

# Why Did Jesus Choose to Die?

A Bible Study Lesson of The Mt. Zion Church

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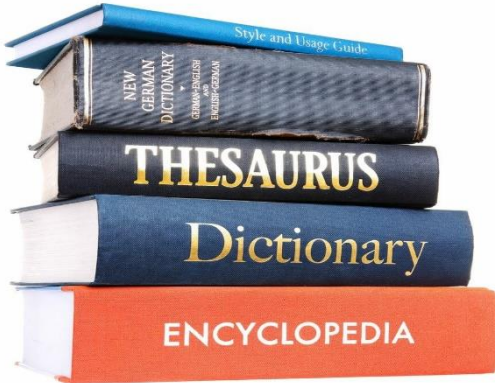


We Have the Vision to be a LEARNING Church!  
We are Rooted in Christ and Reaching the One!



## I. Where Did the Term Easter Come From?

The English word Easter, which parallels the German word *Ostern*, is of uncertain origin. One view, expounded by the Venerable Bede in the 8th century, was that it



derived from Eostre, or Eostrae, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and fertility. This view presumes that Christians appropriated pagan names and holidays for their highest festivals. This fact regarding Resurrection Sunday may or may not be true. There is now widespread consensus that the word derives from the Christian designation of Easter week as *in albis*, a Latin phrase that was understood as the plural

of *alba* (“dawn”) and became *eostarum* in Old High German, the precursor of the modern German and English term. The Latin and Greek Pascha (“Passover”) provides the root for Pâques, the French word for Easter.

## II. Why Does the Date Keep Moving?

If you did not know, different people around the world track time differently. Many cultures, track time based on the moon and it’s cycles versus the sun.

(Lunar calendar vs. Solar Calendar). This presents some tricky matching up of days when comparing the two because the lunar calendar is 11 days shorter than the solar calendar (354 vs 365 days).

Fixing the date on which the Resurrection of Jesus was to be observed and celebrated triggered a major controversy in early Christianity in which an Eastern and a Western position can be distinguished. The dispute, known as the Paschal controversies, was not definitively resolved until the 8th century. In Asia Minor, Christians observed the day of the Crucifixion on the same day that Jews celebrated the Passover offering—that is, on the 14th day of the first full moon of spring, 14 Nisan. The Resurrection, then, was observed two days later, on 16 Nisan, regardless



of the day of the week. In the West the Resurrection of Jesus was celebrated on the first day of the week, Sunday, when Jesus had risen from the dead. Consequently, Easter was always celebrated on the first Sunday after the 14th day of the month of Nisan. Increasingly, churches opted for the Sunday celebration.

If you would like more information regarding the history of time keeping, a neat website is <https://www.ancient-origins.net/artifacts-ancient-technology/history-timekeeping-0013904>.

### **III. Why Did Jesus Choose to Die?**

This question gets us to the heart of the matter for this particular study. The simple answer is to pay the price for the sin debt that mankind owes. However, what does that mean? Let’s do a quick check to see what you know. The question is...How does Jesus’ death pay for our sins?

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The importance of the question and answer cannot be underestimated. This is the conversation which helps us to understand the power of Jesus’ death, the completion of His work, and the benefit we have as a result!

### **IV. SIN**

First, let us examine the nature of sin. In our culture especially, we have a way of shrugging off sin. We act like it is no big deal and even categorize sin by small sin and big sin. 1 John 5: 17 does not differentiate between sin, but says “All sin is unrighteousness...”

A simple definition of sin is purposely disobeying the rules of God (1 John 3:4 <sup>4</sup>**Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.**).

### Sin's Impact

- Sin racks up an eternal debt. This is understood in Romans 3:23 and 6: 23.
- The nature of sin itself tells God, “Not thy will be done. *My* will be done” (Paraphrased from C.S. Lewis). Not only do we choose to sin, but we delight in wickedness (Proverbs 2:14).



What sin have you at times made small?

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We understand the concept of consequences. If you have children, you clearly know that misbehavior requires a response. WHY? Because the intent is to help the misbehaving person understand and live within the boundaries set by the person who is authorized. As the ultimate authority, GOD determines what behaviors, attitudes, actions, thoughts, etc. He desires and does not desire. When we do not follow the authority we have sinned AND we deserve consequences. The consequence (the penalty to be paid) for sin is???? Remember Romans 6:23?

- The wages (consequence, penalty) of sin is \_\_\_\_\_ .  
There **must** be a death payment for sin.
- Remember, sin requires a payment for its actions.

Why does this create a problem for you and me?

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So we have two choices: either endure eternal punishment because of our sin debt or find someone to pay it.

➤ **Can't I just be good and pay the debt?**

“But what if we work to pay off our debt? Through good deeds?” every other religion apart from Christianity says.

Here's why this doesn't work. First, Scripture says good deeds are like dirty rags, completely worthless (Isaiah 64:6). Also, good deeds, no matter what kind of “debt” they pay cannot repay an eternal debt. First, because the motives behind good deeds being used as repayment for sin does not bring us in line with God's will for obedience. It creates an escape clause. Secondly, the eternal debt of sin is so big that we cannot pay it. How can you or I pay a death for every sin we commit?

**V. The Solution**

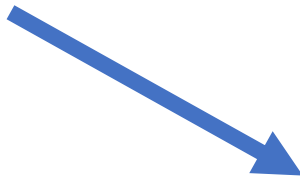
Many have wondered, why not just forgive mankind, and move on? This seems like a simplistic answer to a huge problem and on one level God does this. God forgives us before we recognize we are wrong. He pays upfront through Jesus' death. We then, retroactively learn about what we have done wrong and ask for forgiveness for our sins by accepting Jesus as “savior” (He saves us from the consequence of sin and ultimately the presence of sin). God then counts what Jesus did as payment for our Romans 6:23 problem.

It looks like this:

1. God gives rules and consequences
2. Mankind breaks rules and deserves consequences
3. Mankind cannot pay for all the consequences we deserve
4. God substitutes Jesus as payment for our consequences
5. If and when we ask for God's forgiveness and his solution to our consequences (JESUS) we are saved.
6. IF we do not accept God's answer for our debt and we die, we must pay our penalty for eternity in Hell. (Eternal penalty =Eternal punishment; Think student loans!!!!)

- Concerning our salvation, God was seemingly faced with a very difficult problem. God loves us and He wants to save us. But He must save us in a way that satisfies Him and satisfies His righteousness.

SOLUTION!!!! Someone who doesn't have to pay the debt!!!!




**Remember the formula is:**

**1 Sin = 1 Eternal Death**

**Thus: 0 Sin = 0 Eternal Death**

Jesus, who is God in the flesh, is born of a virgin, lives 33 years, and is perfectly obedient to God the Father's rules and expectations. He is obedient even to the most agonizing action which was to substitute Himself for us. He paid the penalty instead of us paying the penalty. Revisit the formula.

Jesus' Sacrifice!

**0 Sin  1 Eternal Death**

The unbalanced formula solves the problem for mankind because we can now access the benefit of it if we John 3:16 it! “Whosoever believes on Him” If you and I believe that Jesus is God’s son, that Jesus died for our sins, that He was buried for 3 days, and that God raised Him on the first day of the week (our Sunday), then Romans 10: 9 emphatically states we receive the substituted consequence of

### **0 sin= 0 Eternal Death**

And if you receive 0 Eternal Death you must have received Eternal Life!

Question:

How has your understanding now changed or enhanced regarding what Jesus did on the cross for our sins?

**Final thought: Read the following two scriptures and discuss with the group your feelings and thoughts about their meaning in your life.**

1. 2 Corinthians 5: 20-21

We beg you as Christ’s representatives, “Be reconciled to God!” <sup>21</sup> God caused the one who didn’t know sin to be sin for our sake so that through him we could become the righteousness of God.

2. Luke 22: 42

He said, “Father, if it’s your will, take this cup of suffering away from me. However, not my will but your will must be done.”