

Sunday June 23rd sermon: "The Rulers and the People Murdered Jesus – Who Crucified Christ? (Pt 2)"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,
by John Pittman Hey

John 11:45-53; Acts 7:51-52

Several times in the Gospels, the writers describe how, the night He was betrayed, wicked men bound Christ, and led Him away.

We are shocked at the outrageous way He was handled by His creatures whom He Himself had made.

Jesus demonstrated He could not be taken without His consent on various occasions during His ministry. But when the time of His death came, He submitted Himself to their hands.

Christ is God of very God! He made all things, He upholds all things moment to moment. Yet in His humanity, when the time came, He submitted to the cross as God's Lamb to save us!

God has arranged the entire world, and all of history, so that it is impossible for His beloved, saved ones not to praise and glorify Christ in everything!

Most Christians have not thought through the question of who crucified the Lord Jesus. That's because most people do not comprehend cause and effect, and that the cause of anything is most complex. Indeed, there is an almost infinite web of causal inputs to any event.

As to the murder of Jesus on the cross, people have a number of reasons not to examine closely all the causes of it.

But the Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus was murdered by an evil people out of a rabid rage and rebellion against Him.

Jesus foretold the acts of those wicked men. He repeatedly told His disciples that He must be betrayed into the hands of evil men, and brutally slain by them.

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave, that pushed Israel's wicked rulers over the edge. Because of the miracles Jesus was doing, the rulers feared that the whole nation would soon follow Him, and the Romans would take away their positions and overthrow the nation.

Imagine: they thought it was a good plan to kill the only Man Who could raise dead people from the grave! They'd rather grasp their privileged positions in Jewish society, than to seek refuge in Messiah!

So they decided it was best to kill the holy, just, and innocent Jesus in order to "protect the nation."

At the Passover, the rulers plotted to kidnap Christ with the help of Judas Iscariot, and then put Him to death.

At His sham trial, the rulers attempted to suborn perjured testimony against Jesus to justify their murder, but found no two witnesses that agreed with each other, as the law required. But they determined to kill Him anyway.

And so in the end, the rulers and the crowd cruelly murdered Jesus in the most foul, horrible way, by pressuring the Romans to crucify Him on the cross.

Scripture is most clear about the wicked deeds that were done to murder Jesus, and yet there are people who call themselves Christians who claim these people did nothing wrong, that Christ wasn't murdered at all.

They suggest that Christ volunteering to lay down His life makes their actions pure and just! They claim that because God obviously ordained that Jesus be put to death, God cannot charge those who accomplished His purposes with any sin.

In other words, they believe that God cannot hold a man guilty if his evil deeds accomplish God's purpose! This foolish argument follows from their false doctrine of Libertarian Free Will, that they create their choices on their own, all by themselves, without any external causes at all.

But scripture is very clear: God before determined everything that was to be done to Christ, and then wicked men carried out God's purposes precisely. These wicked men were guilty of murder, and God's plan to provide His people a perfect Lamb of Sacrifice was accomplished by the very acts of those wicked men, which God had before ordained would be done!

At Pentecost, Peter declared these truths, and then warned those wicked men that they were in eternal danger, and they must repent and believe on Jesus Christ, Whom they had slain!

Later, the Lord's people explicitly articulated this truth: that the people, the rulers, the Gentiles, and Pilate, had all risen up in sinful rebellion against Christ, in order to do what God's hand and God's counsel had determined beforehand to be done!

These people had risen up in rage and hatred against God and His Christ, and then did those wicked deeds just like God had before ordained that they would.

The worst condemnation came from the lips of the martyr Stephen just moments before the same wicked rulers murdered him for his witness against them. "You are now the betrayers and murderers of God's Messiah!"

Those false Christians despise God as the almighty Creator, with the right to judge all the wicked deeds of His creatures which He Himself determined they would commit, to accomplish His purposes.

What Scripture teaches about the causes of Christ's sacrifice is rejected by these heretical teachers, and they hate those teachings. They will not have God's purposes overrule their "free will" decisions.

But to those who have trusted in Jesus, we rejoice that God found wicked men who could be counted on to do His purpose, and hate His Son so much, that they would in their wickedness, carry out the offering of God's Lamb for us!

They slew God's perfect Lamb out of envy and hatred and wrath, but God accepted Christ's death at Calvary as our sacrifice for our sin.

So true believers both see, and embrace the truth of the terrible and the glorious acts of God to rescue His loved ones!

All the evil of what those men did against Jesus falls completely upon them.

All the glory and good and beauty falls upon our God, in His mercy and love for us!