



Who Killed Jesus? The Shocking Truth

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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AM Assembly



Introduction:

While we understand this particular Sunday is no more special to God than any other Lord's Day on which we remember the death and resurrection of our Lord through His Supper (**I Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7**), we also recognize that more people are willing to listen to the message of Christ's death on this day than on any other. A question that is often asked is who killed Jesus? Who was responsible? Who should be blamed? Perhaps you have had discussions, read articles, or seen news shows about it. However, if I were one to do so, I would wager that up to this point, you have only heard partial answers to this question. The shocking truth is that in the midst of this debate, the shocking truth has not been told. On a day, when most people are thinking about the death and resurrection of Jesus, we will consider the partial answers and then learn the ultimate and shocking truth, the truth that should humble us and change our lives.

Discussion:

I. The Jews killed Jesus.

- A. In the opening paragraphs of **John**, the Bible says Jesus came not only to the world, but to His own (**John 1:11**). "His own" refers not to mankind but to "His own possession" and "chosen people"—the Jews (**Deuteronomy 7:6**). However, His own did not receive Him.
- B. In **John 11**, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, upsetting the Pharisees. According to **John 11:47-53**, the Pharisees began plotting to kill Jesus right then.
- C. According to **John 11:55-57**, the chief priests and Pharisees put out the word during the Passover week that if anyone knew where Jesus was in private, to let them know. Judas, one of the twelve, took up the chief priest's offer and agreed to betray Him. The Jewish council paid Judas thirty pieces of silver to accomplish this task (**Matthew 26:14-16**).
- D. On the night of the Passover, Jesus and 11 of His disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane. While praying there, Judas arrived with a large crowd who came from the chief priests and the elders of the Jews (**Matthew 26:47**). Jesus was taken to the court of the high priest. Despite the farcical trial they put on, the high priest seized on Jesus' words that He was the Christ, the Son of God and accused Him of blasphemy. Based on this confession, the council claimed, "He deserves death" (**Matthew 26:66**).
- E. In **Matthew 27:19-26**, though Pilate could find no guilt in Jesus, though he tried to appeal to the Jews' decency by offering to set Jesus free and execute Barabbas, a known murderer, the priests and elders of the Jews stirred up the crowds to cry for Jesus' crucifixion. When Pilate washed his hands and claimed that he would be innocent of Jesus' blood, the Jews cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children!" (**Matthew 27:25**, ESV).
- F. Finally, the testimony of the apostles in **Acts 2:36; 3:13-15** was that the house of Israel crucified Jesus when Pilate would have released Him. Most definitely, the Jews killed Jesus.

II. The Romans killed Jesus.

- A. Interestingly, in **John 18:3**, the text says that Judas received a "band of men" along with the officers from the chief priests. The Greek word here is a very specific word used to describe a "cohort" of Roman soldiers as the New American Standard translates the passage. Evidently, the Jews had received help from the Roman soldiers even in arresting Jesus.
- B. Further in the midst of the cries of the Jews to crucify Jesus, the quiet remarks of Pilate as he spoke to Jesus in **John 19:10** ring out clearly. Pilate had the authority to release Jesus or to crucify Him. For all his hand washing, it was Pilate who crucified Jesus. **Mark 15:15** makes the blame very clear. Pilate wanted to please the crowd more than he wanted to do what was right. He scourged Jesus and delivered him to be crucified.
- C. At that point, the Roman soldiers took over. As **Mark 15:16-17** demonstrates that the whole Roman cohort became involved in the mockery and beating of Jesus. **John 19:17-25** ends by very clearly saying that the soldiers did these things. The Romans crucified Jesus.

- D. Interestingly, when the apostles prayed in **Acts 4:27**, they accused Herod, Pilate, and all the Gentiles as having been gathered against Jesus. Thus, while preaching to Jews, they wanted the Jews to know they had crucified Jesus, but the Gentiles were just as guilty.

III. We killed Jesus.

- A. All that being said regarding who actually put Jesus on the cross, we have already come to learn that the Jews of Jesus' day and the Gentiles of Jesus' day are not the only ones guilty. I am not telling you anything you have not already heard when I point out that we are just as guilty of putting Jesus on the cross as the Jews and Romans were.
- B. **Romans 3:23** said that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. We all deserve the wages of sin, which is death (**Romans 6:23**). **Isaiah 53:5-6** rings loud and clear. Jesus was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. His chastisement was for our peace. Our healing came from His stripes. We like sheep went astray, but our iniquities were laid on Jesus. This same theme is repeated in **I Peter 2:24; 3:18**.
- C. We may not have held the scourge's handle, but our sins brought it down on His back. We may not have driven the nails into His hands, but our transgressions pounded that hammer. We may not have mocked and jeered, but our iniquities burdened Him on the cross.
- D. You have heard all of this before, haven't you? These refrains have been repeated in television interviews and written in articles. But this is not the whole truth. This is only part of the truth.
- E. Have you given thought to how absurd it is to end the answer to our question with these three options? First, we consider the Jews, who by their own admission had no authority to put anyone to death (**John 18:31**). The Jews had no power to kill Jesus. But then we have the testimony of Jesus regarding Pilate in **John 19:11** that Pilate had no authority over Jesus at all. Finally, we must consider our own sins. Is there something about our own sins that forced Jesus onto the cross? Absolutely not. He did not owe us. He was not obligated. Therefore, our previous answers fall short.

IV. The shocking truth: Jesus laid down His own life.

- A. The shocking truth is found in **John 10:17-18**, "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may 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 I have authority to take it up again" (ESV).
- B. Look again at **Acts 4:27**, this time continue reading into **vs. 28**. All those people had gathered together against Jesus, but they only accomplished what God had planned and predestined. **Isaiah 53:10-12** also explains that it was the Lord who bruised Jesus. It was Jesus Himself who poured out His soul unto death.
- C. According to **Matthew 26:53**, at any moment Jesus could have called as many as 12 legions of angels. A legion was 6000 strong. He could have had 72,000 angels come fight His battle if He desired. But He didn't. Why did the Father, Son, and Spirit accomplish this plan? **Romans 5:6-8** explains that this plan was strictly accomplished by God's love. **Ephesians 2:4-10** explains that this plan of salvation was wholly of God's grace and mercy. The clichéd statement is true, love held Jesus to the cross, not the nails.

Conclusion:

The shocking truth—The Jews could not kill Him. The Romans could not kill Him. Our sins did not obligate Him. His great love and mercy caused His death. The saddest aspect of Jesus' death is that for too many people, Jesus died in vain. Too many are unwilling to love Jesus as He loves us. Too few are willing to walk in His footsteps. **Romans 6:1-11** explains what God is offering us through Jesus Christ: freedom from sin. He has offered this to us through the death and blood of Jesus on the cross. Would you like to be set free from the sins that are killing you? Then follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Be buried with Him in baptism, dying to your sins, and be raised to walk in the newness of life. Do not let Christ's death be in vain for you. Have you died to sin by being buried in baptism for the remission of your sins (**Acts 2:38**)? If we can help you draw closer to Christ, please, let us know.