

# Why Did Jesus Die?

January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Romans 3:21-26

## "Why Did Jesus Die?"

Nearly everybody here knows the answer to that question - right?

~ You're thinking, *"What a basic question to ask..."*

~ *"Jesus died to save people from their sins..."* ~ or some variation

~ That's true ~ but it's **not** the answer to my question...

*"Why did Jesus die?"* ~ *"to save people from their sins..."*

~ That is a good answer ~ And it **is** an answer given in this text

~ But it's the **second** answer given

~ Another answer is given that takes precedence

~ And it has nothing to do with man's salvation...

But before we talk about that...

~ Let's first review Romans to this point

## Paul - God's Prosecutor

Romans 1:1-15 ~ Introduction

Romans 1:16-17 ~ Sneak peek at gospel and faith

Romans 1:18 - 3:20 ~ Extent and Effect of Sin

~ they "suppress the truth in unrighteousness"

~ they are "without excuse"


~ "although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God"

~ "professing to be wise they became fools"


~ they "exchanged the truth of God for a lie"

Paul is God's **prosecutor** arguing the case against mankind

~ God is the plaintiff... Mankind is the defendant...

~  **Read Romans 3:10-18** ~ all are guilty ~ all deserve death

~ Closing statement for the prosecution ends with...

~  **Read Romans 3:19-20** ~ ringing in ears...

**Transition:** Paul has shut all people up into sin and slammed the door...

## Good and Bad Buts

**Buts... (128 in Romans alone...) This is the 15<sup>th</sup>...**

**But** is a very common word... (51 excluded from Exhaustive Concordance)

It occurs in Romans 128 times ~ 8 per chapter ~ This one in 3:21 is the 15<sup>th</sup>

~ I would argue this one is one of the most (if not **the** most) important

The word **but** causes you to flip things around

~ It qualifies and narrows a statement, sometimes reverses it...

III: Think of an argument as a Rubik's cube in your hand

~ Each time spin it around to examine another side is a but

Buts are of 2 kinds ~ good buts and bad buts

~ By my count bad buts outnumber good buts by > 2:1

**A Glorious but...**

 **Read Romans 3:21-22**

This is **not** just a good but... **This is a glorious but...**

~ We are condemned by creation...

~ We are condemned by our actions...


~ We are condemned by our consciences...

~ We are condemned by the law and the prophets

~ III: Movies where all escapes slam shut as they approach them...

~ "Paul has shut everyone up in a prison of sin, shame and guilt..."

Then he said... **BUT...** and opened the prison door

 **Read v21 ~ How were people saved prior to the coming of Christ?**

~ By **FAITH** ~ from Adam and Eve to Anna and Simeon in the temple...

 **Job states this best in Job 19:25-27**

*For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth;  
And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God,  
Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.  
How my heart yearns within me!*

**Transition:** Let's look closer at this righteousness of God in vss 24-25...

## Righteousness of God (apart from the law)

 **Read v24-25b ~ Righteousness (apart from the law) Explained**

justified - "declared as righteous - free from condemnation"

freely - "without cost or effort on your part" - "*not even court costs*"

grace - "unmerited favor of God"

redemption - "payment of a ransom" - "*taken captive...*" 2 Tim 2:26

propitiation - "a sacrifice which satisfies"

*"By an unearned act of God's mercy we are declared righteous.*

*Jesus paid our ransom price through the only means possible -  
sacrifice of Himself."*

Now - let's return to the question...

**"Why did Jesus die?" ~ Jesus died to save us from our sins...**

Salvation of sinners was:

~ made possible by Jesus' death...

~ an express purpose of Jesus' death...

~ accomplished by Jesus' death...

But there is another reason ~ unrelated to salvation of mankind

 **Read 3:25-26**

**Question:** "*Why did Jesus die?*"

**Answer:** "*to demonstrate the righteousness of God*"

**Question:** *What would this demonstration result in?*

**v26 ~ That God might be:**

1) just, and the

2) justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus

**Question:** "*Why did Jesus die?*"

**Answer:** "*that God might be just*"

**Transition:** *Why might people think God unjust?*

# God's Forbearance

 **Read 3:25b ~ "because in the forbearance ... committed."**

*"What does this phrase refer to specifically?"*

All of the sins from the day of creation to the day of the crucifixion

## Examples of these sins

Adam & Eve ~ disobedience, idolatry, murder

~ God made them coverings of animal skins

Cain ~ envy, covetousness, murder

~ God didn't execute Cain for murder

Noah ~ wickedness

~ 120 years lifespan given because of wickedness

~ God destroyed mankind because of wickedness

Babel ~ disobedience, pride

~ God confused languages to spread people out

patriarchs ~ envy, covetousness, idolatry, disobedience to parents, lying

~ Yet Abraham is credited as righteous because of his faith...

Moses ~ fearful of man, not circumcising sons, disobedience c/rock

~ Sacrificial system formed within Judaism

King David ~ adultery, murder

## Gradual Revelation of God's plan

creation: Natural revelation

patriarchs: dreams, visions, sacrifices

Mosaic law: written code, ceremonial laws

prophets: restraining wickedness

## God's Forbearance Cost Him

God "winked" at these sins (Acts 17:30 - KJV) ~ "overlooked"

Animal blood didn't cover these sins ~ they were set aside by God

**Transition:** Earlier in Rom 3:20 I spoke of all people being imprisoned

# God's Problem

## People problem ~ God problem

Paul had shut everyone up in a prison cell of guilt ~ escape was impossible

~ The 'but' in 3:21 was the key to that prison cell


~ Mankind had a problem and this but was the answer to it...

But this but also solved a problem for God ~ *piece of God's plan*

~ Man's problem was due to his selfishness and sinfulness

~ God's problem was due to His mercy and patience in not punishing sin


~ Every sin He overlooked was an affront to His glory

~  **Romans 3:23** ~ Sin is to "*fall short of the glory of God*"


God's forbearance opened Him to the accusation of being soft against sin

~ of being unholy ~ not honoring His Word ~ not glorifying Himself

## People in Scripture often cry out to God for justice...

 Habakkuk 1:2 ~ "*O LORD, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, "Violence!" And You will not save.*"

Yet Scripture also speaks of His mercy...


 Psalm 103:8-10 - "*The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities.*"

 2 Samuel 12:9-13 ~ Nathan confronts King David

~ v13b "*The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die*"

~ Just like that ~ David doesn't have to answer for adultery and murder

~ Sin is 'put away' ~ This is what overlooked means...

 Ps 103:12 - "*As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.*"

~ God removed them from us... But He still had to deal with them...

God's glory was being despised by sinners...

Rather than vindicating His glory and His honor by slaying us...

He vindicated His glory by slaying His Son...

He had to do one of the two...

## Closing: God's Glorious Plan

### The Council of God

In eternity past, before time began ~ God purposed to glorify Himself  
This plan is described in Isaiah 49...

 **Read Isaiah 49: 1-7a "Listen ... Servant of Rulers"**

### Why didn't God execute Cain for killing Abel...?

All sin deserves punishment by death

~ But this murder seemed so heinous and cruel... so pointless...

~ I want Cain to die for murdering Abel ~ It is unjust that he doesn't...

Yet it's also an injustice that Adam and Eve didn't die immediately...

~ But I don't want Adam & Eve to die for disobeying God's Word

~ I don't see their sin as so bad... But God did...

It was Adam and Eve's sin that set us on this path... not Cain's...

God is long-suffering...

~ Jesus told us "*God sends rain on the just and the unjust.*"

~ But every sin that has been committed will be accounted for...

~ God's glorious perfection requires it...

William Gladstone, a Prime Minister of Great Britain in the late 1800's

*"Justice delayed is justice denied!" ~ "Is that true here?"*

"Is God unjust because He delays?" ~ Perhaps we are... but not God...

Peter writes in 2 Peter 3:9 that God is "*longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*"

Yes ~ The death of Christ proves not only the righteousness of God

but also the depth of His love for us... ~ God could have punished us.

That would have been consistent with His justice.

Instead He punished His Son in our stead. And Job's words will be fulfilled..

*I know that my Redeemer lives - and in my flesh I shall see God.*

***How my heart yearns within me!***

## Small Group Questions

### **Why did Jesus die?**

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1. What popular answer was not seen to be the best answer to this question?
2. What occupation was Paul described as fulfilling for God in Rom 1:18 to 3:20?
3. Do you have a favorite phrase from the first 3 chapters of Romans? What is it?
4. Why is the word 'but' in Romans 3:21 considered by the speaker to be so important?
5. Was this righteousness apart from the law still dependent upon law keeping? Explain...

#### Definitions:

justified - "judged as righteous and worthy of salvation"

freely - "without cost or effort on your part"

grace - "unmerited favor of God"

redemption - "payment of a ransom"

propitiation - "a sacrifice which satisfies"

*"By an unearned act of God's mercy we are declared righteous. Jesus paid our ransom price through the only means possible - sacrifice of Himself."*

6. Why did Jesus die?
7. Do you agree with the phrase 'Justice delayed is justice denied?'