

Who Really Killed Jesus?

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Preacher: Don Coleman

[0:00] Take your Bibles this morning and open them to Acts chapter 2.

And I'm going to read, starting with verse 22, and read a rather lengthy text, though really part of it, of the text, but I want to read the whole thing so that we'll understand where we're going here.

Men of Israel, and this is Peter, of course, speaking and preaching. Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves also know.

Him, being delivered by the determined purpose or counsel, and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death, whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be held by it.

For David says concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad.

[1:41] Moreover, my flesh also will rest in hope. For you will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life.

You will make me full of joy in your presence. Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, he would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne. He, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he poured out this which you now see and hear.

For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit in my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.

[3:02] Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. Jesus Christ.

Okay. Now, this month, every Sunday this month, leading up to Easter, which is, of course, the last Sunday of the month, we are considering answers to several, I think, important questions about the most controversial person who has lived in all of history, Jesus of Nazareth.

Or, as most of us would call him, the Lord, Jesus Christ. Questions like, was he a real person? And we focused on that last Sunday night.

Was he a real person? And we discussed a number of things about that and the implications of that. And we discovered that not only was Jesus a real person, but that there is more proof of the historical Jesus, really, than there is for many others who have lived, whose historicity has never really ever been in question.

And so, was he a real person? Yes, he was. And then the question that we focused on last Sunday morning was, why did he have to die? Why did Jesus have to die?

[4:24] And the short answer, of course, is because of the existence and the seriousness, eternal seriousness of sin. That's why he had to die. And because of man's universal guilt and participation in sin.

The Bible says, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3.23. The Bible says, all we like sheep have gone astray.

We have all turned to our own way. But God has laid on him, that's Jesus, the iniquity of us all. The sin of us all.

And so that's why he had to die. Now, a third question that we're going to consider this morning as we are discovering the real Jesus. The third question is one that a lot of people have. And talk about quite often, especially among theological circles. But others have the same question. And the third question really takes us to the very heart of the atonement.

[5:31] To the very heart of the debate over the true meaning of the cross. And here's the question. Who really killed Jesus?

Who really killed him? Now, you might think, maybe at the outset here, that's not really an important question. But it is. The question's important and even more significant is the answer.

And the implications of the answer to your life. To your life. Who really killed Jesus?

And it's not a new question, is it? And over the centuries, I think you would admit that over the centuries since the death of Jesus Christ, at least one answer to that question was responsible for the genocide of millions of Jews.

And so that would be a good place to begin, wouldn't it? As we're kind of discovering or searching for the right candidate who would be the answer to that question, who really killed Jesus.

[6:43] And we would begin with the Jews, wouldn't we? Probably. Well, how about the Jews? The Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus Christ. And there does seem to be a great deal of support for this in the Word of God.

That the Jews did it. And, of course, it began, if you understand the New Testament history as laid before us in the Gospels, the four Gospels, each of the four Gospels cover many of the aspects of this.

And so we know from the New Testament that it was the Jewish leaders who started this whole thing. It was the nation's leadership and their devilish plot to have Jesus Christ killed.

And they got together for a secret council. And John chapter 11 gives us some of the details of that council. And the Bible says there that the chief priests and the Pharisees, they gathered together. They gathered a council. That would be the Sanhedrin. And they gathered together and they said, What shall we do about this man? About Jesus? What do we do about him?

[7:58] They said, and they reasoned in their own minds and in their discussion, that if we leave him alone, they said, Then everyone will believe in him and the Romans will come and take away both our place, our position, and our nation.

Now, that discussion they had among themselves is very telling, isn't it? Because, you see, they didn't care anything about the truth. Didn't care anything about justice.

They certainly didn't care anything about the claims that Jesus was making and his disciples were making concerning him. And they really didn't care, really, whether or not he was the Messiah. Their concern was their position, their power, their place of influence, and so forth. And then Caiaphas, you might remember the story.

The high priest, in those days, he stood in the midst of this council, this Sanhedrin, and he convinced the Jews that it would be best for one man to die for the entire nation so that we could continue to have our power, our position.

[9:08] That's basically what he was saying to them. It'd be better for one man to die. And so the Bible says, I'm just kind of laying this out, you know, to help us with the argument that the Jews were the ones who killed Jesus.

And many would argue that point. And here it is in Scripture. It's pretty clear. They plotted from that day forward, they plotted, the Bible says, to kill Jesus. They bribed Judas, one of Jesus' disciples, bribed him, 30 pieces of silver, to turn him over, to betray him.

They also went out and found some witnesses, and though the Bible doesn't say specifically, I don't think, they probably bribed them, but they certainly coached them to give a false witness at Jesus' trial.

So they're working all this together. And not only that, but they compelled, or you might even say manipulated Pilate, to have Jesus executed, to have him crucified.

You remember they said to Pilate, if you don't deal with this man in our way, then you're no friend of Caesar. And so Pilate was pretty much, his hand was forced.

[10:32] He had to do it. So they did all this. They plotted. They connived. They bribed. They manipulated the power that was in that day.

And so the Jewish leaders were responsible for this, weren't they? But now, the guilt must not be limited to just the leadership there in Israel.

Not just the priests and the Sanhedrin at large, the Pharisees and all of the Jewish leaders. The guilt doesn't rest just with them, does it?

Because the guilt was shared by the people of Israel. You remember they were the ones, that mob that had gathered there before Pilate, they were the ones who were crying out, crucify him.

And maybe they were paid off too. But they were there doing that. So remember, it wasn't just the leaders. It was the Jewish mob that had gathered there that day.

[11:32] And they were the ones who chose Barabbas over Jesus. They were the ones that could have had Jesus released. It was within their power at that moment because Pilate said, what do we do with this man?

You can pick Barabbas or Jesus. And they selected Barabbas. And remember, they were the ones who foolishly cried, let his blood be upon us and upon our children.

Now think of that. We're talking about the Jews. And so surely the answer to who killed Jesus is a simple one, isn't it? The Jews did it.

Peter said they did. All the evidence is there. The Jews did it. The Jews killed Jesus. And by the way, that is what Peter says in our text this morning.

Do you remember? In fact, he said it twice. He was preaching, you know, on the day of Pentecost, that very holy day.

[12:38] And a lot of the Jews were there. There were thousands of Jews gathered there in Jerusalem. It was one of the holy holidays that the Jews observed.

And Peter took that occasion to very boldly and very pointedly say, in verse 23, you, you did it.

That's what Peter said. That's what Peter said. Your wicked hands took him. And with your wicked hands, you crucified him.

So case closed. The Jews did it. But now, wait a minute. If the answer to the question is the Jews killed Jesus, then that brings up another question.

Which Jews? If we're going to attach blame, ascribe blame or guilt to the Jews for murdering the Lord of glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, then which ones?

[13:42] The Jewish leadership of the day? Or how about the Jewish people who were gathered there that day? That kind of near riotous mob that had gathered before Pilate?

How about them? Or maybe we need to extend it to the whole Jewish nation who were living in the day when Jesus walked this earth. Or maybe all Jews, then and now, are guilty.

And some would agree with that. They'd say, yeah, all Jews, the Christ killers, as they are called by many.

By the way, that thinking existed within the Christian community early on and for centuries and still does in some quarters today. That the Jews, the entire Jewish nation, all Jews, are Christ killers.

Less than 50 years after the death of the last apostle, that would be John, around 150 A.D., a man by the name of Justin Martyr, you probably have heard his name, he wrote of the Jews.

[15:04] And this is what he said. He said, True tribulations were justly imposed upon you, for you have murdered the just one.

For strong words. In the third century, the Christian theologians, Hippolytus and Origen, both wrote that the Jews were uniquely, quote, uniquely responsible for the crucifixion of Christ.

By the fourth century, that was the predominant thinking. Among people of the church. Decide, what they called it.

The murder of God. And they laid that on the Jews. Martin Luther. Martin Luther wrote that all the blood kindred of Christ burn in hell and they are rightly served.

Hmm. Not only that, but in 1542, Luther wrote, First, he said, their synagogues should be set on fire.

[16:20] Secondly, their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed. Thirdly, they should be deprived of their prayer books and Talmuds. Fourthly, their rabbis must be forbidden under threat of death to teach anymore.

Fourthly, passport and traveling privileges should be forbidden to the Jews. Sixthly, they ought to be stopped from usury. Seventh, let the young and strong Jews and Jewesses be given the flail, the axe, the hoe, the spade, the distaff, the spindle, and let them earn their bread by the sweat of their noses.

We ought to drive the rascally lazy bones out of our system, therefore away with them. That's pretty strong. Martin Luther.

What makes that worse is this. A couple of centuries later, a man by the name of Adolf Hitler read those words and reprinted Martin Luther's anti-Semitic writings and the rest is history.

I don't blame Martin Luther for what Adolf Hitler did. But Adolf Hitler was, quote, greatly influenced by that sentiment, that anti-sentiment, anti-Semitic sentiment.

[17 : 48] The rest is history. History we know quite well. And so are six million Jews murdered as, quote, Christ killers.

And today the anti-Semitic thinking is still alive, really, in a lot of places, even in the church. All right, so are the Jews solely responsible for the murder of Jesus Christ?

Well, let me ask you something else, then, as we kind of move along here. We're trying to answer the question, who really killed Jesus? Was it the Jews only? Was it just them who were party to the crucifixion of Christ?

Well, certainly not. So maybe the second answer to the question, or maybe the answer, or we might say we would combine this second group with the first group, and that would, of course, be the Romans.

Romans did it. That's easy enough to prove, isn't it? I mean, don't forget that about Pilate and, you know, Pontius Pilate was not a Jew.

[19 : 06] He was a Gentile, a Roman governor. And it was Pontius Pilate that gave the order. He sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion.

Herod Antipas, a kind of a king of the day of that region, though he was under the kingship of Caesar. And Herod Antipas, a Gentile.

He was not a Jew. He was a Dumian. And he gave Pilate his authority. And he also consented. Supported Pilate's decision to have Jesus Christ crucified. Romans, you see.

Not Jews. Were the ones who used crucifixion as the prime form of capital punishment.

The Romans did that. Jesus' execution was carried out by Romans. Not Jews. Roman soldiers arrested Jesus. Roman soldiers scourged Jesus.

[20 : 09] Roman soldiers beat Jesus and mocked Jesus just to get their jollies. And it was Roman soldiers who drove the nails through his hands and feet upon that cross.

And a Roman soldier took his spear and pierced the heart of Jesus. So, who killed Jesus? The Jews?

The Romans? Well, the answer, of course, is both, right? Both, I mean, in a matter of speaking. In fact, clearly, in Acts chapter 4, verse 27, The Bible says, For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, he's the Messiah, against him, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together.

So that one verse puts both groups together. Jews and Gentiles. Perhaps the only time in their history that the Romans and the Jews participated together in a common cause.

The murder of Jesus. So, the Jews, then, we answer the question, the Jews and their secret councils perpetrated the murder of Jesus.

[21 : 42] The Romans, with all the efficiency that they were known for, they prosecuted the murder of Jesus. The Jews perpetrated it.

The Romans prosecuted it. Who killed Jesus? The Jews and the Romans, right? Well, is there anyone else involved? How about, thirdly, how about Jesus himself?

Have you ever thought of that? Jesus was responsible for his death. So, the Jews perpetrated it.

So, the Jews perpetrated it. The Romans prosecuted it. But Jesus permitted it. He permitted it. And if he hadn't permitted it, it would not have happened.

Right? Do you, for one minute, think that any one man or group of men or an entire nation of people could be actually guilty of deicide?

[22 : 48] The murder of a God? Is that really possible? I'm just thinking logically here. Is that possible? To actually kill God?

Well, no, I don't think so. Jesus is God. He was then, too. God.

Do you think anyone could have killed Jesus without his permission? No. Don't you remember what the Bible tells us? Do you remember in John chapter 8 and also in John chapter 10 we have mobs.

There were mobs that tried to kill Jesus and on one occasion tried to throw him over a cliff and have him killed. It didn't happen, did it? And then you might remember also that Jesus was almost stoned to death in John chapter 7 and then again in John chapter 8 and how the Bible describes how he was able to just pass by them out of their reach.

It doesn't really describe how he did that. Because his time had not yet come. But on numerous occasions Jesus came real close to death but it didn't happen because there wasn't time and who was calling the shots?

[24:11] God. The Lord Jesus himself. Even when he stood before Pilate he said to Pilate he said you would have no authority over me unless it had been given to you from above.

That's pretty bold isn't it? It's true. Jesus had already instructed his disciples he already gave them a heads up he said I'm going to lay down my life.

I'm going to lay it down. He said no man takes my life from me but I lay it down on my own.

Because he's got authority to do that.

He said I also have authority to take it up again too. That'll be the subject for Easter Sunday. I have power to lay it down. And when the time was right Jesus submitted to his arrest without a fight.

He stood silent at his trial as false accusers gave witness against him. And he endured the torture and the abuse and ultimately the crucifixion he endured with patience these things and then at the right time as he's hanging upon that cross he said Father into your hands I commend I commit my spirit and he bowed his head the Bible says and he that's Jesus gave up his spirit.

[25:53] That is he dismissed it. Dismissed his spirit. He said okay it's time now. And he died. He died.

He willingly said Spirit you may go. Life you may go. Did you know that Jesus was the only man who ever lived who chose to die?

He's the only one who ever chose to die. A lot of people choose to die people commit suicide and maybe acts of heroism and they they sacrifice their life. Yeah they chose to die at that time and in that way but they were going to die one day anyway.

Jesus was the only one who ever chose to die because Jesus was the only man who ever lived who did not have to die. He didn't have to die. He's God.

He laid down his life. He laid down his life. Alright so who really killed Jesus? The Jews perpetrated it. The Romans prosecuted it. The Jesus himself permitted it.

[27:05] And then there's a fourth and maybe I should have started with this one. I don't think this will surprise you though it might. I would say fourth that God the Father himself killed Jesus.

Now hear me out before you get all upset. God the Father killed God the Son. And there's plenty of evidence in Scripture I think it's overwhelming as a matter of fact.

See now listen those who wickedly lied against Jesus those who unjustly judged Jesus those who brutally beat Jesus to the very edge of his life and those who cruelly murdered the Lord Jesus Christ they're all guilty.

Alright they're not exonerated from their evil but ladies and gentlemen it was God the Father God the Father who killed his Son Jesus.

Yes he did. Peter in our text in verse 23 look at it him speaking of Jesus of course being delivered by the determined you can just insert the word decreed purpose or counsel or plan Jesus was delivered for death death on a cross by the what the determination of man no by the decree the decreed plan purpose and foreknowledge it means the plan for this went way back of who

[29:05] God God God did it a couple of chapters or one chapter over two chapters over in chapter 4 verse 27 I referenced part of this verse a moment ago but let's look at it and add the next verse verse 27 says for truly against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together to do whatever your hand and your purpose determined before to be done before what before time before creation God put his own son to death and and listen this was not some new plan that God came up with or in the Godhead they came up with because things weren't going as they originally planned down here on this earth wasn't some new plan this was a plan that was devised in the heart of God before time before the creation in eternity past the Bible says that

Jesus was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world and if so God the father killed Jesus if that seems bad to you let me tell you something else God put his own son to death and it pleased him to do it pleased him to do it that's what we're to understand from the prophet Isaiah Isaiah 53 thought I had a marker on it but I don't so bear with me Isaiah 53 and verse 6 or 5 rather but he that's speaking of the Messiah and we know his name now it's Jesus and he was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed all we like sheep have gone astray and we we have turned everyone to

his own way and the

Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all he was oppressed he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth he was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before his shearers is silent and he so he opened not his mouth he was taken from prison and from judgment and who will declare his generation for he was cut off from the land of living for the transgressions of my people he was stricken and they made his grave with the wicked but with the rich at his death because he had done no violence nor was any deceit in his mouth yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him pleased him now that just doesn't seem quite right to us does it and yet that's what the Bible says so who killed Jesus who did the Jews well certainly they perpetrated it the Romans they prosecuted it Jesus himself he permitted it God the father he planned it planned it and pleased in it but there is one more and you probably knew I was going to get to it you and I participated in it you and I participated in it let me put it to you quite bluntly you killed him you killed Jesus I killed him I did how does that make you feel what's your initial reaction to that do you want to object object to even the notion I mean just that I killed Jesus would that be your objection no way no way could I do that well don't forget that that is exactly what Peter said to his congregation there on that day the day of Pentecost here in Acts chapter 2 how do you think that made them feel I think it's safe to assume that most of them were not there that day when Jesus was crucified some of them may have been but I think it's safe to say that most of them were not there not a part of that rabble! [35:00] that had gathered there before Pilate who were screaming crucify him and so how could Peter you killed you crucified him how could Peter say that well I'll tell you how he could say it because everybody in that crowd there that group that Peter was preaching to everyone in that crowd participated in the crime the crime against Jesus that brought about his death every one of them without exception and so I can say it here this morning just like I did a moment ago because everybody in this building participated in the crime against Jesus that brought about his death every one of us what crime preacher did we participate in the mock trial bring false accusation against him did we participate in the cruel insults hurled at

Jesus by the Jews and by the Roman guards that abused him did we participate in the face slapping and beating and the spitting upon his face did we participate in that did we participate in his scourge the scourging did we participate in the pressing of that crown of thorns upon his royal head did we participate in that did we participate in the nails and in the spear in his crucifixion what crime did we participate in listen listen the essence of the crime against the Lord Jesus Christ was not the ending of his life there that day the essence of the crime of which we all stand guilty is our sin against

God against him that has greatly offended him our breaking of his commandments that were given to us clear clearly and the demand to obey them could not be misunderstood our sin that's what we stand guilty of that's the crime perpetrated against Jesus Christ that brought about his death it's our sin our sin our self rule our rejection of God's remedy God's Messiah his son the Lord Jesus Christ that's the crime you see really the important issue here this morning is not who killed Jesus 2000 years ago though I've spent now 40 minutes talking about that the real issue is not who killed him 2000 years ago the crucial question for you today is are you still consenting in his death in your unbelief in your rejection of

God's salvation in Christ are you consenting still consenting in his death are you still part of what killed him of what he died for and I'm talking about sin sin and rejection of Christ are you still still a part of that ruled by that dedicated devoted to that in your life where all your life your focus is upon self and your love of sin and your rejection of Christ are you still part of that today your sin and your unbelief that's the crucial question for you many of you or have you finally realized that it was for your sin that he died have you finally realized that he took your place there on that cross maybe you've realized that for the very first time though you've known it up here but you've never submitted to that truth here in your heart and with your life and so maybe you're like a certain group in that congregation to whom

Peter preached where in verse 37 and I didn't get this far a while ago now when they heard this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles!

[40:52] men and brethren what must we do? Is that where you are right now?

Having come face to face with the reality the reality that you are participating in the crime that necessitated Jesus' death on the cross and so maybe you're asking what they asked what must we do?

And what was Peter's response? He said to them repent repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit translation you shall be saved repent turn turn from sin turn from self and self rule change from the direction away from Christ and following Him and turn to Him as Lord and as Savior repent Thank you.