

Why Did Jesus Die?

By Everett Hardin

The death of Jesus Christ is the focal point of the Bible. His death was foretold in the Old Testament scriptures, was spoken of in plain words by Jesus during His personal ministry, and was fulfilled when Jesus died on a Roman cross in 30 A.D.

The death of Jesus was part of God's foreordained plan for the redemption of mankind. He was "*delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,*" Acts 2:23. Jesus was crucified, not because of His own weakness nor because of the strength of His enemies, but because of the divine plan. "*God commendeth His love for us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life,*" Rom. 5:8-10.

Man's Lost Condition

From the beginning, God decreed that the sinner must die. "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die,*" Ezek. 18:4. The first man, Adam, deliberately chose the path of sin, and mankind from that time until the present has been afflicted by sin, Gen. 2:16-17. Paul wrote, "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,*" Rom. 5:12.

God is no respecter of persons, but He holds each person responsible for his sins. "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The Son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him,*" Ezek. 18:20.

We must be willing to face the fact that man, by his own free choice, has brought upon himself the misery that is everywhere evident. God is holy and righteous and cannot tolerate sin, and must punish sinners. Man is lost due to his own free choice, and he has no grounds upon which to blame God or others. "*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death,*" Jas. 1:13-15. "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,*" Rom. 3:23. We must be willing to admit and confess our sins.

God's Plan For Man

God had a plan from the beginning for the redemption of mankind through the blood of Jesus Christ. This plan was revealed in the Old Testament in shadows and types in that God commanded the blood of animals to be offered for sin. Later God established through the Law of Moses a system of sacrifice for sin, again requiring the blood of animals, to be observed by the Israelites through their generations.

However, the blood of animals could not take away sin. "*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins,*" Heb. 10:4. These sacrifices could not cleanse the conscience of man, could not take his sins away, and could not satisfy the demand of God. But Jesus accomplished in His body what was never accomplished by any other man. "*For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified,*" Heb. 10:14. Jesus obeyed the will of God perfectly; and was thus qualified to become the perfect sacrifice for sin.

Jesus Died For All

Jesus died for sins, **for our sins!** He actually died in our behalf. “*Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood; to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus,*” Rom. 3:24-26.

God’s law had been violated again and again; and yet in this present dispensation He was justifying sinners; and had passed over the sins done aforetime. How could He show He was just in doing so? To ignore sin, or treat them with indifference would wreck His moral government. Justice demands that the guilty be punished and the majesty of the law requires that penalties of the law be inflicted on the guilty. How, then, could God be just in justifying sinners in the present time? Only because Jesus died for us. He suffered the penalties of the violated law. Even though He paid the penalty for redemption for sin and death, He forces no one to accept the freedom He purchased. The plan arranges only that those who believe in Jesus may be justified.

Not only did Jesus pay the full price for sin, once for all, by His death on the cross: but Jesus died for every man— every single individual! “*This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth,*” I Tim. 2:4. Again, reading in Heb. 2:9: “*But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor: that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*”

This simply means that through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ all believers **have the power** or right to become sons of God. John wrote, “*He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name,*” John 1:11-12.

The universality of the gospel is one of its distinctive features. Jesus commanded His apostles: “*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized Shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned,*” Mark 16:15-16.

No one’s sins are so black but what they can be washed clean by the precious blood of Christ. Isaiah wrote “*Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,*” Isa. 1:18.

Jesus has paid the full price for sin, and the gospel is the revelation of what Jesus has done for us. It is now up to you to accept or reject the gospel. Although Jesus died for all, the benefits of His blood are conditioned upon men accepting God’s gift on God’s terms. Salvation is a gift, but even gifts must be accepted.

God’s Great and Final Appeal

In spite of God’s great pleadings and enducements, mankind continued in the practice of sin. Sin continued to dominate the world. But God did not give up His efforts to bridge the gap between Himself and man.

God would try again to make man understand. This time He would provide such a demonstration of His great love for mankind, and so fully expose the horribleness of sin, that none who seek truth would fail to understand. It must be clear-cut and decisive. It must be

strong enough to penetrate the hardness of sinful man and powerful enough to destroy the hold of sin.

Does God love mankind? The answer is found in the cross of Christ. “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,*” John 3:16.

Just how bad is sin? The answer is found in the cross of Christ. Sin nailed Jesus to the cross. It was working in the hatred of the Jewish mob, the cowardice of Pilate, the denial of Peter, the desertion of the apostles, the slander of false witnesses, the lawlessness of the Jewish high court, the mocking, the beatings, and the death on the cross. Jesus underwent all of this because He cares about people who sin. “*But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed,*” Isa. 53:5.

All of God’s actions and appeals are designed for man’s salvation. God “*is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,*” 2 Pet. 3:9. The claims of Jesus are worth investigating; your soul and salvation depends upon it!
