

01 | Cross

Salvation in a nutshell



Introduction

The most important event in all of history was the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without the cross, there would be no Christianity, no hope and no eternal life. Many people in the world don't even know that Jesus died for them let alone why He died, and many Christians cannot aptly explain why Jesus had to be crucified, and its importance.

At highschool, a friend of mine asked me why Jesus had to die for him. Even though I had attended church all of my life, and I had all the clichéd answers, I could not adequately answer his searching question. This concise study attempts to explain sin, sacrifice, and salvation. I hope it will help you to better understand and explain why Jesus died for you.

Sin

God created mankind in His own image, to have an abundant life and to have a relationship with Him. He did not make us like robots, automatically loving and obeying Him, but gave us a will and complete freedom of choice.

Adam and Eve chose to wilfully disobey God by eaten the forbidden fruit and Sin and death entered the world. Mankind inherited this sinful nature through Adam.

*¹²When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. **Romans 5:12 (NLT)***

We can plainly see the effects of man's sinful nature throughout history. In a nutshell: pain, destruction, sickness, and death. Many people ask why there is so much pain and suffering in the world? The culprits are ourselves. Man's sin, and the consequences of that sin are to blame.

*¹⁹When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, your lives will produce these evil results: sexual immorality, impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, ²⁰idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, ²¹envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other kinds of sin. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. **Galatians 5:19-21 (NLT)***

Sin caused mankind to be eternally separated from God.

*²But there is a problem—your sins have cut you off from God. Because of your sin, he has turned away and will not listen anymore. **Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)***

*²³For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard. **Romans 3:23 (NLT)***

God is perfect and holy (sin cannot be in His presence), and because mankind is sinful, there was no way we could ever be reconciled to God or have a relationship with Him. Every one of us has sinned and is guilty of disobeying God. The punishment for this is eternal separation from Him, in other words... Hell.

*⁴⁶And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life." **Matthew 25:46***

*²³For the wages of sin is death... **Romans 6:23a (NLT)***

How many times do you have to steal to be a thief?

- a. just once
- b. a few times
- c. many times

How many times do you have to murder to be a murderer?

- a. just once
- b. a few times
- c. many times

How many times do you have to sin to be a sinner?

- a. just once
- b. a few times
- c. many times

The answer to all 3 questions, is of course 'a'.

Sacrifice

From the beginning of time a blood sacrifice has been required to atone (cover over) sin. Because the wages of sin is death, something or someone has to die as a punishment for sin. Throughout the Old Testament animals were sacrificed as a substitute in the place of the person or people who had sinned.

⁵*“When any of the people become aware of their guilt in any of these ways, they must confess their sin ⁶and bring to the LORD as their penalty a female from the flock, either a sheep or a goat. This will be a sin offering to remove their sin, and the priest will make atonement for them.*
Leviticus 5:5-6 (NLT)

These animals, sacrificed to cover over the sins of the people, were only temporary. Sacrifices had to be made over and over again, and could never completely wash away sin.

¹¹*Under the old covenant, the priest stands before the altar day after day, offering sacrifices that can never take away sins.* **Hebrews 10:11 (NLT)**

The first death ever recorded was a result of Adam and Eve's sin and therefore was a sacrifice.

²¹*And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.*
Genesis 3:21 (NLT)

This method of covering people's disobedience by the death of an innocent one, was God's plan, even before He made the world. He knew that people would foolishly reject His leadership and instead try to be the God of their own lives and fail. God calls this rejection "sin." Yet, because of God's love for everyone, He planned to send a Saviour who would die, to provide the offer of forgiveness for the sins of all people.¹

Salvation

¹⁸*For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. ¹⁹He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.* **1 Peter 1:18-19 (NLT)**

Jesus, the Son of God, came to Earth and was born of Mary (a virgin), and never inherited the sinful nature from Adam because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He was perfect and never sinned. Because a blood sacrifice is required to cover over sin, Jesus chose to be crucified, to give His life as a blood sacrifice on our behalf. The perfect sacrifice!

Only someone who was all human could die in our place... Jesus was. Only someone who has no beginning or no end could break the power of sin and death... Jesus was. Only someone who was sinless could be the atoning sacrifice for sin... Jesus was. Only someone who was all man and all God could reconcile man back to God... Jesus was.

(Note: We will study more about Jesus being God in a later study.)

This was God's perfect plan to reconcile mankind back to Himself. On the cross, Jesus received the punishment we deserved because of our sin.

³He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. He was despised, and we did not care.

⁴Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God for his own sins! ⁵But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed! ⁶All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the guilt and sins of us all. **Isaiah 53:4-6 (NLT)**

By dying and rising from the dead, Jesus broke the curse of sin and death and made a way for mankind to be reconciled back to God, to be able to have a personal relationship with Him, and to be saved from death and hell.

¹So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ²For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death.

³The law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent his own Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

Romans 8:1-3 (NLT)

Jesus' blood doesn't just cover over sin; it washes sin completely away! Jesus' work on the cross was complete. He was the ultimate sacrifice for all sin, once and for all. Unlike the high priests in the Old Testament, He does not need to offer sacrifices day after day to merely cover over sins; He sacrificed for our sins once and for all when He offered Himself.

²⁷He does not need to offer sacrifices every day like the other high priests. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus did this once for all when he sacrificed himself on the cross. **Hebrews 7:27 (NLT)**

⁷...the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from every sin. **1 John 1:7b (NLT)**

Note: For further study please read:

- **Romans 5:12-20**
- **Hebrews 10:1-18**

No other way to be saved

There is no other way to be saved from Hell except by Jesus. No other person in the history of the world died and rose again for you. Other religions say that Jesus is a way to get to heaven, but Jesus says, "I am **the way**". Which one will you believe? Think about it, if there was another way to be eternally saved apart from Jesus, do you think that God would have watched His only Son tortured and killed for nothing?

¹²There is salvation in no one else! There is no other name in all of heaven for people to call on to save them." **Acts 4:12 (NLT)**

⁶Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. **John 14:6 (NLT)**

What must I do to be saved?

To be saved you must turn away from sin (repent), believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and receive Him as Lord and Saviour of your life.

1. Believe

You must believe (rely upon, trust in, place all confidence in) Jesus Christ died on the cross as a substitute for you, paid the price due for your sin, and rose again.

¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him

will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it.

*¹⁸“There is no judgment awaiting those who trust him. But those who do not trust him have already been judged for not believing in the only Son of God. **John 3:16-18 (NLT)**”*

2. Repent

You must be truly sorry for all your sin and ask Jesus to forgive you for everything you have done wrong. You must forsake your sin and sinful way of life, and live for God alone.

*¹⁹Now turn from your sins and turn to God, so you can be cleansed of your sins. **Acts 3:19 (NLT)***

3. Live

You must ask Jesus to be Lord of your life, acknowledging openly and verbally that Jesus is not only your Saviour, but also your Lord, and live for Him.

*³²“If anyone acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will openly acknowledge that person before my Father in heaven. ³³But if anyone denies me here on earth, I will deny that person before my Father in heaven. **Matthew 10:32-33 (NLT)**”*

You may think that this is a very tall order, and that there is no possible way you could turn away from sin, even though you are willing. The good news is that Jesus promises to help you!

Conclusion

I pray that this study has helped you to understand the work of the cross more clearly. You may be reading this and have never really given your life to Jesus in the way that has been described above. To conclude, here is prayer of Salvation that you can pray. As the Bible says...

*¹As God’s partners, we beg you not to reject this marvelous message of God’s great kindness.
²For God says,
“At just the right time, I heard you.
On the day of salvation, I helped you.”
Indeed, God is ready to help you right now. Today is the day of salvation.
2 Corinthians 6:1-2 (NLT)*

Prayer of Salvation

*Dear God,
I am so sorry for everything I’ve done in my life that has hurt you. Please forgive my sins.
Wash me clean, and create in me a clean heart. I believe that Jesus Christ died in my place
and rose again on the third day. I could never repay You for such love, but this day I yield my
whole life to You, and will attempt to live according to that which is pleasing in Your sight.
Amen.*

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References:

¹ God’s Story: An Online Presentation of Biblical Foundations (<http://www.christiananswers.net/godstory/fall3.html>)