

High Desert URC – Heidelberg Catechism Supplement
June 2026

* Read each Heidelberg question and answer before discussing them according to the prompts below.

I. Question and Answer 38

What is the significance of Jesus being condemned by Pontius Pilate, as a temporal judge?

Pilate was an authority ordained by God as the Sovereign King (see Romans 13:1); this was not an accident. In Jesus' trial, Pilate found no fault in him. Thus, it was public record that Jesus was innocent. This was a fulfillment of the Scripture that states, "He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Through faith in Christ, our sin was imputed to Christ and his righteousness was imputed to us.

II. Question and Answer 39

What is the significance of Jesus being crucified in our place?

Paul states this in Galatians 3:13-14: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"--¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith." Although Jesus was completely innocent, he was considered a curse taking on God's eternal wrath in our place.

III. Question and Answer 40

Use your own words to describe the significance of Christ's death in our place.

Because Adam's sin was imputed to us and we thus became sinners who sin instinctively, we deserve to die and suffer the pains of hell for eternity. This represents God's justice, which means sinners must be punished. The only way we could be saved from God's eternal wrath in hell, was the presentation of a substitute. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, was and is perfect because he was sinless and obeyed the Law of God in our place (he is the only substitute). When Jesus, God's Son, died on the cross he took our place and won salvation for us as we have faith in him to do this work.