

Why Was Christ Put to Death?

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Date: 02 April 2010

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[0:00] Please turn with me to John chapter 11 and verse 45. 5. Our interest tonight is all about that historical event that took place 2,000 years ago outside of Jerusalem when the incarnate Son of God was hung up on a cross between heaven and earth and left there to die between two thieves.

The question is why? Why was Christ put to death? And the answers to that question run on two tracks. There's the divine side and there's the human side.

The divine side is that God planned it that way. Amen. God's plan from eternity past was to send his own son to come into the world to save sinners by suffering and dying the death that we should have received under God's wrath forever and ever.

And many scriptures could be cited showing the divine side. Of Jesus death. That's why he died because God wanted it to happen.

But the same question can be answered from the human side. Why was Jesus Christ put to death? Well, because that's what men wanted.

[1:31] That was man's plan. Certain men hated Jesus or at least wanted him dead for one reason or another. And so they put him to death.

That's why he died. And the scriptures give us both. The human side and the divine side.

And the study of either side is rich with lessons for us. But it's as we see these two sides playing out together that we're struck with the sovereignty of God over everything that happens in this world, even over man's greatest wickedness.

And schemes. So at Calvary, what the holy God wants to happen and what wicked sinners want to happen meet at the middle cross.

Of our Lord Jesus Christ. Before we get to our text, just two from the book of Acts. Acts 2.23.

[2:43] This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge. That's God's side. And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

That's man's side. God's plan. Man's plan. Meet in Christ. Crucify. Again, in Acts 4.27 and 28.

We have all the major players in the crucifixion of Christ. Herod and Pontius Pilate meeting with Gentiles and the peoples of Israel in Jerusalem. All conspiring against the Lord and his anointed Christ.

That's man's side. And yet, we're told there that they did nothing but what God's power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

That's God's side. Men did absolutely nothing but what God's will had decided beforehand. Not one nail more in his flesh.

[3:46] Not one fist more in his face. Not one lash more on his back. Not one hawker of spittle in his face. Then what God's will determined should happen.

And so spear in his side. Yes, God's determined it will. Broken.

Knees. Like the others. No. And so they're not broken. All decided beforehand. So we're in John's gospel here in chapter 11.

And we're getting man's side. We're getting a lot of man's side in this passage as to the answer of why Jesus died. And at the end, we're going to see a marvelous weaving in of God's side in a statement that is made.

So from man's side, John tells us that the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. Was a major catalyst that moved the Jewish leaders to kill Jesus.

[4:54] It was like the last straw. It played a strategic role. Now, there were many of Jesus teachings that stirred up the wrath of the Jewish leaders.

There was his indifference toward all the man-made rules that the Jews had made up. Jesus didn't pay any attention to them. And that irritated them.

But especially it was his claims to be God. Calling God his own father and making himself equal with God. When he said in chapter 10, I and the father are one.

The Jews stooped down and picked up stones to stone him. And Jesus sees the stones in their hands. And he says, I have shown you many great miracles from the father.

For which of these do you stone me? We're not stoning you for any of these, replied the Jews. But for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.

[5:54] And though they tried to seize him, he escaped their grasp. That's chapter 10. Chapter 11 is the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead.

And verse 18 tells us that Mary and Martha and the brother of Lazarus lived in Bethany. And that it was just two miles from Bethany to Jerusalem. And that explains why when Lazarus died, many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.

It was just two miles out of Jerusalem. Large population in Jerusalem. Friends of Mary and Martha and Lazarus came out to console them in Lazarus' death. So that when Jesus arrived four days after Lazarus' death and burial, the witnesses of his miraculous raising of Lazarus from the dead were not a few.

There were many Jews on hand. Now tonight I want us to notice the reaction of the witnesses and then the reaction of the Jewish leaders.

First of all, the reaction of the witnesses to Lazarus' resurrection. Verses 45 and 46 of John 11.

Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what Jesus did put their faith in him.

[7:16] But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Jesus Christ is always presented in the Gospels as the great divider of humanity into two camps.

Believers and unbelievers. And so it was here with this great miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus stands as the great divider. Some believed, we were told.

Some sought and believed. Others went and snitched to the Pharisees. Who they knew hated Jesus and were his avowed enemies. So some believed and others didn't.

But everybody, without exception, was talking about him. So Jerusalem is all full of this story of what Jesus of Nazareth has just done outside in Bethlehem or in Bethany to the dead man Lazarus. And all of Jerusalem is abuzz with the talk. And that is too much for these Jewish leaders to stomach. They call an impromptu meeting of the Israeli Supreme Court.

[8:19] Verse 47. Then the chief priest and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. And now we get to read the reaction of the Jewish leaders to this miracle.

There are four points. First of all, we hear their belly aching. Verses 47b and 48. What are we accomplishing?

They asked. Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him. And then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.

They're singing the blues. They're irritated. And yet they're perplexed as to what to do. They're asking, what have we accomplished by our present policy towards Jesus of Nazareth?

The present policy against Jesus was to speak out against him, to challenge him verbally, to threaten excommunication from the temple for anybody that might follow him.

[9:24] But there was no action being taken against him physically. Not yet. Perhaps some argued for caution on the basis of procedure. That was Nicodemus' position in John chapter 7.

They're ready to haul him in and arrest him and condemn him. And Nicodemus says, does our law condemn anyone before hearing him, trying him? So Nicodemus and perhaps others argued caution in the handling of Jesus.

Others argued caution for the fear of the people who hurt him gladly. Finally, we read in this final week leading up to his death, when Jesus came into the temple and cleansed it and drove out the money changers, that the Jewish leaders asked Jesus this question, by what authority do you do these things?

And remember, Jesus said, well, I'll ask you a question. If you answer me, I'll answer you. John's baptism. By what authority? Where did it come from?

From heaven or from men? Now, Jesus displaced them uncomfortably right on the horns of a dilemma. And so they speak to each other about this.

[10:42] And they said among themselves, if we say from heaven, then he will say, then why didn't you believe him? But if we say from earth.

We're afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet. So they answered Jesus, we don't know. And Jesus says, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

But what do we see? We find these leaders of the Jews are slaves to the fear of people. They can't even answer a question outright because they're afraid of what the people will say if they spoke the truth.

And so, though they're irritated to death with Jesus. Popularity. They still are afraid of getting on the wrong side of the people.

By killing a popular miracle worker. So it's moderate policy. And now they're confessing that this moderate policy is getting us nowhere.

[11:51] They say much the same thing in the next chapter. Chapter 12, when Jesus came riding into Jerusalem. And the multitudes are shouting his praise. Verse 17 of chapter 12.

Now the crowd that was with him. When he called Lazarus from the tomb. Raised him and raised him from the dead. That crowd that witnessed that. Continued to spread the word.

Many people, because they heard that he had given this miraculous sign. Went out to meet him. So the Pharisees said to one another. See, this is getting us nowhere.

It's all about us. This is not getting us anywhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him. It's him and it's us.

They're like a broken record complaining about Jesus rising numbers in the popularity polls. And they're declining numbers. The longer we do nothing.

[12:49] The more miraculous signs he performs. How can we compete with that? And so Jesus Christ is clearly at cross purposes with their self-promoting agenda.

Well, that's the first response of these Jewish leaders. Their belly aching is matched by their hardness of heart. Notice they do not deny his miraculous signs.

They say, here's this man performing many miraculous signs. They're not denying them. They're not saying, oh, they're just tricks. No. They don't deny them.

But they stubbornly refuse to believe on him. The miracles are to them not reasons to believe, but rather reasons to step up their opposition against him.

How mistaken is the idea? If only. We saw miracles. Then we would believe.

[13:53] These men saw miracles aplenty. And yet they still refused to believe. You see, man's greatest need is not. To see miracles. It is to have the miraculous power of God supernaturally change their hearts so that they will quit their rejecting of Jesus and believe in him.

Nothing short of a divine power from heaven can bring a man, a woman, boy or girl to believe on Jesus savingly. How we underestimate the power of unbelief.

The power of unbelief. We think if only they could see a miracle. If only they could see the power of a of godliness. If they could just see a holy life lived out in their home.

Remember Jesus own brothers lived with the holiest of all and still did not believe. It's not needing to see a miracle.

To see some power of holiness. Do not be surprised at the unbelief in your family and in your friends.

[15:09] Man's unbelief does not budge before the best. Of arguments. The most moving of persuasions. Before the strictest logic.

Before the holiest life lived as an example before them. Nothing less than a new birth by the power of God can affect belief in Jesus.

We see it here. They saw the miracles. They acknowledged them. And yet they did not believe. J.C. Ryle says.

If even his avowed enemies could not deny his miracles then. Because they were too many. They were too public. They were too obvious. Then how foolish of his enemies today.

To deny his miracles. Living 2,000 years afterwards. The enemies. His own enemies of the day. Didn't even question that.

[16:10] But oh how many preachers are in pulpits telling their congregations today. That there is no supernatural. Those are just stories. There's no miraculous acts of Jesus in the gospels.

The hardness of heart. Of these Jewish leaders. Then thirdly we see the reason for their concern. Why are they hot and bothered about Jesus and his miracles? Well they say this. If we continue to let him go on like this. That's just not stopping him. Everyone will believe in him.

And we can't have that. Because such a popular uprising among the Jewish masses. Following one that they refer to as king of the Jews.

Which surely aroused the attention of the Romans. Who were suspicious of any kind of Messiah movement. Or revolutionary movement.

[17 : 12] And so they would come down upon us. And crush us. And destroy our place. Whether it's the temple or Jerusalem. And our nation as well. And if the temple and the nation are gone.

Well that would be the end of us. Chief priests. And Pharisees. That's their greatest unspoken concern.

Hiding behind their supposed concern for the good of the nation. These ambitious lovers of power. Are posing as patriots. With national concerns.

When what bothers them is that if. Our place is taken away. And our nation. Is taken from us. Then we. No longer have our power.

But even Pilate was able to see right through that. He knew it was. For envy. That they handed him over. They were envious of him. Oh put away your. Your talk about.

[18 : 17] He's a king. And opposes Caesar. There's nothing to it. I've checked it out. You guys are just envious. Pilate saw them. To the heart. And so they're singing the blues.

Wringing their hands. In frustration. And fourthly. We see. In the response of these Jewish leaders. The pompous speech. Of Caiaphas.

Verses 49 and 50. Then one of them. Named Caiaphas. Who was high priest that year. Spoke up. You know nothing at all. You do not realize.

That it's better for you. That one man die for the people. Than that the whole nation perish. You bunch of know nothings. He says to his colleagues.

You witless creatures. You knuckleheads. You numbskulls. He is speaking offensively. To the rest of the Sanhedrin.

[19 : 13] You haven't been able to figure out. The solution to the problem. I only hear you whining. Well let me enlighten you. Let me give you. What is clearly the answer.

And you will only show your ignorance. If you disagree with me. He's as rude as he is. Ruthless. Rather than passively. Letting things go on.

As they are now. Until the whole nation perishes. As you're so afraid. It is better. For you. It is more expedient. For you. It is in your best interest.

You see. That's what's driving this whole thing. All along. It is better for you. That one man die for the people. Than that the whole nation perish.

Oh how wise Caiaphas is. He's got the answer. If Jesus goes on doing miracles. Everybody starts following him. This great messianic movement.

[20 : 10] Rouses the suspicions of Rome. They come and crush the whole movement. Destroy the nation. And the temple. Well Caiaphas says. Well what's up with you guys.

It's easy. Kill Jesus. Instead of killing the whole nation. If it's Jesus or the nation. I.E. Us.

It's him. That must go. So that through his death. The nation. Will be spared. Sacrificing. The one for the many. It's a slam dunk. What's the hold up guys. Get on with it. Ruthless politicians. Are often willing. To sacrifice another. For their political ends. Jesus Christ. The son of God. Was murdered. As a political expediency.

[21 : 05] Of Caiaphas. And his crew. Never mind.

What's just. Never mind. What's right. What will work. For our advantage. The greater good. That's power. Politics. And when Caiaphas.

Is reintroduced. In the account. On the very night. Of Jesus arrest. And Jesus. Is brought into his home. For. Jesus is brought. Before the Sanhedrin.

For the trial. John. Says of him. Once more. He was the one. Who had advised. The Jews. That it would be good. If one man.

Died. For the people. That's what's going down. In the middle of the night. In Caiaphas's court. But Caiaphas.

[22:00] Pompous. Speech. Shows us. Just how lacking. Worldly. Wisdom. Is. Because it. Utterly. Failed. To accomplish. What he said. It would.

So God. Could say. To this. Know it all. High priest. You know. Nothing. At all. Caiaphas. For number one. By killing. Jesus.

They did not. Bring the Jesus. Movement. To an end. At all. Because. Jesus. Was raised. From the dead. Triumphant. Over death. He hadn't.

Figured. On that. In his. All wise. Solution. And. Why not. Caiaphas. You knew. He raised. Lazarus. From the dead. You know.

Nothing. At all. And so. In the end. Jesus. Death. That which they do. To end. The movement.

Actually. Becomes. The catalyst. For. The movement.

[22:57] Just. Continuing. To multiply. And increase. To where we find. Mass. Conversions. Three thousand. In one day. At the preaching. Of Christ. Crucified.

And resurrected. And the movement. Grows. And furthermore. Caiaphas. You know. Nothing. At all. For secondly. By killing. Jesus.

You brought. The wrath. Of God. Down. Upon. The nation. By killing. Jesus. You filled. Up. The limit. Of. The nation's. Sins. And God. Said. That's it.

I have been. Patient. For hundreds. And hundreds. And hundreds. Of years. But by killing. My son. I sent. You prophets. I warned. You. I sent. You calling. You to repent. With this prophet.

And the other. Them. You abused. And mistreated. And last. Of all. I sent. You my son. And when you killed him. It was over. And God.

[23:52] Calls. On. The mighty. Roman army. And they come down. And smash. Jerusalem. Slaughtering. Perhaps. A million Jews. Hauling them off. Into.

Into. Captivity. Destroying. Jerusalem. Burning. Down. The temple. No. Caiaphas. You are a know nothing.

You who speak so pompously. As if you've got the answer. It's better for one to die. For the nation. Nevertheless.

His humiliating words. Shamed the rest of the. The court. And carried the day. And it helped set a new course. For dealing with Jesus.

Verse 53 says. From that day on. They plotted. To take. His life. No more. Moderate treatment of Jesus. He must die.

[24:56] He must die. They also. By the way. We're plotting. To take Lazarus life. Because on account of him. So many. We're believing in Jesus. Caiaphas. But Caiaphas was a know nothing.

For a third reason. Because he knew nothing. Of the deeper meaning. Of his own words. It's better for you. That one die. For the people.

Than that the whole nation. Perish. His own words. Carried a deeper meaning. Than he ever attended. Than he. Ever. Knew. But that God.

Attend. Intended. Who inspired him. To speak them. As his own. Prophetic word. Because it says. He prophesied. He spoke for God.

Totally unconscious. Of their divine meaning. Indeed. The true prophets. Sometimes. Were told. In first. Peter. Searched intently. Trying to figure out. What their own words.

[25:54] That they prophesied. Me. Me. Me. When they. Spoke of the coming. Sufferings. And glories. Of Christ. And the prophet. Didn't always know. Well. The high priest. Didn't have a clue. What he had just said.

He only meant. What was murderous. For Jesus. And self-serving. For himself. And the nation. Verse 51. And 52. He did not.

Say this. On his own. But as high priest. That year. He prophesied. That Jesus. Would die. For the Jewish nation. And not only. For that nation.

But also. For the scattered. Children of God. To bring them together. And make them one. Now. If you have trouble. With God.

Speaking through. A Messiah. Murdering man. Like Caiaphas. I just want to remind you. That God once. Spoke through a donkey. And then he spoke.

[26:52] Through the donkey's master. Balaam. That wicked prophet. For hire. Who said to King Balak. If you just. I'll say. I'll curse Israel.

And he opened his mouth. To curse Israel. For money. And out of his mouth. Tumbled blessings. By the Holy Spirit. It. So here.

A Christ. Killing high priest. Is made the vehicle. Of God's. Gospel message. Of Jesus. Dying. Instead of the nation. And instead of the Gentile. Children of God. What a different meaning. God puts. On. Caiaphas. His own words. He didn't have a clue. What he was saying.

His words were fulfilled. In a way. He never dreamed of. God turned his cursing. Into. A blessing. And so Caiaphas.

[27 : 49] You know nothing at all. Because. You don't realize. How you just spoke. The gospel. Of Jesus Christ. The message. That will gather. His people in.

From all over the world. It's the very decision. That God made. In eternity past. When he decided. To condemn the one. In the place.

Of the many. That they might live. Because of his death. For them. So Caiaphas. His plan. And God's plan.

Both meet. On the middle cross. At Calvary. One man. Dying. In the place. Of the people. And it's a powerful.

Demonstration. Of the sovereignty. Of God. It's not what Caiaphas. Meant. But it is what God. Meant. You meant it to me. For evil. But God. Meant it for good. The saving.

[28 : 48] Of many lives. And under both. Plans. Christ. Died. For. For the people. Under Caiaphas. His plan. The one.

Dies. For the many. And under God. Almighty's plan. The one. Dies. For. The many. That word. For. Is who pair. In the Greek. And it's a. Word that's used. For substitution. What we have here. Is the. The language. Of substitutionary. Death. We have one. Dying. As a substitute.

For another. In the place. Of another. He died. Instead of. The people. Romans 5. You see. At just the right time. When we were still. Powerless. Christ. Died. Who pair. For. In the place. Of. Instead of. The ungodly. God.

[29 : 40] Demonstrates. His love. For us. In this. And that. While we were yet. Sinners. Christ. Died. Who pair. For. Sinners. Us.

And so. The language. Of substitution. Jesus dies. As a substitute. For the. The nation. But John. Sees. A wider. Impact. On the death.

Of the death. Of Christ. Than just. For the Jewish. Nation. Notice. He says. In 52. And not only. For that. Nation. But also. For the scattered. Children. Of God. To bring. Them. Together. And make. Them. One. Caiaphas. His interest. Was only. For the Jewish. Nation. That in some way. Jesus death. Would serve. The survival. Of that nation. From the Romans. Destruction. God's purposes. In Christ's death. Extend. Well. Beyond. Israel. To include. The Gentiles. Here. Called. The scattered. Children. Of God. So you have. Two groups. Of children.

[30 : 36] Of God. You have. Those. Within. The nation. Of Israel. And you have. Those. That are. Scattered. Among the nations. And Jesus. Christ. Dies. For the children. Of God.

Those. In the nation. And those. Scattered. Among the nations. And so.

The promise. To Abraham. In Genesis. Twelve. Three. Would be fulfilled. By the death. Of Jesus. That through him. All the nations. Of the world. Would be blessed.

Sin. Scatters. Men. But salvation. Through Christ. Death. Gathers. Them. Together. And notice. Gathers. Them. Together. Into one. Into one. Body. Of Christ.

The church. Gentiles. And Jews. In Jesus. Fold. Together. It's what Jesus. Said in John 10. I am the good shepherd. And I lay down my life.

[31 : 34] For the sheep. I have other sheep. That are not. Of this sheep. Pen. And I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice. And there will be one flock.

And one shepherd. That's the fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies. One flock. One shepherd. Ezekiel says. I will place over them one shepherd.

My servant David. And he will tend them. My servant David will be king over them. And they will all have one shepherd. Something we've been seeing in the prophecy of Hosea.

Isn't it? Not just bringing together of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah into one flock. But also the Gentiles who are not my people. Who are now called the children of God.

Brought together. Under. The one leadership of David their king. A reference to Christ. Something that both Paul and Peter apply to Gentile Christians.

[32 : 35] That's the holy nation for which Jesus died. The holy nation of his people made up of Jew and Gentile. And that's why God said to his eternal son in Isaiah 49.

It's too small a thing. Too little of a thing for you to be my servant. To restore the tribes of Jacob. And to bring back those of Judah I have kept. I will make you a light. For the nations. For the Gentiles. That you might bring my salvation to the ends of the earth. So what do we learn from this unusual prophecy. That came out of a Christ hating man. Of one man dying for the people. Well it is better for us. That one died in our place. In 50 years I would be in hell for sure. If the one had not died for the many. And I would be there for all eternity.

[33 : 37] If the one had not died for the many. He died the death under God's wrath. It should have been mine. He stepped in and said.

I'll take the wrath. I'll die under your wrath. And I'll give him life. I'll give her life. Eternal life. Tonight we say.

I live. Because he died. It's better for us. That he died. That one died. In our place. It's better for Christ.

Because by his death for the many. He purchased people for God. He purchased a bride for himself. For all eternity. And he gathered them together through his death.

Into one bride. Those who had been scattered far. He brought together. Into his family. It's better for us.

[34 : 38] That one died. It's better for Christ. That one died. It's better. For God in his glory. That one died. Because the substitutionary death of Christ.

displays the glory of God's attributes. Like no other. Activity does. It's at the cross. That we. We see the wrath of God. The holiness of God.

The justice of God. Like we see it. Nowhere else. He's so holy. That he will. Damn his son. When he bears sin. And comes into the place of judgment.

That's how holy he is. And yet it's at the cross. That we see. The amazing mercy. And grace of God. And the love of God. The one standing demonstration.

For all time. Of his love. That he would give. His one and only son. And damn him in our place. What love is this?

[35 : 36] Let's marvel. Tonight. At the sovereignty of God. That we see at Calvary. Because at Calvary. We see the divine plan of God. From the ages. Coming together.

With man's hatred. And his plan. And God. Reigns. Over man's hatred. He causes even the wrath of men. To praise him.

The Bible says. And so even Caiaphas. His wrath against Jesus. Is made to bring forth. God's eternal plan. By which he saved. A multitude of people. From all the nations.

Let's marvel. The Lord. The Lord. The Lord. The Lord. Let's marvel. Tonight. Before our all wise God. Our sovereign God. His love for us. What is the humility.

Of the son of God. That he would stoop. To being a political pawn. To be snuffed out. In order. To save us.

[36 : 30] Would go to the.