

## **WHY DID JESUS DIE?**

by D.W. Cloud

Most people agree that Jesus was a wise teacher and a good man, but few can properly answer the question, “Why did Jesus die?”

Jesus was born about 2,000 years ago in Israel in the town of Bethlehem. He was a Jew. Israel is in western Asia. It is located on the Mediterranean Sea between Egypt and Lebanon.

Jesus was not an ordinary man, though. He was the eternal Son of God and the creator of the world. Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, His entire life was written down in the Christian Bible.

The Bible is unique among religious books in that it contains hundreds of prophecies. These are not vague prophecies such as those made by astrologers and fortunetellers. The Bible’s prophecies are very specific. They name the names of people and places; they give exact dates and details.

The Bible contains many prophecies about the coming of Jesus. The prophecies described His birthplace, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His death by crucifixion, and His resurrection.

Jesus grew up in a fairly large family, with brothers and sisters, but his parents were not wealthy. His father was a carpenter and earned a common standard of living. By the time that Jesus was 12 years old he knew more than the religious leaders in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. When he was 30 years old he started his public ministry, traveling around Israel, preaching to large crowds, and doing amazing miracles. On two occasions he fed several thousand people miraculously. He healed every sort of disease, including the blind, the deaf, and the cripple. He raised the dead back to life. He walked on water and quieted raging storms.

The Jewish religious leaders became jealous of Jesus' popularity and they plotted to have him put to death. At that time, the Jews in Israel were under the authority of the Roman Empire, and the Jewish leaders didn't have the power to put anyone to death without permission from the Roman government. Therefore, they told lies about Jesus, claiming that he was trying to overthrow the government, which was not true, in order to have him killed. Eventually the Roman governor ordered Jesus put to death. After they mocked him and beat him cruelly, the Roman soldiers killed Jesus by nailing his hands and feet to a cross and leaving him there to die. This was called crucifixion.

After Jesus died he was buried in the tomb of a wealthy follower. Three days later he rose from the dead, just as he had promised. He was seen by hundreds of people. One time 500 people saw him at the same time. After his resurrection He taught his disciples for 40 days, and then He ascended back to heaven.

Now we come back to the question, "Why did Jesus Die?" The answer is that Jesus died for man's sins.

The Bible says that the first man and woman sinned against God by breaking His commandment. When that happened, man became separated from the holy God and his heart became dark and sinful. Since then, every person who has been born into the world has a sinful nature. This is why it is so easy for us to do wrong. This is why the world is filled with trouble, pain, fighting, war, and sorrow.

God could have destroyed mankind because of sin, but the Bible says God loves men and wants to save them. The most famous verse in the Bible tells us the following good news: "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).

God's only begotten Son is Jesus. He came into the world, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life. Then He died on the cross to bear the

punishment that we owe God because of our sin. We have broken God's laws.

God is a holy God and He is a God of law and justice. He gave His law to men 3,500 years ago and it was written down in the Bible, but all men have broken God's laws. The first law of God says:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me” (Exodus 20:3-5).

Because men have broken God's laws, they must be punished. The Bible says, “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

If I die without receiving forgiveness for my sins, I will be punished forever in a burning hell.

But Jesus took our punishment upon Himself when He died on the cross. Those who believe in Him and receive Him as Saviour will not be punished but will be forgiven and will receive eternal life.

Why did Jesus die? The good news is that he died for your sin. And three days later He rose from the grave. Today He is alive in heaven and He is waiting to receive you. He says:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

The Bible also says:

“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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16-18).

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).

“... if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:9-13).

For suggestions about churches see the church directory at the Way of Life Literature web site: [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org)

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