

Why Did He Have to Die?

Good Friday – and a Remembrance of Passover



Ah what a strange holy day, holiday, remembering... Jesus' memorial.

It's so hard when someone we love dies. And during this time of global crisis, we're surrounded by news of the dying and fear of ourselves or loved ones potentially dying. Let's take a rest from these concerns and in this little window of time, focus our thoughts on why Jesus had to die. We understand more easily human death, if you've lost someone you care about. So strange to see them one day, talk with them, share meals and moments, laughter and arguments, questions, stories, ... just the knowing them, and then they are gone.

And every Good Friday our culture commemorates when Jesus died. That He was born, lived, then was gone. It was violent, confusing, political, disturbing.

Jesus, God's only Son, sent because God so loved the world.

But gone by dying on a cross? Of all the cruel things we do in our culture, it's a bit hard to relate to crucifixion on a cross beam dropped in the ground publicly. We're somewhat more sophisticated when we torture people today, or at least think so. Regardless, why did Jesus have to die? Even if you think you know the answer, let's read some scripture together and remember again. Grab a Bible and piece of paper and as you find the verses, jot down the missing words to fill in the blanks (my version answers at the end if you get stuck in different translation). It will help us to not read too fast and gloss over what the Word of God is telling us.

Let's begin at the beginning...

Genesis 1:1 says, **In the beginning God created the _____ and the _____.**

That included the light, day and night, sky and water, dry ground and the seas, plants, trees, sun moon and stars, living creatures in the sea and birds in the air, creatures on land, and finally, man.

Genesis 1:27 **So God created man in His _____, in the _____ of God He created him; _____ and _____ He created them.**

Genesis 2:7 **the Lord God formed the man from the _____ of the _____ and breathed into his nostrils the _____, and the man became a living being.**

So far so good, but God had one restriction and this is where we don't tend to cooperate.

Genesis 2:16 **And the Lord God commanded the man, You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, _____ you must not eat from the tree of the _____ of _____ and _____, for when you eat of it you will surely die.**

And that's how it came to be...

Before then, nobody had to die. Eve and Adam were told to not eat fruit from one tree. But they did. And perfection was over. **But love was not.** God is so full of mercy and kindness and generosity; He designed a way to save us and still not compromise His divineness that could only have communion with others similar- like-minded and pure, holy. He didn't want us to be forever disqualified from communion and connection with Him, so a price was paid to satisfy the justice necessary to not defile God.



I don't think this is possible for us to fully understand, but we are able to observe the difference between when something is alive, and when it is dead. We get used to death if we live long enough, but do you remember your young first experiences of realizing

things die? A pet, an old person, stepping on ants... somewhere you first figured it out. There's something that changes in that moment, ... an innocence lost. And so it was. After eating from that particular tree, death first became evident, and inevitable. Now all mankind would be locked into a life cycle. A birth to death cycle for everyone and every living thing.

Genesis 3:7 After they ate from it ... **then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they _____ they were _____;**
so they sewed _____ together and made _____ for themselves.



In Genesis 3:10 Adam told God he was afraid because he was naked, and so he hid from Him. And God said, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from that tree?

This was the first invitation, and first missed opportunity to confess sin, but both Adam and Eve skirted the question and lobbed blame at each other and the deceiver. God seemed angry and disappointed; they messed up something really good. And the result was they were hiding from their maker ... behind fig leaves - also made by God. Rather desperate and arrogant. So, they got in terrible trouble, curses were involved and they got kicked out of the most perfect beautiful place anyone could ever have lived on earth.

Can we relate? To the getting in trouble feeling at least? It's so awful when you want to hide, and try to. The regret, brokenness, loss of trust. We run for cover, but what is adequate to cover sin? To cover refusing God? Is it possible God wouldn't notice if we found a way to cover ourselves? But while we're scrambling for cover, God responds.

It's easy to forget... God is love. (1 John 4:8)

He can't change. He can't sin or lie or change His mind or not finish what He starts. So, He still loved them even though they didn't love Him – at least they wanted what they wanted more than what God wanted. But God could see ahead into all of time and saw a great reunion in His own heart and will for His creation, His people, His glory. So, before He kicked them out of the garden...

Gen 3:21 The Lord God _____ of _____
for Adam and his wife and _____ them.

This just hurts my heart in this moment... the sadness for God.

And the mercy and love of God. Have you ever had to dress a broken person? A helpless person? Someone – not a child, who couldn't dress themselves? God did. He looked at their leaves and made better coverings for them. But how very sad was that? He had to kill something He had called good, that He breathed life into. Did Adam and Eve realize or were they already thinking only of themselves, their embarrassment, their curses, their fears, what they lost.... While God, who was so full of joy on day 7, now had to kill something to cover what was lost... lost freedom, love, peace, playful lack of self-consciousness, certainly insecure now and now pain -the first shame. Shame of self, focused on the physical identity, not the spiritual self. How very sad. Grief began. Mourning came. Separation.

But He clothed them.

And one more mercy... **Gen 3:22** **And the Lord God said, The man has now become like _____ (don't miss the preferred pronoun), knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to _____ his hand and take also from the _____ and eat, and live forever.**

So then the Lord banished them from the garden. Sounds a little stingy or bitter at first glance, but God isn't stingy or bitter. Actually, He didn't want Adam and Eve to live forever in that broken state of shame and blame and fear and separation. It's a mercy this sinful life has an expiration date on it. God wanted to heal the result of sin, and He would prove Himself our Redeemer on a future hill later in the journey.

But could we just pause for a second and talk about blood? What is it with **the blood**? Why so gory? So many people give up trying to understand old testament scripture because it's violent and pretty gross. There was a lot of sacrificing going on and a lot of blood. So consider this...

Leviticus 17: 11 For the _____ of a creature is in the _____, and I have given it to you to make _____ for yourselves on the altar; it is the _____ that makes atonement for one's life.

If atonement is a new idea for you, it's enough for now to know that atone means being at – one with God. That was the idea of all the sacrifices, that the animal's blood was a substitute for the person who deserved death for their own sin, but the shed blood provided a substitute sacrifice to permit at-one -ment again or reconciliation with God. Only blood – or life, was precious enough to pay for the sin and remove that separation from God.

Hebrews 9:22 in fact, the law requires that nearly everything be _____ with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no _____.

So here we begin to see how old and new testament relate and what was happening right before Jesus went to the cross.

Passover is a holiday commemorating the Jewish people's exodus from hundreds of years of slavery in ancient Egypt. To summarize, God picked Moses, during a hard time in history when Egypt felt outnumbered and threatened by the Jewish nation (their slaves) and so thought they should throw Jewish baby boys into the Nile. **(Exodus 1:2)**

Such savagery! And so tragic to think this happened again under Rome when Jesus was born in Bethlehem many years later. But like Jesus, Moses also miraculously survived the brutal infanticide. Moses actually got adopted into Pharaoh's family and after some complicated years when Moses realized he was Jewish and went away to figure himself out, God appeared to him and ordered him to go back and lead the Jewish slaves in Egypt into freedom. **(Exodus 3:7-10)** And give Bob Marley something to sing about...

So Moses reluctantly went, and things did get worse before they got better. The Pharaoh didn't like his idea or his God and repeatedly refused. And so God responded with plagues displaying His power and supremacy over false gods, and repeatedly commanding the Pharaoh to let His people go.

Finally, after the terrible last plague, the death of firstborn baby boys, did the Pharaoh relent. The amazing act of God that is still celebrated every year, is that God told Moses to tell the Israelites during this plague to prepare a sacrifice...

Exodus 12:5 says the sacrifice had to be specifically a year-old male lamb without defect, loved for 14 days, then sacrificed at twilight. **12:7** says, **then ... take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the _____ of the houses where they then eat the roasted lambs. ...12:12** that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn -both men and animals – and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see _____, I will _____ you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. ...

12:17 Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread... celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. (leaven or yeast is symbolic of sin – for another study).

So it's worth noticing, that **God whose timing is perfect**; always exceptionally specific and meaningful, thought that Passover was the right time for Jesus to enter Jerusalem for the last time as a man on earth.

Luke 22:7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the _____ had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.

Luke 22:20... after supper He took the cup saying, This cup is the new covenant in _____, which is poured out for you.

Any chance you remember what John the baptist said when he recognized Jesus for the first time? **John 1:29** the next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the _____, who takes away the _____ of the _____."

Please try to see the costliness of this gift. There was nothing more precious, there is nothing more precious or unique and valuable than life. We cherish each other, our friends, family and children even though imperfect. But Christ- His life was holy,

blameless, without sin, the lamb of God. There's nothing that could prove more what you are worth to God the Father, your Creator, your Redeemer. Nothing is more expensive and that's what He willingly paid for your ransom. The law and endless sacrifices couldn't secure our salvation. He, only He could be sufficient once for all.

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore brothers, since we have _____
to enter the Most Holy Place by the _____ of _____,
by a new and _____ way opened for us through the curtain
(read Mark 15:25), that is, His _____...

22- let us _____ to God with a
_____ in full assurance of faith,
having our _____ sprinkled to _____ us from a
_____ and having our bodies
_____ with pure water.

23- Let us hold unswervingly to the _____ we _____,
for He who _____ is _____.

Hebrews 10:5-10 ...when Christ came into the world, He said... sacrifices
and offerings... You did not desire, nor were You pleased with them... Then
He said, Here I am, I have come to do Your will...

10:10- and by that will we have been _____
through the _____ of the _____ of
_____ once for _____.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ _____ for _____ once for all, to
_____ you to _____.

But it gets better!... not that it needs to, but God is wild and does more than we could
ask or imagine... He trades us.

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made Him who had no _____ to be _____ for
_____, so that _____ we might become the
_____ of _____.

Colossians 1:22 But now He has _____ you by Christ's physical _____ through _____ to present you _____ in His sight, without _____ and free from _____.

Such love. Such vision to protect it. Such a rescue plan... from the beginning He knew He wouldn't let anything take us from Him. He treasures you. Let us treasure Him. We all are broken and inconsistent in our efforts to follow Him and worship Him adequately. We are always imperfect and always perfected in Him only. But our attempts to love Him, thank Him, and desire a heavenly eternal relationship with Him, require us to accept this difficult action of God and ultimately Christ, to willingly die a true death, to make atonement for our sins.

Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on _____, the author and perfecter of our _____, who for the _____ set before Him _____ the _____, scorning it's _____, and sat down at the right hand of the _____ of _____.

So, I pray as you consider the depths of His love for you, your love for Him will expand and fill your heart to overflowing. He is worthy of our all.

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's _____ to offer your bodies as _____, holy and _____ to God- this is your _____ act of _____.



Fill in the blank, answers:

Genesis 1:1 Heavens, Earth

Genesis 1:27 own image, image, male, female

Genesis 2:7 Dust, ground, breath of life

Genesis 2:16 but, knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3:7 realized, naked. Fig leaves, coverings

Genesis 3:21 made garments of skin, clothed

Gen 3:22 one of us, reach out, tree of life

Leviticus 17:11 life, blood, atonement, blood

Hebrews 9:22 cleansed, forgiveness

Exodus 12:7 doorframes; 12:12- the blood, pass over

Luke 22:7 Passover lamb; 22:20 my blood

John 1:29 Lamb of God, sin, world

Hebrews 10:19 confidence, blood, Jesus, living, body;

22- draw near, sincere heart, hearts, cleanse, guilty conscience, (remember hiding behind the fig leaves), washed;

23- hope, profess, promised, faithful.

Hebrews 10:10 made holy, sacrifice, body, Jesus Christ, all

1 Peter 3:18 died, sins, bring, God

2 Corinthians 5:21 sin, sin, us, in Him, righteousness, God.

Colossians 1:22 reconciled, body, death, holy, blemish, accusation

Hebrews 12:2 Jesus, faith, joy, endured, cross, shame, throne, God

Romans 12:1 mercy, living sacrifices, pleasing, spiritual, worship