



Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT, ESTABLISHED 1786, MISSIONARY

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"

Vol. 5

Lexington, Kentucky

April 1974

No. 7

WHO KILLED THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23), "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4,5), "No man taketh 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. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18).

The answer to this question must come from the Bible, and when we read what it says on the subject there seems to be contradiction and confusion. But when the word is rightly divided, there is harmony and consistency. There are scriptures which tell us that men put Christ to death (Acts 2:23, 4:27). There are other Scriptures that tell us plainly that God put Christ to death (Isa. 53:4,10). And then there are Scriptures that tell us that nobody put Him to death (John 10:18).

Now these passages are typical of three distinct groups of Scriptures. One group says that wicked men killed Christ; another group says that God put Him to death; and a third group says that He lay down His life. All these Scriptures are true, but they view His death from different angles.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST AS THE ACT OF MEN

1. It was a wicked deed. Peter says, "...with wicked hands have crucified and slain." We

have no difficulty in seeing that men did a wicked deed when they nailed the Son of God to the cruel tree.

2. It was an ignorant deed. "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Cor. 2:8). On the cross Christ said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). There is a sense in which all sin is a matter of ignorance. Nobody knows much about the enormity and heinousness of sin apart from the convincing and convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

3. It was a providential deed. In putting Christ to death, men were doing only what God had determined to be done--and they were doing it the way He meant for it to be done. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God); that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance" (Deut. 21:23). This raises a question: How could it be sinful or wrong to do what God had purposed to be done? This leads to another question: What makes an act sinful? It is not the mere deed but the motive behind the deed. In other words, sin is not in the hand but in the heart. The Bible says in Matthew 5:27,28: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

And so those who killed Christ did what was meant to be done, but their motive was sinful. Their deed was from a wicked heart. This is why a perfectly good deed in itself may not be a good deed in the sight of God. One may give his goods to feed the poor to no profit because he does it from a selfish motive--to get the praise of men. Selfishness may express itself in a good deed as well as in a wicked deed. The Pharisees did a lot of good things and yet they were censured by Christ because they did it to get the praise of men. Watch your motive, and be careful about judging the motive of others. For a thing to be good in God's sight, it must be done for His glory.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST AS AN ACT OF GOD

1. It was an exhibition of justice. God's justice calls for the punishment of sin. Here is where many go astray in their thinking. The general feeling is that God ought to save everybody if He is to be just. No unregenerate man is sound in his thinking about religion. He may think straight about things in nature and science and human courts. Nobody will ever argue that human courts ought to open prison doors and let all prisoners go free as a matter of justice. Everybody believes that a just judge must enforce the law and inflict the penalty on the offender. Well, God is a just Judge and as such, He will enforce His law. And that is what He is doing at the cross. He is not punishing the sinner, but the sinner's Surety who is Jesus Christ.

At Calvary God was acting as a just Judge. Christ took our guilt upon Himself and God is striking at sin. Sin deserves the wrath of God, and at Calvary all the wrath of God fell upon God's Son who was in the sinner's place. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21). God was so just that He spared not His own Son when He saw Him in the sinner's place. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32).

2. It was an exhibition of love. There was both justice and love exhibited at the cross--justice towards sin and love towards the sinner. God in love gave His Son to die in the sinner's place that He might in justice let the sinner go free. "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:8,9). Sin cannot be pardoned; it must be punished. Failure to punish sin is to put a premium on sin. God's love is not a lazy good nature as many think, but it is rigidly righteous. God in love for sinners punished His own Son.

1. It was voluntary. God gave His Son but He did not force His Son to die. Men killed Jesus but not against His will. Had you ever noticed how helpless His enemies were to take Him until He got ready to die? Seven times we are told in John's Gospel that they could not lay hands upon Him because His hour was not yet come.

2. It was a priestly act. The Old Testament priests offered the blood of bulls and goats that could not take away sin, but Jesus Christ as our High Priest offered Himself without spot to God. By one offering He perfected forever them that are sanctified or set apart by grace through faith.

CONCLUSION

The truth in a capsule is this: Here stands a sinner--what is to be done with him? Justice says, "Cut him down, he has no right to live." Truth says, "He or I, one of us, must perish for I have said, 'The wages of sin is death.'" Holiness says, "I hate the workers of iniquity, away with him." Mercy pleads, "Spare him." And wisdom says, "Deliver him from going down into the pit for I have found a ransom," and He offers the sinless Son of God as the ransom price for our redemption.

It is so comforting for us poor sinners to know that God is so rich and abundant in the very thing we so greatly need as sinners. It was in mercy that Christ died for us, and it was also in mercy that the Spirit enlightened our sin darkened understanding. No wonder the Psalmist said, "I will sing aloud of Thy mercy" (Ps. 59:16).

All who fail to trust the Lord Jesus Christ will be dealt with in strict justice--they will get what they deserve as rebels against God--for God out of Christ is a consuming fire.

By the late C. D. Cole



REAL LIFE

Is Not in the Abundance of Things Possessed, but

IS IN DOING THE WORK OF CHRIST