

Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?

- as taken from [Active Christianity Website](#)

God is the source of life; He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. ([1 John 1:5](#)) God's antithesis is Satan, whose realm is darkness and [sin](#) Sin is anything that goes against God's will and His laws. To commit sin is to transgress or disobey these laws. The lust to sin dwells in human nature. In other words, it is contaminated and motivated by the sinful tendencies that dwell in all people as a result of the fall into sin and disobedience in the garden of Eden. This... [More](#). From the beginning God made it clear that sin will lead to death. ([Genesis 2:17](#); [Romans 6:23](#))

## Sin separates us from God

When Satan with his wiles managed to deceive Eve, and in turn Adam to disobedience, sin entered into their nature. This sin came between them and God like a veil, separating them from the source of life. Spiritually speaking, they were dead in their trespasses and sins. ([Ephesians 2:1](#)) Sin had entered the world, which was cursed, and all living creatures also had to die a physical death.

The sin that entered Adam and Eve's nature was passed on to all their descendants. This "[sin in the flesh](#) Sin is anything that goes against God's will and His laws. To commit sin is to transgress or disobey these laws. The lust to sin dwells in human nature. In other words, it is contaminated and motivated by the sinful tendencies that dwell in all people as a result of the fall into sin and disobedience in the garden of Eden. This... [More](#)" is not guilt for committed sins, but a strong inclination to do our own will rather than God's. If we follow this inclination, for example when we are tempted, we [commit sin](#) To commit sin is to consciously do something that you know goes against God's will and His laws. It is when you are tempted by the lusts and desires that dwell in you and you consciously agree to act on that temptation, knowing full well that it is displeasing to God. This "act on" can occur in word, deed, or... [More](#). To help His people stay on the right path, God gave them laws that spelled out His will for them.

Unfortunately, people were incredibly weak and not one person ever managed to keep pure from sin. In fact, even the best of them usually sinned daily in thought, word and deed. In other words, all people were guilty, and Satan could use this as a letter of accusation against them, demanding that they should die. ([Romans 5:12](#)) In the temple, the symbolic house of God on earth, a large, thick veil hung in front of the Holiest of Holies, symbolizing the sin in the [flesh](#) Sin is anything that goes against God's will and His laws. To commit sin is to transgress or disobey these laws. The lust to sin dwells in human nature. In other words, it is contaminated and motivated by the sinful tendencies that dwell in all people as a result of the fall into sin and disobedience in the garden of Eden. This... [More](#) that separated people from God. Anyone passing that veil would die instantly, as no sin could stand in the presence of God.

## Forgiveness through sacrifice

God, in His longsuffering, gave people a chance: by sacrificing an animal without blemish, the people could get forgiveness. Once a year the high priest could enter the Holiest of Holies, carrying the blood of the sacrifice, and obtain atonement for the people. Through the spilling of the blood of an innocent sacrifice, the debt of sin could be paid. ([Leviticus 17:11](#); [Hebrews 9:22](#))

However, the blood of animals couldn't take away the root cause of the problem, the sin in human nature. After their sins were forgiven, the people continued [to sin](#) To commit sin is to consciously do something that you know goes against God's will. This can be in word, deed, or even thought. ([James 1:14-15](#))... [More](#), meaning that they had to come back and sacrifice again, year after year. Not even the high priest could help them; he himself was a sinner, and the sacrifice was for himself just as much as for the people. ([Hebrews 10:1-4](#))

God hated this frightful state of affairs. His longing was to have communion with people and to save them. He looked for someone who could lead the people out of the vicious circle of sinning and forgiveness. But, despite the fact that there were righteous, God-fearing people throughout history, none of them were blameless, and none of them could "stand in the gap" between God and mankind. So then God sent His own Son to carry out this greatest work in history. ([Ezekiel 22:30](#); [Isaiah 41:28](#); [Isaiah 50:16](#); [Isaiah 63:5](#); [John 3:16-17](#))

## **Jesus: a human being in every sense of the word**

Jesus was the Son of God, but He willingly "emptied Himself" and became the "Son of Man" – a human being in every sense of the word, with the same human nature as all of us. This meant that Jesus was tempted as we are. But Jesus was also born of God's Spirit, and this Spirit accompanied Him His whole life, giving Him the strength to carry out the task He was sent for. ([Luke 1:30-35](#); [Philippians 2:5-8](#); [Isaiah 61:1-3](#))

"And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." [Philippians 2:8](#). It was as a man that Jesus had to learn obedience, because, being a man, He had His own self-will, or sin in the flesh, and was tempted. There He learned to deny Himself, "take up His cross daily" and put that sin to death. The result was that He never sinned. ([Hebrews 2:18](#); [Hebrews 4:15](#); [Hebrews 5:7-8](#))

When Jesus spoke out against sin and against the hypocrisy of the religious rulers of the time, He spoke with authority and conviction. But because the death over sin was taking place in His [inner man](#) The outer man is our physical body while we are here on the earth. Our inner man is our everlasting spirit and soul. ([Romans 7:22](#); [2 Corinthians 4:16](#); [Ephesians 3:16](#); [Matthew 10:28](#))... [More](#), hidden from people's sight, He was misunderstood by nearly all His contemporaries. So much so, that in the end, He was arrested and crucified. The pure, righteous, blameless Man died as a criminal, punished for sins He had never committed. Why?

## **Atonement – and a way to follow**

Being blameless, the only human being in all history who was completely pure and without sin, Jesus was the only one who could "stand in the gap," the only one on whom Satan had no claim.

He was the only one who had not deserved death, either physical or spiritual. But, fulfilling the purpose for which He had come to earth, Jesus voluntarily offered Himself. He was crucified as the ultimate, blameless sacrifice. He died as the Lamb of God, the atonement for all mankind. He bore the punishment of all our sins, and died, the just for the unjust. ([Romans 5:10](#); [2 Corinthians 5:21](#); [1 Peter 3:18](#)) Not only did He die a physical death, but He even experienced separation from God while He was hanging [on the cross](#) Jesus was physically crucified on the cross at Calvary. Though blameless, He took upon Himself the punishment for sin, which was death, so He could pay our debts and forgive us our sin if we are willing to believe in Him and follow Him the Apostle Paul wrote: “I have been crucified with Christ...” ([Galatians 2:20](#)) This is a metaphorical... [More](#). ([Matthew 27:46](#); [Mark 15:34](#)) Through this sacrifice, all those who believe in Him are able to obtain forgiveness.

Jesus’ death [on the cross](#) When the cross is mentioned in the Bible, it most often does not refer to a physical wooden cross, except when specifically describing Jesus’ crucifixion on Calvary. “Taking up your cross” refers to the metaphorical cross that Jesus’ speaks about in [Luke 9:23](#). “Taking up your cross” is the act of denying the sinful thoughts that come up in you... [More](#) on Calvary, though absolutely one of the most momentous and powerful events ever on earth, is actually only part of the Christian story. By the strength of the Spirit that was with Him from birth, Jesus had “suffered in the flesh” by denying it and not giving in to the inclination to sin that He had in His nature as a human being. In this way the sin in His flesh was condemned and He “put it to death,” “crucifying” the [lusts and desires](#) The desires that we experience that go against God’s will. In other words, a desire for anything sinful. See [James 1:14](#). Also called “sin in the flesh.” Although the expression “youthful lusts” is often thought of in connection with sinful sexual desires, lusts include anything that go against what is good and right in God’s eyes. ([2 Timothy 2:22](#); Galatians... [More](#). So though He was tempted, He never sinned. ([Hebrews 2:18](#); [Hebrews 4:16](#))

When Jesus died on the cross, He cried out, “It is finished!” At that moment, every last shred of the sin He had inherited in His human nature had been crucified, and His work on earth was finished. When Jesus died, the heavy veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. The debt had been paid; the way back to the Father was open.

Jesus’ [victory over sin](#) “Victory over sin” means that you do not commit conscious sin – that which you know would be sin at that time when you are tempted. It doesn’t mean that you are without sin, but that temptation is overcome before it can become sin. ([Romans 8:37](#); [1 Corinthians 15:57](#); [Revelation 2:7](#))... [More](#) was also a victory over death. He did not remain in the grave, but arose from the dead with a glorified body, containing the whole fullness of God’s own nature. Forty days later He ascended to heaven, where He is sitting today at the right side of His Father. ([Philippians 2:5-11](#); [Colossians 2:9](#))

## Jesus’ brothers!

So how was Jesus’ crucifixion and sacrifice different from the sacrifice and forgiveness in the Old Covenant? How does Jesus’ death on the cross take away the sin in our flesh? Why are we still tempted? This is because forgiveness alone was not the ultimate goal of Jesus’ life, nor is it the ultimate goal of a Christian. In fact, forgiveness is only the beginning. Jesus Himself

indicated this very clearly: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **daily**, and follow Me.” [Luke 9:23](#).

Jesus’ purpose was not only to be the atoning sacrifice for people’s sins. He wanted disciples, those who follow Him. We can’t follow Him to the death on the cross on Calvary, but we can take up our cross daily!

By following Him on this way, we become His disciples, and He sends us His Holy Spirit to give us the same strength that He had to overcome sin. We also [suffer in the flesh](#) The Bible often mentions suffering. Though this can refer to outward, physical suffering, in the New Covenant it mostly applies to the suffering that occurs when you deny your own sinful lusts and desires and put them to death. It is an inner suffering that occurs because your lusts are not being satisfied, rather than a physical, outward one –... [More](#), we also crucify the flesh with its [lusts](#) The desires that we experience that go against God’s will. In other words, a desire for anything sinful. See [James 1:14](#). Also called “sin in the flesh.” Although the expression “youthful lusts” is often thought of in connection with sinful sexual desires, lusts include anything that go against what is good and right in God’s eyes. ([2 Timothy 2:22](#); Galatians... [More](#) and desires, we also [put to death](#) Is to overcome the temptations to sin that arise when our lusts and desires draw us to react in ways we know to be evil (i.e. pride, hatred, evil-speaking, envy etc.) It is the act of denying those thoughts and refusing to agree with them. The lust to sin is not only suppressed, but it actually dies. ([Romans 8:13](#); Colossians... [More](#) the “[deeds of the body](#) Deeds of the body are things we realize are wrong only after we have done them, because the Holy Spirit points them out to us; our eyes are opened to the fact that they were wrong. Therefore, anything wrong that we do unconsciously—without our mind or our enlightened self agreeing to it—is a deed of the body. There is no... [More](#)” by the Spirit and, *we also cease from sin, we become “members of His body,” we become Jesus’ brothers, and we become partakers of [divine nature](#) God’s nature, or divine nature, is perfectly pure and it cannot be tempted by evil. We are promised that we can be partakers of the divine nature by fleeing the corruption in the world that comes through our lusts. As we gradually overcome our sinful human nature it is replaced by divine nature – God shares His own nature with... [More!](#) ([1 Peter 4:1-2](#); [Galatians 5:24](#); [Romans 8:13](#); [1 Corinthians 12:12-14](#); [Hebrews 2:11](#); [2 Peter 1:2-4](#))*

Jesus’ death on the cross of Calvary was the culmination of His incredible work of love for us people. By His death He reconciled those who *believe* in Him with God, and through His life He opened a way back to the Father for those who *follow* Him. Through death over sin, Jesus conquered death. ([Hebrews 2:14-15](#)) By His life He gave us life. May His sacrifice not be in vain – may He have many disciples, whom He is not ashamed to call His brothers!