

The Wednesday Word, January 28, 2015: Who Killed Jesus

Many people say that the Jews killed Jesus but is that true? If the only evidence on the matter were Acts 2:23, one however, would indeed be led to believe in their total responsibility. In that verse, Peter tells his Jewish audience, in no uncertain terms, that they were guilty of slaying the Son of God. So then is it true, that the Jews killed the Lord Christ? Mmmm!! Maybe not! Consider this, no actual Jewish person nailed His hands and feet to the cross. No Jewish soldiers whipped Him and crowned His lovely head with thorns. So why then did Peter say it was the Jews who took Christ, and by wicked hands crucified and slew Him? The answer is this, Peter, under divine influence, imputed the crime of Christ's death to them. The grizzled bearded leaders of Israel had planned and schemed for Christ's death, and now the nation itself was reckoned as being guilty of having committed the vulgar and violent crime. Guilt was imputed and reckoned to them because of the actions of others.

This matter of imputation is a serious business and not, as some suggest, a legal fiction. The Jews were guilty, by imputation, and treated as such by God. We also know that although the Jews plotted and planned His death, they did not physically kill Jesus. They couldn't! Why not? Because Jesus, speaking of His life, plainly said, "No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18). The Lord's death was His own doing! His life was not taken by any man or group of men!

In Hebrews 7:27 we read that Christ offered himself as a sacrifice. In other words, Jesus, as it were, placed Himself on the sacrificial altar. He was not a helpless martyr reluctantly pulled along by crushing events. He was the Sovereign Lord in charge of all that happened. He was the master and commander of His destiny. Although Pilate sent Him to the cross, Pilate was not the one who killed Him. Guilty as Caiaphas may have been, he did not slaughter the Christ. Christ Himself moved history towards Calvary and there as our High Priest offered Himself as a perfect, sinless sacrifice without blemish.

Do you see His sovereignty here? Let me explain. Unless the Lord returns in our lifetime, we will all die. That's just the way it is. When the shrouded figure of death points his icy finger at us, we cannot resist. We are powerless against him. Yet Christ went to the cross and chose the very moment of death. Death was not His master. He chose not to die until He was good and ready. We, on the other hand, are powerless against death. Ecclesiastes 8:8 points out, "There is no man that has power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither has he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war;" but this scripture is not true of Jesus. He was the only one who ever lived who had the authority and ability to lay down His life (John 10:18). At the precise second, at the fixed moment of His choosing. He humbled Himself unto death (Philippians 2:8) and voluntarily dismissed His spirit (John 19:30).

Jesus chose the exact moment of His death. The truth is; He need never have died -- even on the Cross. He had the power to sustain His life had He wished to (John 5:26). But His earthly life was one of voluntarily relinquishing His divine prerogatives. His 33 years here were ones of loving identification with His people. When the redemption of His sheep was complete, and not until then, did the Great Shepherd, as an act of His free-will, bow his head to death.

Hallelujah! What a Saviour

And that's the Gospel Truth!