

**The Greatest Letter Ever
Jesus Had To Die
Romans 3:25**

Introduction: A Theological Interlude

***The Heart of the Gospel:** God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. (Romans 3:25)*

False Explanations of Jesus' Death

1st False Idea: Jesus' death was an unforeseen accident

The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.” (John 10:17-18)

Evaluation: The death of Jesus was clearly part of God's plan

2nd False Idea: Jesus died as a martyr

This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. (Acts 2:23)

Evaluation: God wasn't surprised; Jesus was more than a martyr

Five Major Explanations of Jesus' Death

1st Explanation: The Ransom Theory

Key Words: Ransom; Payment

Main Idea: Jesus paid a ransom to set us free

Proponents: Origen; Anselm

Scriptures: Mark 10:45; John 8:34-36; Ephesians 1:7

Caution: Don't try to make this a payment to Satan. The key point is that God paid the price.

2nd Explanation: The Moral Influence Theory

Key Words: Love; Example

Main Idea: Jesus died to demonstrate God's love

Proponent: Abelard

Scriptures: Luke 23:42; Luke 23:47; 1 Peter 2:21-23; Ephesians 5:1-2; Philippians 2:4-11

Caution: Jesus' death is much more than an example.

3rd Explanation: The Victory Theory

Key Words: Power; Triumph; Victory

Main Idea: Jesus' death sealed the defeat of the devil

Proponents: Martin Luther; Gustav Aulen (Christus Victor)

Scriptures: Hebrews 2:14-15; Colossians 1:13-14; Colossians 2:15; Revelation 17:14

Caution: Satan is defeated but he is still active

4th Explanation: The Relationship Theory

Key Words: Reconcile; Friend

Main Idea: God wants to be your friend

Proponent: Athanasius

Scripture: John 15:12-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17-19; James 2:23

Caution: More than friendship is needed to forgive sin

5th Explanation: The Substitution Theory

Key Words: Sacrifice; Atonement

Main Idea: Jesus takes our sin and punishment upon Himself

Proponents: Philip Melancthon; John Calvin; Louis Berkhof

Scripture: Hebrews 9:28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:2;
1 Corinthians 5:7

Caution: Exercise care to make sure it doesn't seem as though Jesus is stepping in to intervene with an angry God

Our Response to Jesus' Death

1st Response: We ought to hate sin

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do. (1 Peter 1:15)

2nd Response: We ought to love Jesus

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:9-10)

3rd Response: We ought to make the message known

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)