

THE PURPOSE FOR THE CROSS

Jesus was crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. Acts 2:23

You killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead . Acts 3:15

God raised up Jesus whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. Acts 5:30

The righteous One you have now betrayed and murdered. Acts 7:52

God did what the Law could not do. God sent Jesus as an offering for sin so that sin is condemned in the flesh of sinless Jesus as He died on the cross an innocent sacrifice.

Romans 8:1-3 1 Peter 1:17-25

Jesus was the Father's sacrifice for sin in that He sent Jesus into our sinful world in order to expose the atrocious character of sin and provide us a way of being changed out of our sin. Just as Jesus died in condemnation of sin, we can cooperate with Holy Spirit conviction and die to sin and be raised to a new life in Christ. We must simply choose to live by God's design for eternal life by receiving Christ into our very being. 1 Peter 2:1-13; 1:3-9

Jesus was not a sacrifice to appease an angry deity or make a payment for sin by being punished in our place. By His sinless death, at the hands of sin, Jesus defeated sin and death for humanity. Jesus arose with all authority over all creation. Jesus arose with the right and the power to rescue us from sin by making us new creations in Christ through new birth in the Spirit.

Christ died for our sins does not mean that God required the death of His Son in order to forgive us of our sins. God has always freely forgiven our sin from the beginning. God commands us to freely forgive others just as He forgives people. Experiencing eternal life is not a question of being forgiven of our sins. Experiencing eternal life is a question of our being cooperative with God's design for eternal life. God's design is that we allow Him to be the resource of all our being. We are to be guided by His indwelling Spirit, live in His power, and live according to His resources. God grants eternal life to all who will cooperate with Holy Spirit conviction and let Him live in us.

When we say that Jesus died for our sins, we mean that we violently sinned our sins against Jesus because Jesus is God and all sin is against God. God allowed all our sin to be thrust against Jesus while He was on the cross from noon until 3pm. Jesus revealed the heart of God by forgiving us. When Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them," he was not asking God to act contrary to His nature. Jesus always did what He saw the Father already doing. God the Father was forgiving our sin freely from the beginning. God freely forgave Adam and Eve, came to them in the garden, and explained His plan of salvation for humanity.

At the cross, all humanity violently sinned our sins into Jesus because we do sin and our sin is first of all against God. At the cross we see where sin has led us. It leads to the murder of God. At the cross, human sin is seen as atrociously sinful. We required the death of Jesus to see the depths of our sin. And the cross lets us see the depth of God's love and willingness to bring us back in line with His correct design for eternal life.

So, the cross is not about the appeasement of an angry god. The cross is about the revelation of a merciful, gracious, and loving God. At the cross we discover a God who would rather die than destroy us. The cross is where God in Christ absorbs sin and then shows us forgiveness.

The cross is what God endures in Christ as He forgives (2 Corinthians 5:19). The cross is as ugly as human sin and as beautiful as divine love. But in Christ, divine love shines forth and His resurrection life enters the believer and gives eternal life.