

“WHO KILLED JESUS?”

Matthew 27:32-36,50

INTRODUCTION:

- A. A very popular movie in 2004 was “The Passion of the Christ” produced by Mel Gibson.
 - 1. *Passion*: a word coined by the Catholic Church to describe the suffering of Christ in the last hours of His life.
 - 2. The movie depicts the last 12 hours of His life, with some flashback moments.
- B. Movies depicting the death of Christ are often controversial. Especially that one:
 - 1. Some news outlets suggested that the movie was “troubling,” perhaps even “anti-Semitic.”
 - 2. Gibson even capitulated to Jewish pressure by removing a volatile subtitle that reflects the sentiments of a Hebrew mob, “*His blood be upon us, and on our children*” - which, incidentally, was recorded by a Hebrew, Matthew (Mt. 27:25). (Christian Courier website).
 - 3. *It is not “anti-Semitic” to accurately report the fact that a significant element of the Jewish community in the first century was a willing participant in the dramatic events that culminated in the death of Jesus of Nazareth.*
- C. What role did the Jews actually play in the death of Jesus? Do they bear the responsibility *alone* for His death?
- D. Let’s ask the question: *WHO KILLED JESUS?*

I. WAS IT THE ROMANS?

- A. Involvement of the Roman authorities.
 - 1. The Jews had no power under Roman dominion to put one to death - **Jn 18:28-31**.
 - 2. What the Romans did:
 - a. Pilate gave the orders for Christ to be crucified - **John 19:16**.
 - b. Roman soldiers carried out the actual crucifixion - **John 19:17-18,23,31-34**.
- B. Jesus placed greater responsibility ELSEWHERE.
 - 1. Note the words of Jesus to Pilate - Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release

- You?" Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." **John 19:10-11.**
2. *Pilate* thought the power was totally his.
 3. Those who delivered Jesus to the Romans bore the *greater responsibility*.
 4. "Pilate, though guilty, was not as much so as the high priest and the Sanhedrin who had vastly more knowledge of the divine will than Pilate. Their prophecies abounded with references to the Messiah, and pointed unerringly to Jesus as the fulfillment thereof. They sinned against greater light than Pilate and thus were guilty of greater sin than was he." — Gospel Advocate Commentaries.
- C. "*So it was the Jews who killed Jesus.*" Well, not so fast. We should ask another question:

II. WERE THE JEWS TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE?

- A. They did bear a GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY.
 1. As the ones who delivered Jesus to Pilate - **John 19:11.**
 2. As the ones who forced Pilate to have Jesus crucified - **John 19:12-15.**
 3. Indeed, the Jews who forced Pilate accepted responsibility for their actions - **Matthew 27:22-25.** But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!" *Matthew 27:22,23.*
 4. Paul (who may have participated in the call to crucify Jesus) laid blame for Jesus' death on the JEWS of Judah - cf. **1 Thessalonians 2:14-15.**
- B. Yet it was according to THE FATHER'S PURPOSE.
 1. Note the sermon of Peter on Pentecost - **Acts 2:22-23.**
 - a. Jesus was delivered by the *determined purpose and foreknowledge* of God.
 - b. The Jews and Romans were *instruments* in carry out God's will.
 2. Jesus understood this to be the case:
 - a. "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." **Matthew 26:42.**
 - b. That the Jews and Romans did not fully realize their sin - "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." **Luke 23:33-34.**
- C. So, do we answer the question by saying: "*So it was GOD who killed Jesus.*" Again, not so fast. Consider another question.

III. WHY DID THE FATHER HAVE JESUS KILLED?

- A. Jesus shed his blood *FOR THE REMISSION OF SIN*,. **Matthew 26:26-28**.
- B. His sacrificial death for our sins was foretold by Isaiah - *Isaiah 53:4-6,10-12*.
- C. WHY? It can be summed up: “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*” **John 3:16**.

IV. JESUS WAS KILLED BECAUSE OF OUR SINS.

- A. The Romans and the Jews were *INSTRUMENTS* of God (though they certainly bore responsibility for their actions).
- B. But *ALL* who are guilty of sin must bear responsibility for Jesus' death.
- C. “Who *HIMSELF BORE OUR SINS* in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.” **1 Peter 2:24**.
- D. That includes everyone. - cf. **Romans 3:23**.
- E. Who killed Jesus? YOU and ME, that's who. “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for *US*, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” **2 Cor 5:21**.
 - 1. The Jews and Romans involved in the actual crucifixion bear some responsibility.
 - 2. But God had Jesus killed because of our sins, so we all must bear responsibility as well.
- F. Of course, forgiveness is now possible to all through the death of Jesus.
 - 1. Even as Peter offered to the Jews who killed Jesus - **Acts 2:36-38**.
 - 2. God now desires that all repent and be saved - **Acts 17:30-31**; cf. 1 Timothy 2:3-6; 2 Peter 3:9.
- G. AS BAD AS IT WAS THAT OUR SINS KILLED JESUS, WE MUST ASK:

IV. SHALL WE CRUCIFY JESUS AGAIN?

- A. It is *POSSIBLE*, as some *HAVE*.
 - 1. The Hebrew writer spoke of some who were guilty of doing this, **Hebrews 6:6**.
 - 2. HOW? By refusing to repent of sins after having once benefited from God's grace - **Hebrews 6:4-6**.
- B. Are WE crucifying Jesus again?
 - 1. We are if once saved we are living in *UNREPENTANT SIN*.
 - 2. Of course, *CLEANSING IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE* to those who confess and repent

- cf. 1 John 1:9.
3. But not if we persist in sin with a rebellious attitude - cf. Hebrews 10:26-31.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Today we have asked “Who Killed Jesus?”
- B. Perhaps the more pressing question should be "Who is killing Jesus?"...
 - 1. Those who REFUSE TO ACCEPT GOD'S GRACE still bear the guilt of their sins that caused Jesus' death.
 - 2. Those who once accepted God's grace but TURN AWAY to unrepentant sin crucify Him once again.
- C. Is your life crucifying Jesus AGAIN?

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