
Who Really Killed Jesus?

There have been numerous allegations concerning anti-Semitic inference surrounding Mel Gibson's movie, *The Passion of the Christ*. Some claim the film portrays the Jewish leaders of that day to be guilty of conspiring to kill Jesus of Nazareth. Consequently, some believe this will agitate old suppressed hatreds toward the Jewish community. But is that an accurate characterization? Did the Jewish leaders of Christ's day really kill Him? Or is there more to the story? Have traditional human perspectives and prejudices blinded us from a much larger picture of God's unfolding plan for humankind? The answer to this question may surprise you!

The Gospel of John begins with a curious statement: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:1-4).

These verses provide us the notion that this "Word" was with God in the beginning, and He too was considered God. We are also told all things were made by Him. In other words, He was the Creator of everything and presented light (understanding) and life (physical, as well as eternal) to mankind.

The text explicitly states that He made "all things"—including this earth—but the world (society in general) did not know Him; nor was He accepted by His own ethnic group, the Jews (verses 10-11). Yet He was made flesh and dwelt among us while we beheld His glory as the only begotten of the Father (verse 14). John the Baptist admits this Word came **after** him (his ministry), but is preferred **before** him because He was **before** him. Again, the notion one is given is this Word, who became flesh, **existed before** John the Baptist was born, but whose ministry, on earth, followed after his (verse 15).

In Revelation 19:13, again the apostle John, later in his life, reminds us that this Word of God is indeed Jesus of Nazareth. The apostle minces no words when identifying the Word of God. He knows this is Jesus, the Christ (the Anointed), the Faithful and True (Revelation 19:10-16), and that

He will return to this earth to claim His rightful position as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Now back to the Gospel of John. As you continue to read through the first chapter of this Gospel, it becomes apparent that Jesus of Nazareth is in fact the Son of God (John 1:29,34). With this in mind, we come to understand quite a bit about Jesus Christ and how **He is destined** ultimately to come back to earth and complete His mission of world peace, eliminating all global conflict among differing cultures. This is the essence of the gospel message that Jesus Christ of Nazareth brought to mankind when He visited our dimension of time and space. **How** this would be accomplished and **who** would be participants is central to the message of both Old and New Testaments.

The Salvation Plan was Preordained

Most people don't realize God is in charge of His salvation program. He has authored the plan. He decided **how** He would introduce eternal life and world peace to this planet of human beings. As a matter of fact, God constructed this plan *before the world was*.

Paul, writing to Timothy, a young evangelist, says, "Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus **before the world began**, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:9-10).

The Bible is clear about how God is working out His own purpose, which was designed *before the world was*. Paul, writing to Titus, substantiates this truth and mystery: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised **before the world began**" (Titus 1:1-2).

Paul continues to write about this mystery when he says, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained **before the world** unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:7-8).

Even the apostle Peter confirmed his agreement with Paul when he said, "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was **foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Peter 1:19-21).

It becomes quite obvious this plan of salvation is **God's concept and will**. He has worked out the details and laid down the patterns. In biblical terms, we call this *prophecy*. As a matter of fact, Jesus Christ's visitation to our dimension was a fulfillment of prophecies written over thousands of years by multiple men of God. These events were written *before* they happened, so that *when* they happened we would be able to validate they were from God and recognize the Messiah upon His arrival. In Ephesians we read, "According as he has chosen us in Him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of *His will*, To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; Wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, *according to His good pleasure* which *He has purposed in Himself*: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all

things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated *according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will*: That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ" (Ephesians 1:4-12).

The early New Testament writers were well aware of the fact that this plan of redemption was conceived *before the world was*, and those who would become participants would be part of a predestined Godly purpose. That purpose would result in our becoming adopted sons of God and **sharing in the mystery of His will**, ultimately becoming born immortal beings able to live in His dimension of eternity.

So we should begin to understand that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was a **predestined** event that had to happen for the sake of human redemption, and which was orchestrated by the Being introduced to us, during Christ's ministry, as the Father. Remember one of the reasons Jesus the Christ (the Anointed) came to this earth was to reveal the Father. "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (John 1:18). For the first time in human history this time traveler from another dimension, Jesus of Nazareth, introduced to us a whole new perspective and dimension concerning the make-up and nature of God.

As a matter of fact, much of Jesus' persecution and criticism resulted from confrontations with the Jewish religious leaders of His day over His disclosure concerning His relationship with "the Father." In John 8, this is clearly illustrated in the dialogue recorded. As you read through the text you will see emotions ran rather high due to what the Jews considered blasphemous statements from Christ. Yet Jesus was adamant and insistent in explaining to them that He was the Being that identified Himself to Moses as the "I AM" when emancipating Israel from Egypt thousands of years before. This didn't go over very well and almost resulted in Him being stoned to death (John 8:54-59). The reason is obvious: Jesus was telling them He was the God of the Old Testament; that He was the God of Israel who covenanted with that nation as their Provider and Healer; that it was He who made the promises to Israel's spiritual forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was unacceptable to the Jewish leaders

of His day. It was blasphemous as far as they were concerned.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth Preexisted

However, the Scriptures are explicit concerning the fact that Jesus Christ of Nazareth did indeed preexist and was in fact the very One who created the material universe. Paul addresses this in a few areas. He says, "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17). Paul continues, "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:9).

The writer of Hebrews states, "God who in various times and in different manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2). Even Jesus Himself clearly spoke of His preexistence the night He was betrayed in the garden when He prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own Self with the glory which I had with Thee **before** the world was" (John 17:5).

In the course of Paul's explanation to the Corinthian church about the value of Old Testament examples, he mentions something that many Christians today overlook, yet is another proof that verifies Jesus Christ was indeed the God of the Old Testament. Notice what Paul says: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that **Rock was Christ**" (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). Paul is speaking of how God took care of the children of Israel by bringing them through the Red Sea and providing for them in the wilderness. But the God that took care of them is identified as none other than Jesus Christ, formerly the Word of God, who created all things.

So, in summary, up to this point we understand that Jesus Christ of Nazareth preexisted as the Word

of God. With this in mind, we understand that Jesus was the God of the Old Testament and was the one who identified Himself to Moses as the "I AM." He was instrumental in arranging the relationship and matrimonial covenant agreement with the nation Israel that was central to the Old Testament; but when the people failed, the result was divorce. Additionally, this plan was conceived **before the world was** and became part of the predestined program of salvation God composed for the purpose of redeeming all of humankind, ultimately resulting in paving the way for "bringing many sons unto glory." However, the key ingredient in making all this possible was the event of the Creator God (Jesus the Christ) dying for His creation, affording Him the freedom to marry another—that "other" being the church.

This became the "Cornerstone" of the salvation program because it is the method that opened the door for **all** human beings to access the *family* of God. Paul explains this in Ephesians 3. He details how in previous ages the mystery of **how** God would make it possible for the Gentiles to become fellow heirs **was not** understood, but is now revealed unto the apostles and prophets through His Spirit (Ephesians 3:1-6). He further details how this was God's intent, according to His eternal purpose, so that access into the God family would be made possible, and eternal life provided for **all** human beings through Christ by the vehicle of the church (Ephesians 3:7-21). **This was God's choice.** He decided, **before the world was**, that ultimately salvation would not just be reserved for the Israelite. That eternal life would be made available to *all ethnicities and races*. However, it would not come without a suffering servant that would be sacrificed as a lamb to the slaughter (Isaiah 53). And what better, more qualified Being would there be to provide this transition than the very Creator Himself, Jesus Christ?

The Way it Works

Early on in the beginning years of the nation Israel, this Being who revealed Himself as the "I AM," the very Creator, who later became Jesus Christ, codified a liturgy of washings, and oblations. These rituals became an important part of the religious teaching of the nation because they pointed to, and foretold, the ultimate Sacrifice: that the Creator God would die for His creation. Jesus

Christ Himself said the Scriptures “testified” of Him (John 5:39). He further states in this same discussion, chiding His audience, that had they believed Moses they would have believed Him, “for he [Moses] wrote of Me [Jesus]” (John 5:46). That was a major disclosure to this Jewish audience that He pre-existed and that He was, in fact, the one Moses had a relationship with thousands of years before.

Much of the reason for the sacrificial system is explained in Leviticus 17. This is where Moses illustrates the importance of the sacrifices and the method of doing a proper oblation. Specifically, though, in Leviticus 17:11 he mentions something that is pivotal to the reason and purpose for this elaborate system of sacrifices. He says, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: **for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul.**” So God reveals through Moses that atonement, peace with God, requires the shedding of blood. As a matter of fact, in Hebrews 9:22 we are told, explicitly, “without the shedding of blood is no remission.”

We can now begin to understand that this salvation program, which is all about mankind becoming immortal, requires the sacrifice of something of great value. Furthermore, it demands the shedding of blood in order to accomplish the objective of remitting sin, resulting in redemption. Hebrews 9 clarifies how this Old Testament sacrificial system relates to the ultimate sacrifice of our Creator, Jesus Christ. Notice what the writer says:

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause He is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance”

(Hebrews 9:11–15).

This is an incredible revelation of the tremendous value of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice. The elaborate sacrificial system of the Old Testament has been superseded by the self-offering of the Son of God—the enfleshed Word, our perfect, sinless Savior—whose life is of more value than all the human lives of the past, present, and future.

Notice how it is further demonstrated that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is superior by comparison: “It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him **shall He appear the second time** without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:24–28).

Hebrews 10 further explains that the sacrificial system was a mere shadow of the reality to come. The blood of animals could never take away sins, so the first system was to be replaced by the second, which is clearly the “offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:1–10).

God Reserves the Right

Now some may ask, Why this method? Why did it have to be so dramatic, gruesome, and merciless? Well, I’m sure we can think of many reasons if we really consider all that’s at stake. But one thing is certain: if we consider in particular the unimaginable prize of eternal life as an immortal being of the God family, recognizing the value and consequential cost of this enormous sacrifice, it is not hard to understand why it necessitated an extremely comprehensive method that would result in the shedding of blood for atonement (Leviticus 17:11).

With this in mind, it is imperative we recognize it was God’s will and He is the Originator. He has decided and determined that this was the type of program and method best suited for achieving the fairness you would expect from God. It is our responsibility to accept it, along with its terms, and concede to His guidance.

Yet, many today are uncomfortable with allowing God to be God. Many cannot understand or don't want to accept the idea that a Living God has the right to make choices based on His judgments to accomplish His purposes and will. It's hard for independent, carnal, and high-minded human beings to submit to a reality that portrays the existence of a higher power more capable of equality and fairness and, in addition, has a plan for mankind that exceeds anything man could ever devise, imagine, or provide. To think that God would *specifically use* certain men, groups, ethnicities, or empires to serve *His will* for accomplishing His purpose is unthinkable and, for most, unacceptable. In our finite way of human reasoning this seems so unfair. We cannot fathom it. Yet that is exactly what we see presented from Genesis to Revelation.

Throughout the Bible we read about our Creator, who became Jesus Christ, making choices. Whether it was choosing Abraham over someone else, or Isaac over Ishmael, or Jacob over Esau, God made His choices to suit *His purpose and will*.

Remember, He hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 9:16; 10:20). He was behind Joseph being sold into slavery (Genesis 45:4-8). He allowed Israel to divide into two separate nations (1 Kings 12:19-24). He allowed the Jews to return to Israel, after seventy years of Babylonian captivity, and rebuild the Temple and reestablish their culture (Daniel 9:1-2; 2 Chronicles 36:20-23).

Much more could be said about God's direct involvement in the affairs of humankind, but perhaps the apostle Paul explains it best when, in Romans 9, he is confronted by this same debate and addresses what underlies this issue: "[C]ould there be unrighteousness with God?"

Paul is reflecting on what a disappointment it is that Israel, the Jews in particular, did not acknowledge Christ for who He was, especially since He was Jewish (Romans 9:1-5). However, in the course of making his point, he demonstrates how God does, indeed, make choices. Paul illustrates this by using the examples of Isaac and Jacob's selection over Ishmael and Esau. Notice: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the

promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Romans 9:6-13).

Now the obvious question is, "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?" (Romans 9:14). In other words, does God have favorites? Is God prejudiced? Paul answers his own question by saying, "God forbid." He then proceeds to establish the superiority of God by describing how God makes His own selections depending on how He chooses to work out His plan (Romans 9:15-18). This is God's prerogative. It's *His-story*.

Now I know it's hard to get our minds around this and go outside of our human perspective. Yet, the Bible demands that we view life from *God's* outlook. Unless we are able to do this and rise above the quagmire of human prejudice, bias, personal opinion, partisanship, and cultural standards and values, along with any other human or worldly influence, we stand no chance of seeing life's realities clearly. As human beings we must surrender to the fact that we have no right to question the methods of God's will.

This is exactly what the apostle says: "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Romans 9:19-24).

As Paul concludes the rest of this chapter he clarifies the fact that the rejection of Jesus Christ by His own fellow Israelites and Jewish tribesmen has

actually served the good purpose of affording the gentiles (non-Israelites and/or non-Jews) access to righteousness by faith. So, when viewed from God's perspective, we see even this issue has good reason as far as God is concerned. This point is further illustrated in Romans 10 and 11.

So Who Really Killed Jesus Christ?

With all this in mind, we are now ready to answer the question presented when we originally asked, Who really killed Jesus Christ? As you will see, without this background it is virtually impossible to answer this question correctly, for so much of our understanding is predicated on mere human perspective.

For example, we could easily answer this question very directly by simply saying a Roman soldier stabbed Him. This is the most direct answer to the question concerning who killed Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Your Bible is quite clear on this matter. Notice what the apostle John writes when describ-

ing the concluding moments of the crucifixion and the assessment of Jesus Christ's physical condition. He says, "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him [the two thieves]. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: But one of the soldiers **with a spear pierced His side** and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knows that he saith true, that you might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on Him **Whom they pierced**" (John 19:32-37).

John makes reference to Exodus 12:46; Psalms 34:20; 22:16-17; Numbers 9:12; Zechariah 12:10; and Revelation 1:7, which all indicate how this event would be a prophetic fulfillment and crucial component validating Jesus Christ's role in this plan of salvation, designed to afford mankind

Did Jesus die before, or after, being pierced?

Matthew 27:48-50, as rendered in the King James Version (KJV), says nothing about Jesus being pierced. However, many ancient manuscripts include a statement on the piercing of Christ at the end of verse 49. This statement is included in some of our English versions, including the Fenton and Moffatt translations. Notice how the Fenton translation renders verses 49 and 50:

"But the others called out, 'Let Him alone! Let us see whether Elijah will come and save Him!' *But another taking a spear pierced His side, when blood and water came out.* Jesus, however, having again called out with a loud voice, resigned His spirit."

The Moffatt translation renders the passage similarly: "But the other said, 'Stop, let us see if Elijah does come to save him!' (Seizing a lance, another pricked [Greek: *nussoo*, meaning "pierced"] his side, and out came water and blood.) Jesus again uttered a loud scream, and gave up his spirit."

Neither Mark's account nor Luke's tell of Jesus being pierced; but it should be remembered that no one account describes all the details. In order to get a full picture of what happened, and the order in which each event occurred, it is necessary to put all the accounts together and to con-

sider any possible variation in translation.

John 19:33-34 is a case in point. The passage reads, "But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out."

This account, as it appears in English, seems to say that the soldier pierced Jesus *after* it was discovered that He was already dead. The usual explanation is that they wanted to make sure He was dead. However, in the Greek, the word translated "pierced" in our English Bibles is in the aorist tense; therefore, the term ("pierced") refers not to the *time* of the action, but to the *kind* of action. The use of the aorist tense allows two possible meanings for the passage: (1) The passage could mean that Christ was pierced after the soldiers discovered that He was dead, or (2) it could mean that He had *already been pierced* when the soldiers observed that He was dead.

So John 19:33-34 could be translated in such a way as to convey either meaning, but in view of Matthew's account, with the insertion of the missing portion of verse 49 (chapter 27), we have reason to believe that John was saying that the soldiers chose not to break Jesus' legs because He was already dead, having been pierced.

immortality.

The Fenton and Moffatt translations further substantiate this event by including a statement in Matthew 27:49: "But another taking a spear pierced His side, when blood and water came out." Unfortunately, this scripture was left out in the King James translation, regardless of the fact that ancient manuscripts like the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Ethiopic, many of the Syrian translations, and some of the oldest Greek manuscripts included it.

If you are interested in studying this point more thoroughly, obtain a copy of the Fenton and Moffatt Bible translations. You will notice that Matthew 27:48–50 will read differently than the King James translation. Why was this verse left out? That's a question for another time. Suffice it to say, many scholars recognize this verse was included in some of the oldest Greek manuscripts we have today.

However, the fact a Roman soldier is directly responsible for stabbing Jesus Christ **does not** answer the question sufficiently. There are far too many reasons and circumstances surrounding this enormously important historical event to reduce the answer to a mere Roman soldier stabbing the Creator of the universe and personally be held responsible for the death of this Creator God, Jesus Christ.

Nor can we simply say the Jewish leaders are solely accountable. Yes, they certainly played a part in the event and without a doubt share in the culpability of His crucifixion, but they cannot be held in **total blame** for our Creator's execution. Pilate who gave reluctant approval for the execution to be initiated, and Herod, who also had a role, cannot be held **exclusively responsible** either; or even Judas, for that matter, who betrayed Him, because this whole saga is **much larger** than all the individuals, ethnic groups, and/or Roman government that played a part in this colossal display of eschatology. It is much more immense in scope than any individual component because it **was designed before the world was** by God Himself, outside of our physical dimension, and was motivated by love to share life with those who could be entrusted with the power to be immortal sons of God. The salvation plan that assures God the Father and Jesus Christ that only those who qualified would be rewarded was complex, and involved many circumstances of **their own selection**.

Notice what Jesus said in the book of Matthew

when discussing His identity and destiny with His disciples. He said, "Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matthew 16:20–21).

Did you notice? Jesus is speaking prophetically about His future death and how He would be resurrected the third day. **He knew in advance** of His execution just exactly what was going to happen. How did He know? He knew because this was all preordained to occur and **designed before the world was** to accomplish a procedure for mankind's redemption and consequent adoption as immortal sons of God (Romans 8:14–17).

Now back to Matthew 16. Did you notice Peter is upset at what Jesus mentions to them? He verbally rebukes Jesus and says it won't be so (Matthew 16:22). This generates a response from Jesus that was rather firm and perhaps somewhat demonstratively agitated. Jesus says; "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Jesus is telling Peter he is out of line. By His own words Jesus claims He's offended at Peter's statement implying he would attempt to thwart **the will** of God. Again, notice Jesus' comment: "for you savourest [consider] not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Jesus is clearly saying, that **God's will supersedes** anything man has *regardless of our opinions, wants, or preferences*. All that matters is God's will. Now that's quite a concept and was certainly an important lesson for Peter.

Additionally, this should be quite a revelation to all of us as well, because what Jesus is saying is that His crucifixion, all along, **was God's will**. In other words, it was God the Father's will, that He, the Creator of all things, Jesus the Christ, should die this horrible death and fulfill the law (sacrificial law) in this fashion.

Now Paul portrays this principle in concept when he says, "For Christ is the end [goal] of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes" (Romans 10:4). In so many words, Paul is saying that Jesus the Christ, our Creator, was **destined** to accomplish all **preordained** prophetic events mentioned throughout the Scriptures, which at that time were

exclusively reserved to Old Testament writings, and fulfilled all provisions for Jew and Greek to obtain salvation (Romans 10:1–13). The sacrificial system was one fulfillment of many aspects pointing to Christ provided throughout His ministry.

We must remember that Jesus the Christ was sent to this earth and visited our dimension of time and space for the exclusive purpose of doing the Father's will (John 6:38–40). Christ was the Living Bread. It was the will of the Living Father that sent Him that those who should believe on Him should live forever (John 6:57–58). Jesus continues to clarify the relationship between us, Him, and the Father by saying those who believe Him believe the Father (John 12:44–50).

What Jesus Christ did was reveal to us the Father. Before this time no man knew this aspect of the mystery of God. It was hidden throughout the ages, and revealed now in these end times to us. And in addition, we did not know what the will of the Father was, but Jesus the Christ manifested it to us and for three and a half years shared the details of the process with primarily twelve specific men He called disciples. In the course of His ministry He explained by teaching, His example, and encounters with various individuals, that we are the sons of God and it was the Father's intent and will we understand that (John 10:24–39). This is central to the New Testament gospel message.

So, it is obvious Jesus Christ's death was planned **before the world was**—necessitated by the anticipation of mankind's failure to obey God. This plan was designed with redemption in mind. However, the shedding of blood was required in order to accomplish this purpose. Jesus Christ, formerly the Word of God, our Creator, was most suited for serving in the capacity of the suffering Servant and Oblation for Atonement, because He was the Creator and His life was greater in value than all of

humanity. So the choices were made, the patterns in the heavens were established, and the program was initiated upon the physical creation of Adam and Eve. The rest is His-story.

In summary, it was the will of the Father that Jesus the Christ, our Creator, formerly the very Word of God, should live a life of sacrifice, teach the things He did, and die the grisly death of crucifixion. **Yes, our sins necessitated it! Without question, transgression of God's law was the underlying cause of Jesus Christ's death** (1 John 3:4–5). Nevertheless, *it remained the will of the Father* to guide and steer it in the direction it went—even until the very end. Consider what Jesus said three times while praying to the Father right before His arrest in the garden: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, **but as Thou wilt**" (Matthew 26:39). Also, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, **Thy will be done**" (Matthew 26:42). And finally, the third time was the "**same words**" (Matthew 26:44).

Therefore, everything else throughout the ages of mankind's history were just so many choices, and selections, that God reserved prerogative to serve His purpose in carrying out His preordained will. This is why no individual, ethnic group, or government can be held responsible for the death of Jesus Christ.

As a matter of fact, the **ultimate responsibility remains with God** for designing the salvation program in the fashion He did. But thank God He had the foresight, compassion, grace, and love to see this salvation program through, because now immortality has been brought to light and disclosed to us in these last days. And now we too can obtain immortal life if only we will repent of sin, obey God, and accept Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior and soon coming King of Kings.



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