

Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

Intro: One of the marks of humanity is the search for meaning. We have an innate need to seek out the answer to "Why?" We want to know there's some reasoning, some meaning, for suffering and for life. This week's question is one that has been asked by Christians since the moment of the crucifixion. The answer that Jesus died because He was a perceived threat to the Roman government and a threat to the religious rulers simply rings hollow and not quite "good enough." Paul was the first to wrestle with the issue in writing, though the Gospel writers followed soon afterwards (Paul wrote several of his letters to churches before the Gospels were written). Although theologians have provided lots of thoughts about the ultimate meaning of Jesus' death, the fact is we must begin with the Scriptures and not with our own conjecture. As a theologian (that would be you as you study thoughts on God), you will have to wrestle with your own answer to the ultimate question of Christianity. And when you do, you'll discover how to share that answer with those who may be wondering.

What the Bible Teaches: Break into Groups of Four, read the following Bible verses, and discuss the questions. You may want to jot down notes and thoughts on the back of this page.

There are two levels of answers to the question "Why did Jesus have to die?" How do these Scriptures answer the question?

Mark 3:1-6; John 10:30-33; John 11:46-50; Luke 23:20-24

What do these Scriptures teach about why Jesus had to die?

Hebrews 2:9-15; Mark 10:45; Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Peter 2:21-24

What were the results of Jesus' death?

2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:10-11; Hebrews 9:15; Revelation 12:7-11

What I Believe: Take ten minutes for silent reflection and thought. Ask yourself what you believe about the reason Jesus died. Use the back of this page to formulate a response to the question:

"Why did Jesus have to die?"

Write your final response here: _____

Articulations: Pair up with one other person and share your response with one another. Take five minutes each. Try to *not* look at your written statement; instead, try to tell your beliefs from your heart. This will prepare you to share whenever you are asked about what you believe.

Therefore: Jesus said His followers should Go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). One of the first steps in making disciples is being ready and able to share the reason for the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15), in other words, knowing what we believe, why, and then being able to share it. Sharing your faith is important. This week, find someone—it can be *anyone*—and articulate your belief about this issue. If you have an unchurched/unreached friend whom you can share with, all the better (you can always say you have a homework assignment from church and you'd like to share it with them). Be ready to talk about your experience next week over the meal at your House Church.