

“**WHY DID JESUS DIE?**” by Dick Tripp. Castle Publishers. R.R.P. \$26.99

The survey carried out and broadcast on TV One’s “Close Up” programme on Good Friday illustrated just how many people have little idea what Easter is all about. Though there were those who knew that Good Friday commemorated the death of Jesus few of them would probably have been able to explain why this was important enough to celebrate.

The death of Jesus is the centre and heartbeat of the Christian faith. The cross upon which He was so cruelly hung has become the most recognized symbol of the faith Christians worldwide profess.

But why did Jesus have to die? What was so significant about His death? Why is the cross, the most painful and humiliating form of death devised by man, still so important in an age where capital punishment is no longer practiced in most of the Western world?

Though the Bible is a collection of sixty six books, written over a period of many years, by a variety of authors, it has, running through it, an unmistakable thread that relates to the death of Jesus. It was conceived in the mind of God before creation itself came into being and came to fruition in just the way the Old Testament indicated, in so many places, that it would.

No event in all human history has had as big an impact nor produced a greater result. No other person’s death is remembered and celebrated as is the death of Jesus. For everyone else death is seen as the end. The completion of a life. The finishing line. For Jesus it was the very reason for His coming to earth.

Though many, over the centuries, have given their life for a worthy cause no other person’s death has produced the level of benefit nor impacted so many peoples lives for time and eternity. A death in fact that changed world history.

Retired Anglican minister, Dick Tripp of Christchurch, will be known to many for his series of booklets “Exploring Faith Today” that he has written, and published, in recent years. Drawing on his accumulated knowledge and spiritual experience he has now turned his fertile brain to producing a work of greater size, depth and importance.

“**WHY DID JESUS DIE?**” is a very comprehensive overview of all that the Bible has to say about the cross and its meaning. As Bruce Nicholls writes in his foreword...*“Now...we have a work of outstanding and lasting worth – an amazingly comprehensive reference to all the biblical texts that point to Christ’s death, its meaning and significance for today’s Church.”*

In the first part of this book the author works his way through the many images of the cross found in the Old Testament such as the tree of life, thorns, the bronze serpent in the wilderness, lambs as sacrifices, references in the Psalms and Isaiah’s graphic prophesies and many more.

Moving on the references to the cross in the Gospels are considered. The Last Supper, the events of that first Good Friday, burial and resurrection. From there the book of Acts and the letters in the New Testament are examined with especial reference to the centrality of the cross in the writing of Paul.

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The cross as it relates to human sin. The believers identification with Christ in His death and suffering. The wisdom of God is seen in the cross, the cross as a challenge to godly living and Christ's death and ours are all explained as is Christ's exaltation in glory.

The benefits of the cross are identified next. Through the cross the repentant believer can know forgiveness, justification, salvation and much more beside. Long words but explained in terms that are easily understood.

There is much that relates to the cross in the book of Hebrews and the writings of Peter and John – these are also covered.

Part Two deals with the issues that arise out of the consideration of the cross in the purposes of God as they relate to: The Trinity, God's love and justice. Human suffering. Easter Saturday and God's "Yes" of Easter Day and the effect the cross has had on human history as well as what it will mean with regard to being a disciple of Jesus.

Dick Tripp's style is lucid and easy to follow. He quotes widely from many sources and illustrates what he writes with interesting stories and examples.

Maybe this all sounds rather heavy and academic but I can assure you that reading this remarkably comprehensive book will inspire you, and lead you, to a deeper and more profound appreciation of the One who died that we might live.

"WHY DID JESUS DIE? Unearthing the meaning of the Cross" by Dick Tripp is published by Castle at the R.R.P. of \$26.99. (ISBN 978-0-9582398-9-9 Published 2007)

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