

Why Did Jesus Die on the Cross?



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The Original Sin

Adam and Eve were created pure and full of grace. They had a very personal relationship with God. They would talk with God as they walked in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day (see Genesis 3:8). Then God decided to test their faith in Him by forbidding them to eat the fruit of the “Tree of Life” (Genesis 3:24). If they could remain pure and sinless they would be guaranteed everlasting life in Heaven.

The Snake, the Evil One, tempted them. Unfortunately, they didn’t talk to God about this to seek His advice. Instead they thought God was lying, believed Satan’s words and ate of the fruit. “Then the eyes of both of them were opened” and they realized that they had sinned terribly against God (Genesis 3:7). Indeed, it was a terrible sin because they were full of grace and had turned against God, their Great Friend, their Creator, who loved them.

As a result their punishment was great. They were driven out of the Garden of Eden to suffer on the earth until death. The gates of Heaven were closed to them and to their offspring, that is, all of mankind (see Genesis 3:14-24).

Jesus Christ our Saviour

God did not cease to love mankind whom He created, despite the great Original Sin. He had pity on us and wanted us to come to Him in Heaven. So He sent us His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, true Man and true God. His Son, Jesus, was full of mercy and love. He wanted to save us from our sins and open the gates of Heaven for us. He wanted to take upon Himself all the sins of mankind from the beginning of time to the end of time, in order to pay for and atone for all our sins. This shows us how grievous our sins are to God and how much they hurt Him. So Jesus knew that by offering Himself as the Lamb of God, and shedding His most precious Blood, that God the Father would be reconciled, and grant the opening of the gates of Heaven to receive souls.

We see in the Garden of Olives the tremendous suffering of Jesus because of our sins. “He said to them [the apostles], ‘I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with Me.’ And going a little farther, He threw himself on the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not what I want but what You want... My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done’ (Matthew 26:36-39,42). Then an angel from heaven appeared to Him and gave Him strength. In His anguish He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground” (Luke 22:43-44).

We see that Jesus wanted to do the will of His Father, even to the point of suffering so terribly for us. He knew that His suffering and death on the Cross was necessary in order to redeem us. “[Jesus said,] ‘Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and He will at once send Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?’” (Matthew 26:53-54). Jesus was the Word of God from the beginning of time. He knew the scriptures. He was the One who inspired them: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1,2).

Many Old Testament scriptures prophesied Jesus’ death on the Cross. We read Isaiah’s words of the man of many wounds, suffering for His people for their redemption: “He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering, and acquainted with infirmity... there were many who were astonished at Him—so marred was His appearance, beyond human semblance ... Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush Him with pain. ... He poured out Himself to death ... and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:3,6,10,12; 52:14).

In the Book of Psalms we read about His crucifixion in detail: “‘But I am a worm, and not human; scorned by others, and despised by the people. All who see Me mock at Me; they make mouths at Me, they shake their heads ... I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint ... My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue sticks to My jaws; you lay Me in the dust of death. For dogs are all around Me; a company of evildoers encircles Me. They have pierced My hands and feet; I can count all My bones. They stare and gloat over Me; they divide My clothes among themselves, and for My clothing they cast lots. ... For I am poor and needy, and My Heart is pierced within Me. ... Into Your hand I commit My Spirit’” (Psalm 22:6-7,14-18; 109:22; 31:5).

Jesus then says in the New Testament: “‘For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life (John 3:16). And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life. ... And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself’” (John 3:14,15; 12:32) (see Numbers 21:8,9).

Let us praise and thank Jesus, our Saviour; for all that He has done, is doing, and will do for the salvation of souls. To please Him, may we repent of our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and strive to be holy. Also, we can show Jesus that we love Him by helping Him to save souls by our prayers, our words and our actions.