom term meaning to secure a favorable verdict, to acquit, to declare righteous. (Just as if you never sinned.) According to the Bible, because of what Jesus did, God forgives sinners and makes them acceptable in his sight. It is a gift. You cannot earn or work for it by keeping a list of rules. Through faith, God makes you right with himself by removing your sins from your account and placing it in Jesus’ account. He then imputes or credits to your account the righteousness (goodness) of Jesus. *”God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”* (2 Corinthians 5:21, NLT) Now when God looks at you, he sees you clothed with the righteousness of Christ. He accepts and loves you just as he does Jesus. Can you imagine such amazing love?

Jesus the Reconciler

Jesus reconciled or gave you peace with God. *“Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.”* (Romans 5:1, NLT) Before God saved you, you were his enemy. By his death, Jesus brought reconciliation (peace between two people who were enemies). God is now your friend. The Father and Son worked together. *“For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them.”* (2 Corinthians 5:19a, NLT) Now that you are friends, he cherishes an intimate relationship with you. It is your first priority! What plans have you made to devote time to develop this friendship?

Jesus the Atonement

In the Old Testament, the Day of Atonement was the most sacred day of Israel’s year – the only day when the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, the innermost room of the Tabernacle. It was a day of sorrow for sins. To atone is to make amends, to set things right, to reconcile by divine sacrifice. In Hebrew, atonement means, “to cover.” On that day, the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies with an animal (blood) sacrifice for himself and the entire Israelite nation, asking God for forgiveness of their sins. However, an animal sacrifice could not “take away” their sins; it only covered their sin

until Jesus, the perfect atonement, gave his life on the cross and made it possible for God to remove your and their sins forever. (Hebrews 10:10-12) Jesus made atonement by pouring out his blood for you. How thankful are you that you do not have to kill an animal to cover your sins? Does it give you joy to know God did not just cover your sins but took them away?

Jesus the propitiation

Jesus became the propitiation for your sins. Some translations say, atoning sacrifice. It means to satisfy the authorities who enforce the law by paying a penalty. You satisfy them by paying a fine if you are caught for speeding. In the same sense, Jesus satisfied God by paying the penalty for your sin on the cross. *“He is the atoning sacrifice [propitiation] for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”* (1 John 2:2, NIV)

Give thanks

What a wonderful Savior! Does it not fill your heart with thanksgiving at the very thought of what Jesus did for you? Perhaps you would like to burst into praise as the Apostle Paul did: *“How we praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we belong to Christ.”* (Ephesians 1:3, NLT) Think about it! Because you belong to Christ, every blessing (something from God that brings comfort and joy) from heaven is all yours! All you have to do to experience these blessings is to believe what God said, receive these truths by faith and act upon them. Let God’s peace and joy fill you as you begin to understand what he did for you.

Attitude Check:

- How do these truths affect your attitude toward Jesus?

Explore:

- Read, “What God Has Done for You” (in front of the *Student New Testament*.) Write in your journal a prayer of thanksgiving for the most precious thing God did for you.

Talking with God:

- Father, help me to have a deeper understanding of what you have done for me. Give me a deep desire to live as one who has been set free.