



God Killed Jesus

by Stephen Cavness

Okay. I admit it. I chose a provocative title on purpose. I decided to call this article “God Killed Jesus” in the hopes that search engines would direct more than a handful of people to the site. I was hoping that those who are searching for information about “Jesus,” “crucifixion,” or “Easter” would come across this article

THE PHYSICAL SUFFERINGS OF JESUS

Every Easter pastors enter their pulpits to describe in great detail the physical suffering of Jesus Christ on Good Friday. And suffer He did. He was beaten within an inch of His life. He was stripped naked for public humiliation and hung on a cross to bleed and choke on His own blood until His body could no longer take the pain. He was made to endure the suffocation, the shock, and the infection of having His body shredded and ripped open to the exposed of the open air, the insects, the dirt, and the spit of those Who wanted to kill Him.

The physical sufferings of Jesus Christ should not to be taken lightly.

But to focus *only* on the physical

sufferings of Jesus is to miss the point of His death and of His whole life. Jesus was by no means the only person ever to be crucified. In its heyday of over one thousand years (from about 6 B.C. until it was outlawed by Constantine in A. D. 336), some estimate that thousands were crucified. Even in modern times crucifixion still occurs.¹

So it was not Jesus’ physical suffering that provided the sacrifice for sin. It was much more than that.

THE REASON FOR THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS

It was the wrath of God poured out on His own Son that caused Jesus the greatest suffering. Romans 6:23 states that “the wages of sin is death.” Sin has a wage/a salary that it earns and that salary is eternal punishment. The

principle is rather simple: if you sin, even once, then what you have earned and what you deserve is the wrath of God.

Ephesians 2 says that we are born enemies of God and we are under God's wrath because of our sin and rebellion against Him. Romans 3 tells us that no one seeks after God on His own initiative. No one is good enough to do what it takes to earn the right to enter Heaven. Indeed the testimony of scripture is that, from birth, the human heart is wicked and cannot be trusted.²

No one ever taught you how to lie, be selfish, protect yourself at all costs, and gossip. No one ever taught you how to lust, dishonor your parents, and covet. These things come “naturally” to us because we are all sinful by “nature.”

I love my children. I would give my life for my children. I would never wish any harm to come to my children. I lavish my children with love, praise, and gifts. But my children are sinners. Their sinfulness can be seen in their outbursts when they don't get what they want and it can be seen in their angry reactions to getting in trouble. They even know how to manipulate. They know how to be sweet after

they have done wrong in an effort to avoid punishment or to cover up their disobedience.

And as much as I love my children, I am lying if I do not acknowledge their “natural” inclination to sin. There is no one who is born righteous. We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners. And God does not cast sin into Hell; He casts sinners into Hell.³

Romans 6:23 says that death is the penalty that every sinner deserves. It is the *wage* of sinners. But Romans 6:23 goes on to say that “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” We don't get eternal life simply because we are more good than bad. We don't receive eternal life simply because of our behavior modification or our steady church attendance. We don't receive eternal life because we have not done any of the big sins. We receive eternally life only by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So why did Jesus die? Read Romans 5 for the answer. Sin entered the world through Adam, but through the death of Christ salvation is possible for all who believe (see also John 3).

The death of Christ was more than a sad display of a good man dying a needless death. It was more than the execution of an innocent man. It was more than God saying “I love you this much.” Though the death of Christ was most certainly a display of the love of God, we do not see the true meaning of it if we do not see that this display of love was rooted in the appeasement of God's wrath. It was the payment of a price. Justice demands that sin be punished and sin was punished at the expense of the life of Jesus Christ. The punishment was for the “wages” of sinners like you and me. And it was poured out on Jesus in full force and without any restraint. This was a punishment that was more brutal than any crucifixion. It was the pure and undiluted wrath of God and it was completely exhausted on the Son of God Himself.

BIBLE PASSAGES ON THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS

That is how God demonstrated His great and unfathomable love for us. Not simply by *sending* His own Son but by *killing* His own Son. The great love of God was shown in that He sent His own Son, *knowing* and even *ordaining* the events that would bring about His death so that we might have eternal life.

At this point, I am no longer trying to be controversial. I am simply taking Scripture at its word.⁴

Isaiah 53:10 – But the Lord *was pleased* to crush Him, *putting Him* to grief . . .

Matthew 26:39 – [Jesus praying in regard to His approaching death] My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as *You will*.⁵

John 6:38 - For I have come down from heaven, *not to do My own will*, but the will of *Him who sent Me*.

Acts 2:23 – This Man, delivered over *by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God*, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

Acts 4:27-28 - For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you [God] anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the gentiles and the peoples of Israel, *to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur*.

Pastor and author John MacArthur says this of God's responsibility for the death of His Son:

The designs of those who killed Christ were entirely murderous. They are by no means exonerated from their evil,

just because God's purposes are good. It was still the act of "lawless hands" (Acts 2:23). It was, as far as the human perpetrators were concerned, an act of pure evil. The wickedness of the crucifixion is in no sense mitigated by the fact that God sovereignly ordained it for good. The truth that it was His sovereign plan makes the deed itself no less a diabolical act of murder. And yet this *was* clearly God's holy and sovereign plan from before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).⁶

God placed the leaders and officials in place that were humanly responsible for carrying out the events that He had foreordained to take place. God sent Jesus to die. Jesus even said this Himself.⁷ The Son of God came to this earth to give life to those who did not deserve it. He came to save whoever would repent of their sins and place their faith in Him alone for the forgiveness of those sins. He came to apply His perfect righteousness to them so that they may live in eternal peace and joy with God.

live. We should worship Him Who was crucified because of His great love and for His great glory.

End Notes

- 1 www.in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-43639120091103; www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR54/013/2002 as of 5/27/10.
- 2 See Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5 ; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9-19,23; 5; Eph 2:1-10.
- 3 See Matt 7: 21-23; 10: 27-29; 25:31-46; John 3:18; 2 Thess 1:8-10; 2 Pet 2: 4-10; Rev 20:15; 21:8.
- 4 All the emphases in these passages are mine.
- 5 See also Matt. 26:42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42.
- 6 www.gty.org/Resources/Articles/2419, "Who Killed Jesus?" as of 3/09/2010.
- 7 Mk 8: 31-33; 10:45; John 10:14-18.

CONCLUSION

Jesus' death was *with* a purpose and *on* purpose. It was pre-planned and that plan was perfectly carried out. Rather than pitying "poor Jesus" Who was mistreated, we should fall on our faces and thank Him. We should exalt the One Who came in loving obedience to the Father to die so that we might