

# Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

## **Who killed Jesus?**

Even though the actions were carried out by evil men, ultimately God predestined Christ to die to fulfill his plan for the redemption of mankind (Isaiah 53:10; Rom 8:32; Acts 4:27-28).

- a. God works even through the evil deeds of men so that his purpose is accomplished (Gen 50:20).
- b. Ultimately Christ laid down his own life in obedience to the Father. No man could successfully take the life of Christ against his will (John 10:17-18).

For what *purpose* did Jesus die? What did Christ achieve as a result of his suffering, death and resurrection?

1. **To demonstrate the Godhead's immeasurable love for sinners.** Many spurn a God that would send sinners to everlasting torment in hell. But these fail to recognize how much was given up to save us so that we would have a way of escape.
  - c. God showed his love for us for us in giving up his Son unto death (Rom. 5:7,8; John 3:16; 1 John 4:10).
  - d. Christ showed his own love for us in the willingness to give himself up for us (Eph. 5:2; 5:25; Gal. 2:20)
2. **To absorb the wrath of God for us.** (Rom. 5:9) “If God were not *just*, there would be no *demand* for his Son to suffer and die. And if God were not *loving*, there would be no *willingness* for his Son to suffer and die. But God is both just and loving. Therefore his love is willing to meet the demands of his justice.” (John Piper).
  - a. The consequence of sin is death (Ezek. 18:4; Rom 6:23, Gal. 3:10)
  - b. “Propitiation” (atonement sacrifice) in Rom 3:25 and 1 John 4:10 means the removal of God’s wrath by providing a substitute. The wrath is not *cancelled* but diverted to and *absorbed* by Christ instead of us.
3. **To be our perfect substitute.** (Heb 2:10; 4:15) The temptations and extreme physical suffering Christ endured *without sin* proved that he was a substitute that satisfied the righteous requirements of God.
  - a. Christ was both fully human and fully God. He had to be like one of us (flesh and blood). He was tempted and suffered in every way as his brothers and sisters (Heb 2:14,17-18), yet God could say he was a Lamb *without blemish or defect* (1 Pet. 1:19).
  - b. He experienced hunger, anger, grief and pain, yet without sin (1 Pet. 2:22). Being “made perfect through suffering” does not mean he was gradually getting rid of defects, but that, in his life, he was fulfilling the perfect righteousness that he had to have in order to save us.

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- c. His physical suffering was so great that his visage and form (his appearance) were marred more than any man. (Isa. 52:14-15)
- 4. **To pay the penalty of sin in the shedding of his blood.** (Eph. 1:7) When the Bible speaks of the blood of Jesus, it refers to his death. But the mere *bleeding* of Jesus did not accomplish redemption. It was the *bleeding to death* that paid the penalty (Lev. 17:11; Heb 9:22)
- 5. **To conquer death in his resurrection and enable our resurrection from the dead.** Jesus finished the work God gave him to do, and the resurrection was the proof that God was satisfied by raising him up from the dead. In doing that, he conquered the penalty of sin: death. The redemptive work required death and resurrection from the dead. (1 Cor. 15:3-4; 15:17 ).
  - a. His resurrection means that we will be resurrected as well (Rom. 6:5; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:19-21).
- 6. **To cancel the legal demands of the Law against us and give us the righteousness of Christ.** (Col. 2:13) God's law (e.g. the 10 commandments) are holy, true and good. (Rom. 7:12) If we were able to keep the *works* of the Law we would live by them. But we are incapable of keeping them, and those who are *not* in Christ will die by them. For those who *are* in Christ, the record of our bad deeds (including our defective good deeds) were *nailed to the cross*. The record has been cancelled!
  - a. The law can only show us our utter sinfulness (Rom. 3:19-20).
  - b. God could do this in a legal sense because Christ fulfilled all the righteous requirements of the law (Matt. 5:17).
  - c. Now the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us also (Rom 8:3-4) because Christ's righteousness has become our righteousness. God has credited his righteousness to our account (Rom. 5:19, 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9)
- 7. **To become the basis for our justification.** Being forgiven is not the same as being justified. If we are forgiven, we are still guilty, but our crime is not counted. If we are justified, we are declared Not Guilty! In Christ, God looks at us and sees us as Not Guilty! (Rom. 3:24; 5:9).
- 8. **To take away our condemnation.** (Rom. 8:1) The great conclusion to the suffering and death of Christ is: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus." To be "*in Christ*" means to be in a relationship to him by faith.
- 9. **To give eternal life to all who believe in him.** (John 3:16; 3:36). God created us eternal beings (Eccl. 3:11). The longing of the human heart is to live and be happy. God created us in his image and he loves life and lives forever. Our souls will live forever. The opposite of eternal life is not annihilation; it is hell. Christ secures our eternal life and wants us to live with him forever (John 14:2; John 17:24).

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10. **To reconcile us to God.** (Heb. 10:19). When Adam sinned (the Fall), man's harmonious relationship with God was broken. In man's sin, he is an enemy of God. Most people don't feel conscious hostility toward God (although some do), but "the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God." (Rom. 8:7). God took the first step in reconciliation, "while we were enemies". Our part is only to accept Christ.
11. **To give us confident access to the Holiest Place.** In the Old Testament, a precise process of worship was given to the Israelites to follow. These foreshadowed the substance of what was to come in the future (Christ). Only once a year could the High Priest enter the holiest place in the temple where the glory of the Lord appeared. When Christ died, the curtain separating the holiest place in the temple was torn (Matt. 27:51).
  - a. Now Christ is our tabernacle (Heb. 9:11-12). He gives us free access to the Holiest Place where God is (Heb. 10:19-22).
12. **To become a sympathetic and helpful High Priest.** Since Christ was tempted and suffered in every way like us, yet without sin, he is sympathetic and able to help us in our time of need (Heb. 4:15-16).
13. **To take away the fear of death.** (1 Thess. 5:10; Phil 1:21,23; 2 Cor. 5:8)
14. **To rescue us from final judgment.** (1 Thess. 1:10; Heb. 9:28). There is a real judgment coming upon this world (Heb. 10:27; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). However, in Christ, we are safe from the wrath to come.