

## WHY CHRIST DIED ON A CROSS

By Henry T. Mahan

1Peter 3:18

TV-498a

Henry Mahan T. Tape Library

Zebulon Baptist Church

6088 Zebulon Highway

Pikeville, KY 41501

I would like for you to pull up a chair and pay close and careful attention to my message today. I want us to study a subject. Now, here's the subject, the title for the message, "**Why Did Christ Jesus Die On The Cross?**" Everybody knows that Jesus Christ was born into this world about 2,000 years ago. He lived on this earth and everybody knows that He died on the cross at Calvary, almost 2000 years ago. But, here's the question, why was it necessary for the Son of God to die on a cross? Now, I could give you several passages of scripture, answering that question, but I'm going to use just one.

I want you to open your Bibles to **First Peter, Chapter 3, verse 18**. Peter, in this first verse of scripture, this general epistle to all believers, gives us an answer to this question, "why did Jesus Christ die on the cross?" And here's the text, First Peter, 3:18, "*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Holy Spirit.*" Now, here's the gospel of redemption, declared in plain words, which cannot be misunderstood, "why Jesus Christ our Lord died on the cross."

Here are five answers to that question. First of all, Peter says this, "*Christ hath suffered for sins;*" He died for sins. He didn't die for His own sins; He had none. He died for our sins. Our sins were laid upon Him. He had no sins, but He suffered for our sins. Isaiah writing about His death, said this; "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him, and by His stripes, we are healed.*" Quote that verse over again, and put your name in the place of those personal pronouns. It says; "*He was wounded for my transgressions, He was bruised for my iniquities, the chastisement of my peace was upon Him, and by His stripes, I'm healed.*" Put your name in that place. Now, that's why He died, He suffered for sins, not for His sins. He suffered for our sins.

Paul, in writing in First Corinthians, Chapter 15, said this; "*Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which you have received, wherein you stand, and by which you're saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, how that Jesus Christ died for our sins. He died for our sins according to the scriptures.*" That's why He died. He suffered for our sins.

You know, when the Passover Lamb was slain, and God was going to use Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land, and He said, "I'll pass through it at midnight, and the firstborn in every home will die, except in the homes, where the blood is on the door. And He told the Israelites to take a lamb, the firstling of the flock, without spot or blemish, a lamb for a house. Slay that lamb and offer it as a sacrifice, and put the blood on the door. When I pass through at midnight in judgment on the whole land of Egypt and I smite the firstborn in every home, when I see the blood, I'll pass over you." And someone preaching on that subject said, "there was death in every home in Egypt, except in the homes of the Israelites, where the blood was on the door." And I say this; there was death in every home. There was not any home where there was not death. With the Egyptians, the firstborn died. In the home of the Israelites, the lamb died. But there was death when God passed through in judgment; there was death in every home. But the death of the substitute spared the firstborn. And that's what I'm saying to you right now.

When the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, He died for sins, our sins. And He paid the debt. We don't die, because He died, but there's death. Sin demands death. And He suffered for our sin. Now watch this word here, He suffered (for). Christ also suffered (for) our sins in the stead of, in the place of the sinner; He died. He reconciled us unto God. The scripture says this, "*He put our sins away.*" Where did He put them? "*He separated them from us as far as the east is from the west.*" The scripture says, "*He cast them into the depths of the sea; He remembers them no more.*" This is a beautiful verse. He made an end of sin; He suffered for our sins. He made an end of sin. Notice this word, "*He suffered for sins.*"

You know, we're not only talking about physical suffering. When I hear people preach about the death of Christ, they invariably talk about the crown of thorns. The crown of thorns was terrible, pressing into His brow, the scourging of His back and the awful nails in His hands and feet. These physical sufferings, though terrible, as they were, are not to be compared with His spiritual suffering. The scripture says, "*He made His soul an offering for sin.*" For our sins, were from the cradle to the grave. "*He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.*" Our Lord suffered; soul agony. When He was in the garden of Gethsemane praying, "*that He sweat as if it were great drops of blood.*" And, He cried unto the Father, this was before Calvary; this was before the crown of thorns, before the whip, before the nails, before the spear. He cried before the Father, "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.*" Christ suffered! Now, that's what suffering for sin is. It's (soul) agony. It's (soul) suffering. Christ made His (soul) an offering for sin. He actually bore our hell. Why did He die? He suffered for sins. For, and in the place of and in the stead of, He reconciled us to God. And He suffered, oh how He suffered, and we don't have to suffer, because He did.

Now, here's another word that's most important. "*Christ also once, suffered for sin.*" Once Christ, that's Who it is, the Son of God Who suffered; and He suffered (soul) agony. And He suffered for our sins, our transgressions, but suffered once.

*“Christ hath also once suffered for sin.”* Hebrews 9:28, says this, *“For Christ was once offered to bare the sins of many, once offered.”* **Hebrews 10:14**, says this, *“By one offering He hath perfected forever, them that are sanctified.”* Why did He die? In this one verse here, First Peter 3:18, *“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins. He bore our sins in His body on the tree.”*

All right, look at the next statement, *“He died the just for the unjust.”* He suffered for sins and He died the just for the unjust. Now, you who are familiar with the Word of God; you have studied the Bible. You know that the Bible, in several places, our Savior is called the Just One. Capital, J-U-S-T; the Just One. You know, when Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus, met God and the Lord blinded him and the Lord told him to go into Damascus to a street, called, Straight. He said He would send someone to him to preach to him and to tell him what to do. He went to Damascus and he was there, sometime, and a man called Ananias came to him, and this was the message that Ananias brought to Saul of Tarsus. He said, *“Brother Saul, receive thy sight;”* that’s the first order of business; receive thy sight.

Then here’s the message that he delivered: He said, *“Brother Saul, the God of our Fathers, hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest see the Just One,”* the Just One. The Lord Jesus Christ is called the Just One. In Isaiah 45:21, He said, *“I am a Just God and a Saviour.”* In Genesis 18:25 *“Shall not the Judge of the earth do right?”* Our God is a Just God, a righteous God, a Holy God, and a God of Justice. Ecclesiastes, 7:20 says this, have you seen this in the scripture? *“There is not a just man on the earth, not one.”* Not a J-U-S-T, holy, righteous, honest, just, man of integrity on the earth. *“There’s not one on the earth that doeth good and sinneth not.”* No, there isn’t! Never has been, not among the sons of Adam, from the time that Adam fell, to this present day. *“There’s not a just man on the earth that doeth good and sinneth not.”*

But there was one, and He’s called the (Just One); and that’s the Lord Jesus Christ. He’s perfectly Holy in His nature. He was born without sin, conceived of the Holy Ghost, born without a human father, and did not partake of Adam’s sin. He was Holy in His life. The Heavenly Father said, *“This is my Son, in whom I’m well pleased.”* He was Holy in His deeds. He went about doing good. He was Holy, harmless, and undefiled. God called Him, *“My Righteous Servant.”* He died the Just One, for the unjust. Why did He die on the cross? He was the Just One, dying for the unjust one. He died the Just One, for the unjust that He might satisfy God’s law in their stead, and room and place.

Romans 3:26, listen, *“He died, the just for the unjust that God may be Just and justify the ungodly and all who believe on Christ.”* In simple terms, and I go over it on this telecast, and have for 20 years, over and over and over again. Will you hear me? Will you hear me again? I’ll say it again, in simple terms; the Law of God has been broken. *“We have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.”* The Law of God’s been broken. The Justice of God says, *“that sin must be punished. The soul that sinneth, shall surely die.”*

Almighty God cannot be Just, He cannot be Holy and Righteous and set us free without our sins being paid for and without our sins being punished. But, if one can be found among the sons of men. If one can be found that can be called the Just One, or the Holy Righteous One. If one can be found who can offer a ransom. If one can be found who can obey the law perfectly and satisfy God's Justice. If one can be found, then God can be Just and Justify. If that One will take our place, in our room and in our stead and meet that awful law, obey it and meet that awful Justice and satisfy it, and that's what He's says in Galatians 3:13, "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*" Christ hath redeemed us, delivered us, set us free from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

When Abraham was told by God to take his son upon Mount Mariah and sacrifice him, he did just that. He took his son up there and bound him and put him on the altar. And he was about to slay him, and God spoke and said, "*do the child no harm; look behind you.*" Abraham looked back behind him and there was a ram caught in the thicket. And he took Isaac from off the altar and put the ram in his place. And the ram was slain, and shed his blood as an offering for sin.

We're the guilty ones, but God took us from off the altar of justice, and holiness, righteousness and the law and put Christ there in our stead. The perfect One who had no sins of His own. He suffered for sin, not His, but ours. He died the Just One, the Holy One for the unjust. Now, God can be Just and Justifier, substitution and satisfaction.

All right, **the third** reason why Christ died on the cross. He suffered for sins, our sins. He took our place. He died the Just One for the unjust, that God may be Just and Justify folks, like you and me. The price has been paid. The law's been kept. Justice has been honored. The law's been satisfied; the debt's been paid in our room and stead, by the Just One, who had no sin.

**Thirdly**, it says here, in **first Peter 3:18**, "*He died that He might bring us to God.*" You know, back in the Old Testament, when God pictured sinners coming before the Lord, there was a tabernacle. Now, in that tabernacle were two sections. There was one called the holy place and in the holy place there was a candlestick that gave light in the holy place. There was a showbread, 12 loaves of bread, one for each tribe of Israel. And there was the burning incense. There was a second veil, a thick, heavy veil, 4 to 5 inches thick, from ceiling to floor, from wall to wall. And behind that veil, was the Holy of Holies. And in that Holy of Holies, was an ark. In that ark, was the Ten Commandments, which God gave to Moses; the Law of God, which we have broken, against which we've sinned. And over that broken law, over that ark was a mercy seat. The scripture says, "*into that holy of holies with the high priest alone, once a year,*" the high priest, a man God selected to represent God to the people and the people to God, he'd go in once a year, alone, not without blood which he offered for himself and for the people. And that went on for years, and years, and years, until Christ came, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's our High Priest and He's the Lamb slain. And when He died on the cross, the veil in the temple was torn into. The Holy of Holies was opened and Christ, the scripture says, "*Christ being a High Priest of good things to come, not by the blood of lambs, but by His own blood, He entered once into the Holy Place.*" Not the holy place made with hands. Not the temple in Jerusalem, but into Heaven itself, in the presence of God. He went into the presence of God and obtained for us eternal redemption.

You see, every time, back in Old Testament days, for millenniums and decades and centuries, that old high priest went once a year, different ones of them, went once a year into that holy place, the Shechinah glory of God dwelt over the mercy seat. He made atonement, a sacrifice over that broken law, once a year until Christ came. And by one offering, "*He perfected forever, them that are sanctified.*" He's our Mercy Seat, He's our Sacrifice, He's our High Priest and He's our Advocate. He went into the very presence of God and He took us with Him. He said, "*I'm the good shepherd, other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them I must bring.* Bring where? Bring to God.

*"He suffered for sin, the just for the unjust to bring us to God; and therefore, having a High Priest over the House of God, let us draw near, having boldness. Let us enter into the Holy of Holies, by the blood of Jesus."* That's clear from the scripture; isn't that clear? Our sins have separated us from God. There's no way back to God. Sin is dealt with by Christ, and is put away by Christ. The law is satisfied, honored and justice is satisfied; and our perfect Lord takes us to the Father.

How does He take us? Well, "*Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and is able to present you faultless, before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy. To the only wise God, our Savior be glory, majesty, dominion and power for now and forever.*"

Why did He die? "*To bring us to God.*" Holy, unblameable, unreprouvable in Him. Faultless, He presents us, He brings us before the presence of God. And that is the only way that a man can come before God, (faultless). The only way he can be faultless is not in himself, but in Christ. That's because, "*Christ suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.*"

Now, I want you to watch this. His death had to do with our sins. He saved His people from their sins. His death had to do with God's Justice. He enabled God to be Just and Justifier. His death had to do with the Holiness of God, the Holy, Shechinah Glory of God. We're able to come before God's presence now, in Christ. His death had to do with our death. It says here, "*He was put to death in the flesh.*" Jesus Christ died on that cross as a man; He was a man. "*He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took on Himself, the likeness of sinful flesh*" He died in the flesh. In the flesh He died.

Listen to me now; listen carefully. One word that is always associated with the flesh is what? You say, "Well sin;" that's true, but I'm thinking of another, death. *"It's appointed unto men, once to die. As in Adam, all die. By one man, sin entered this world and death by sin, so death passed upon all men."* So, I'll tell you this, If you're a human being, you're going to die, and I'm going to die. That's one word that is associated with the flesh; it's got to die. God said, *"You're flesh, you're made from the dust and you're going back to the dust."* All flesh will die.

What's another word that is associated with the flesh? Sin, death, fear; the fear of death. Most older people, especially, know about this. I'm afraid to die; that's what people tell me. I'm afraid of what's out yonder, and who's out yonder. I'm afraid to die.

What's another word associated with flesh, sin, death and judgment? *"It's appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment."* So here we are in the flesh (I in the flesh, you). You've got to die. We're afraid to die. After death is judgment. What are we going to do about it? There's nothing we can do about it, but the Lord did something about it. He died in the flesh and when He died in the flesh, He took away the sting of death. My people don't die, He said, "they sleep!" Their souls don't die; their souls go to God. When this tabernacle is laid aside, our body goes to the ground, but our soul goes to God, who gave it. He took away the sting of death and He took away the fear of death. We don't fear death.

Paul said, *"To die is gain. I have a desire to part and be with Christ, which is far better."* He took away the judgment. There is no judgment to them who are in Christ Jesus. *"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God."* Yes, there is no judgment. So, I tell you, why did he die? To put away our sins, to enable God to be Just and Justifier, to literally bring us, sinners, holy, faultless and present us before the Holy matchless throne of God. He's going to take away, annihilate, obliterate, the sting of death, the fear of death and the judgment after death. No judgment.

Now, last. Why did He die? It says in the last line of this verse, *"That He was quickened, and made alive by the spirit."* What's quickened? Quickened, is made alive by the Spirit. Our Lord arose from the grave. He had to die, to put away our sins. He had to die to satisfy justice, He had to die to conquer death and to bring us to God. He also had to die that He might rise. The only people that rise from the dead are those who die. The only people that walk out of the grave are those that have been in the grave. And so our Lord Jesus Christ died that He might be risen. Also, because He lives, we live.

Preacher, what proof do you have that the dead will rise? There isn't but one proof. There isn't anyway in this world, to prove that graves will open and men will come forth, but one way. You cannot come up with secularly, politically, religiously, or socially, but there is one proof that men will rise from the grave and that is that,

Christ arose. There's no other proof. If you're going to die, which you are, and you hope to rise; you've got to believe on Christ. That's the only proof in the universe that men rise from the dead; and that is that Christ arose. If He arose not, we arise not. If He did not come forth, we are false witnesses of God. If He does not live, no one is going to live. *"If He's not the Son of God who died on the cross and rose from the grave, we are false witnesses of God and you're yet in your sins, and of all men most miserable."* He lives. And because He lives, we live. He died for our sins, according to the scriptures. And He arose again according to the scriptures.