

Did He Die Just For The Hell Of It?



Jesus of Nazareth died a horrific death—beaten, whipped with bone or metal pieces fixed in a nine-lash whip, mocked with a crown of two-inch thorns pressed into his head, wrists and feet nailed to a cross where he hung until he died of slow suffocation. What was it all for? For nothing?

On the contrary, Jesus had many reasons for going through this and all of those reasons center around you:

1) This was Jesus, who had healed people from lifelong diseases, from physical disabilities like blindness, paralysis, even demon-possession. He stopped a violent storm at sea, miraculously fed crowds of over 5,000. So when they nailed him to a cross, it was not those nails keeping him there—it was **his love for us**.

2) He had clearly identified himself as God. That's why the religious authorities were having him tortured and killed. But on five different occasions before his arrest, Jesus declared that he would be crucified and three days later come back to life. He wanted people to publicly see him killed and buried, so that when he rose from the dead, they would know that everything he said about his identity was true. Three days later, his burial tomb was empty. People spoke with him and saw him physically alive (more than 500 people)—**he wanted us to know he really was God in the flesh, just as he said**.

3) His death on the cross was to allow us to have a relationship with him, which he obviously desires. There is only one thing that keeps us from having a close relationship with God—"your iniquity [sin] has made a separation between you and your God." And there is a penalty, a price to be paid, for our sin. Going to church? No. Being a good person? No. The penalty for our sin is death. Death?! So that we would not have to die for our sin, Jesus died in our place. As the prophet Isaiah stated nearly 600 years before Jesus was born, "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own ways; but the Lord has caused the iniquity [sin] of us all to fall on him." **He paid (fully) for our sin and now offers us complete forgiveness.**

4) We don't expect God to offer us forgiveness and eternal life, but he does. But such a gift only belongs to those who take it. Instead of trying to perform for God, look what he has done for you. How many of us are trying to get close to God, not realizing that he already desires to come into our lives? Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him."

If you're like many people, you sense God's desire to know you and have a personal relationship with you. But he won't force you into a relationship with him, which you've probably already discovered. It's simply a matter of wanting him to come into your life, and then you making the decision to invite him in. If you need help knowing how to ask him, here you go:

"Jesus, thank you for paying for my sins. I open the door of my life right now, and ask you to come in. Do with my life what you would like. Thank you for your forgiveness and for coming into my life right now." If you asked him into your life just now, your sins are forgiven, he really came into your life and he will never leave you nor forsake you.

You can learn more about knowing God by reading the section called "John" in the Bible. You can also learn more about Jesus' life, death and facts supporting his resurrection in the feature article **BEYOND BLIND FAITH** at www.EveryStudent.com.

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