

Understanding Why Christ Had to Die

Introduction:

1. A large portion of your Bible explains what the Bible refers to as “*the law.*” In the Old Testament, God gave His people the law.
 - God’s moral law was summarized in what we call the Ten Commandments.
 - This law came from God. It issued from His nature, and therefore it is holy, righteous, and good.
 - This law is an expression of what God requires of people. It rests on the eternal, moral principles that are consistent with the very nature of God Himself.
 - The law was the perfect expression of righteousness. It was the standard that God required.
2. But when we turn to the New Testament, as we read about the law, the Bible gives us some disturbing insights. Here’s the problem:
 - The law cannot justify anyone before God. vs. 11
 - The law cannot bring life or righteousness before God. vs. 21-22a
 - The law actually brings a curse upon us. vs. 10
3. So why would God give mankind the law if the law couldn’t save anybody? When we answer this question, we will gain insight as to why Jesus Christ had to die on the cross.

The law was given that we may see our utter sinfulness. Romans 3:23, 5:20

1. The law of God is the biblical means of awakening sinners.
 - This is exactly what the Bible teaches. Romans 7:7-8
 - The written commandments are what reveal to us the fact that we’ve broken God’s moral law.
2. The Bible says in Romans 3:23 says that we have all “*come short.*” God’s law shows us specifically how we have come up short of God’s holy standard. cf. Romans 3:20, 4:15
3. What does Romans 5:20 teach us? “*The law entered, that the offence might abound.*”

The law was given that we may understand our guilt before God. Romans 3:19

1. In our witnessing to others about Christ, we tend to go straight to the good news that Jesus died on the cross for their sins **before** we show them they are sinners and guilty before God. If you don’t understand your guilt, you don’t appreciate mercy.
2. Look at Romans 3:19. The word “*guilty*” means “under sentence; condemned.”
 - Someone may say, “Well, you should never condemn sinners.” The Bible tells us that they are already condemned (1 John 3:18). The law simply shows them their true state.

3. The law is the sinner's means of seeing his need of God's forgiveness. It breaks the proud heart and shows the person his guilt before God. The light goes on in our thinking: "I'm guilty and I need God's forgiveness."

The law was given that we may recognize our inability to save ourselves.

1. The sinner may think he is rich in virtue, but the law shows him that he is not as virtuous as he thinks. The law reveals the truth of Romans 3:10-12.
 - We may think we're "good" because we compare ourselves with others. But when we compare ourselves with God's holy law, it strips us of self-righteousness and shows us we're in trouble with a holy God.
 - There is nothing wrong with the law (Romans 7:12). The problem is us!
Romans 7:14
2. When we look at ourselves in light of God's law, we agree with God that "*there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*" The law stops every mouth.
3. Therefore, nobody will get to heaven by his or her own moral virtue, upstanding character, keeping of God's law, or good deeds. This is the Bible's conclusion: Romans 3:19-20, 28.
4. "*The wages of sin is death.*" You may not sin quite as much as some other people, but it is irrelevant. You have come up short of God's standard like every other person.

The law was given to show our need of a Savior.

1. We are guilty, condemned, and deserving of eternal death because of our sin and rebellion against God's law. We cannot save ourselves. What a dark picture.
 - But there is good news. Let's read Galatians 4:4-5.
 - Praise God, He sent a Savior, Jesus Christ! Jesus kept God's law that we couldn't keep, and then chose to die the death we deserve. Romans 5:6, 8
2. This was God's glorious plan to redeem fallen man. Christ paid our sin debt **for us** through His death on the cross. God is now offering the righteousness of His Son to any person who will believe on Him. Romans 3:21-26
3. The law was designed to show us our sin and guilt and cause us to flee in faith to Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:23-24, 26
 - The law reveals to us that there is no way we can please God outside of faith in Jesus Christ.

In Conclusion:

1. The law enables grace to make sense. If I don't understand that I have broken the law, then someone telling me I'm going to jail seems unreasonable. If I don't think I deserve to go, I won't appreciate the judge offering to post my bail. I may think it is a kind gesture, but completely out of line because I don't think I should have been arrested in the first place.
2. In the same way, if a person doesn't think he's guilty and deserves eternal punishment, he won't fall on his face and thank God for His mercy and

forgiveness through Christ. He won't appreciate the blood of Christ being shed because he doesn't think he needs it.

3. The law acts as a mirror to show us that we need cleansing, and it leads us to the only One who can cleanse us – Jesus Christ.