

# Who Said Jesus Had to Die?

John 19:1-16

March 20, 2016

We were living in Illinois when on January 11 2003, as one of his last acts as governor of the state of Illinois, George Ryan announced that **he had commuted the sentences of all of the state's death row inmates**. Ryan's decision affected 171 inmates who were sitting on death row. They would stay in prison, just not be put to death.

These criminals were individuals that the police authorities determined had committed the crimes. **They were put on trial, and a judge and a jury agreed that the evidence supported their guilt.** The accused were found guilty, and sentenced to death at the time of Ryan's decision.

George Ryan said: "Our capital system is haunted by the demon of error: error in determining guilt and error in determining who among the guilty deserves to die. What effect was race having? What effect was poverty having? For all these reasons, today I am commuting the sentences of all death row inmates."

**It didn't matter who else said that these men had to die, Gov. George Ryan determined that they would not.** Who has the authority? Who determines that the criminal is guilty, who figures out the punishment, who ultimately says that they should die?

An interesting foot note to this action is that 4 years later, George Ryan, **who was no longer governor, was found guilty of racketeering and bribery charges** and served 6 years in prison himself. And that Ryan was just one of 4 of the past 7 Illinois Governors **who have served prison time for activities that took place while they were governor.**

We know the biblical account of the Easter story. **We know of the meal in the upper room**, we are aware of Jesus' agony in Gethsemane, of His arrest, the mockery of a trial, we remember Jesus being forced to drag His own cross through the streets of Jerusalem, **then to be nailed to the cross**, He hung there and finally breathed His last!

## But who said that Jesus had to die?

After His arrest, Jesus was first brought to Annas, **who had served as High Priest for 10 years**, and though there was a new High Priest, **he was still in a position of influence**. This influence was strengthened by the fact that Caiaphas, **the current High Priest was his Son in Law**, and 5 of his own sons eventually hold that offices. He likely interviewed Jesus **out of his own curiosity, not as an official part of Jesus legal process**. This is not listed in the other gospels.

**Was it the Jewish leaders** who had Jesus put to death? This would include Caiaphas, the High Priest, **The others that served along with the High Priest**, as well as the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin, which was the ruling counsel of the Jewish people.

Jesus was brought to the home of the **High Priest where the Sanhedrin was convened, and there was a trial.**

**We know that this group was not happy with Jesus. When He cleared of the Temple ~ (Mark 11:18 NIV)** The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

### **Because of His comments in John 10**

<sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all<sup>29</sup>; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one."

<sup>31</sup> Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, <sup>32</sup> but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"

<sup>33</sup> "We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

### **They didn't like His teaching (Matthew 21:45, 46 NIV)**

<sup>45</sup> When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet."

**Jesus has a trial before the Sanhedrin, it is described in the other 3 Gospels, but not in John.** You find the most information in Matthew 26 about this event.

**(Matthew 26:59-60 NIV)** The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. {60} But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward <sup>61</sup> and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

<sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "**He has spoken blasphemy!** Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. <sup>66</sup> **What do you think?**" "He is worthy of death," they answered.

**But the Jews had no authority to put Jesus to death.** They turned Him over to Pilate, and tried to force Pilate to sentence Him to death. **They were instrumental in this event.** It was what they wanted. **But they were not in control on this fateful day.**

### **Pontius Pilate**

Was it Pilate, the Roman governor? **From a legal standpoint Pilate was the one with the authority that day.** From the beginning of Pilate's part in this narrative he did not want to make the decision about Jesus.

**His very first comment about Jesus was to the Jews who brought him, 18:** <sup>31</sup> Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." **That didn't work.**

### **He then interviews Jesus,**

**33)** "Are you the King of the Jews?"

**38)** "What is truth?"

<sup>38</sup> **"I find no basis for a charge against him.** <sup>39</sup> But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. **Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?** <sup>40</sup> They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising."

**John 19:4,12** "Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, '**Look, I am bringing Him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against Him.**' ...From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free."

We find a longer description of this trial in **Matthew 27**, including the powerful scene in **vs. 24** “<sup>24</sup>When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd.

**“I am innocent of this man’s blood,”** he said.  
“It is your responsibility!”

**John 19:16** “And so Pilate delivered Jesus up to them to be crucified.” **But we would be stretching it to say that Pilate made this decision.**

### **Jesus Predicted His Own Death**

**I started out by asking “who said that Jesus had to die?”**

Before Pilate sentenced Him to death, and before the Jewish crowd cried “crucify Him,” Jesus Himself said that He would have to die.

In **Matthew 12** the Pharisees demanded to see a sign that Jesus was the Messiah. Christ’s response was **“Just as Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth.”** So, the Son of Man, Jesus, would die, and be buried for 3 days. Here Jesus uses an analogy to make His point.

**Matthew 16:21** **From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things** at the hands of the elders, the chief **priests** and the teachers of the law, and **that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.**

Additional place Jesus indicates His death is...

**John 10:14-18** “I am the good shepherd, and I know my own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.

For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

**Long before He was arrested, Jesus knew that He had to die. But the responsibility was not ultimately His.**

**God said So it wasn’t Pontius Pilate who made this fateful decision. Even the Jews weren’t in control. Jesus knew it would happen, but didn’t cause it.**

Before time even began, God set His plan into motion. **Isaiah 46:9** tells us who was in control, **“Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, “My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.”**

**God is in control of all things.**

**God’s plan that took place at Golgotha, finds its roots in the Garden of Eden.**

After Adam and Eve chose to eat the fruit in spite of God’s direction not to, God says to the serpent,

**“And I will put enmity (antagonism, hostility, hate) between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head and you will strike His heel.”** This is the first indication of the death of Jesus.

God’s plan continued to proceed. On the night that Jesus was arrested, He went with 3 of His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane. And there He spent an agonizing evening in prayer. We are told that He prayed so fervently that He sweat drops of blood.

And what was His prayer? **“Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.”** Jesus did not want to bear the agony of the cross, He didn’t want to die. But He concluded, **“Your will, not my will be done.”** God had a plan. God was in control. God had the authority. God said that Jesus had to die.

We are reminded of God’s control in all human events in **Rm. 8:28 “for God causes all things to work together for good, for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.”**

There are times when we have difficulty seeing the good that may come out of an apparently bad situation. This may be the case with the crucifixion of our Lord. He was an innocent man, why did He have to die? Why did this terrible event need to take place?

God said this must happen, because without it there would be no hope of salvation for any of us, it was for you and for me. **“All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” “The wages of sin is death.” “Without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness of sins.” “But the blood of bulls and of goats cannot take away sin.”**

God was in control on that first Good Friday. He is the one that said Jesus had to die. These events took place in order to accomplish God’s purpose as stated in **John 3:16...** Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins, **for your sins, for my sins.** So that we can have a right relationship with God. **God said it, for us. Do you need God in your life today?**

One of the most famous paintings of the well-known artist, Rembrandt is of the crucifixion. Central to that painting is the figure of Christ hanging upon the cross, right in the middle. Below this figure is the mob of people who had helped to crucify our Lord.

But one with a keen eye will notice a man standing in the shadows at the edge of the painting, this is Rembrandt himself. He painted himself into the mob, as if to say to the entire world, **“I, too, helped crucify Jesus. He is hanging on the cross for my sins.”**

**Place yourself at the cross this Easter season.** Be thankful that God provided a way for you to experience the forgiveness of your sins. **Have you believed in Christ, so that His death served a purpose in your life?** Have you allowed this truth to change your life, on a daily basis?

**We need to place ourselves at the cross.** To confess our sins and our need for a savior. **To recognize that Jesus paid this price for each one of us.** To invite Christ into our lives as the Lord of our life. **This is the reason that God said Jesus must die, for us.** May this Easter Season draw you closer to the God who is in control, who sent His Son to die, so that we might live.

This sermon was preached at the Evangelical Free Church of Bemidji  
on March 20, 2016 by Pastor Peter Kolb.