

# Did You Kill the Lord of Glory?

by John Piper

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*The sermon explores the significance of God's endorsement of Jesus and the consequences of rejecting it, emphasizing that those who reject God's endorsement of Jesus are against God.*

**Duration:** 29:58

**Scripture:** Luke 24:46-47, Acts 2:22-36

**Topics:** "Book Of Acts"

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## Description

In this sermon, Pastor John Piper continues his series from the book of Acts, focusing on Acts chapter 2, verses 22 to 36. He addresses the crowd as 'Men of Israel' and emphasizes that Jesus of Nazareth was attested by God through mighty works, wonders, and signs. Despite this endorsement, the people crucified Jesus, but God raised him from the dead, showing that death could not hold him. Pastor Piper encourages the listeners to reflect on whether they align with God's endorsement of Jesus or if they resist it.

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## Transcript

The following message is by Pastor John Piper. More information from Desiring God is available at [www.DesiringGod.org](http://www.DesiringGod.org) This morning, Pastor John will be continuing his sermon series from the book of Acts. I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Acts chapter 2, verses 22 to 36.

If you didn't bring a Bible, there's one available, hopefully, in the pocket in front of you. Acts chapter 2, verses 22 to 36. Men of Israel, hear these words.

Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know, this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning him, I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken.

Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced. Moreover, my flesh will dwell in hope, for thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let thy holy ones see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the paths of life.

Thou wilt make me full of gladness with thy presence. Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ. This Jesus whom you crucified. I want to begin again with a question this morning, like I did last week, only this one's harder, it's more personal, it's more pointed, it's more offensive, and I don't want you to answer it immediately, I want you to hear the message and then answer it at the end.

Some of you will be resistant to it, others of you will have a stock answer ready from your tradition, but I want you to hear the question interpreted and the answer given by the Holy Spirit and then answer it at the end. And the question is, did you kill Jesus? Did you crucify the Lord? And if you're like me, then inside of you, you would feel denial and maybe rising a resentment. How could you even ask a question that something so distant and far away could begin to be laid at my feet? The reason I ask the question in spite of the unlikeliness of it is because I think that emotional reaction was very likely to be felt by some in Peter's audience.

When he looked out over that vast crowd and said, you crucified Jesus. Now, why do I think that? You remember how many were converted? 3,000 were converted by this sermon. How many do you think were listening to the sermon? Do you think all of them got converted? I doubt it.

Jesus said, maybe get one out of four when you scatter good seed. So maybe there were 12,000 people listening to this sermon. Maybe Peter preached it because he's the one with the big voice.

No PA system. Or maybe 5, 6, 7, 8,000, who knows? A lot of people there. But now, what is the law of probability that all the people there on Pentecost 50 days later on a holiday from people scattered all over the world, all of those people listening were there on Good Friday morning crying, crucify him, crucify him.

What's the probability they were all there? Zero probability, I think. Which means a lot of people heard Peter say, you crucified him, who would feel inside, we didn't have anything directly to do with that. We don't know what you're talking about.

And yet, Peter doesn't seem to be the least concerned about that. He says in verse 23, this Jesus, you killed by the hands of lawless men. As he looks out over that crowd, then in verse 36, he says, this Jesus, you crucified.

Now, how can he say that? And I think the reason he can say that unabashedly without qualification is that everybody in that crowd had participated in the crime that brought Jesus to the cross. Now, what's the essence of the crime that brought Jesus down? I think the essence of the crime is not the physical ending of his life. I don't think that's the essence of the crime against Jesus.

The essence of the crime against Jesus was the rejection of God in Jesus' life. The rejection of God in Jesus' life. Now, think with me about this.

Put on your thinking cap here. Jesus was handed over for blasphemy. He had said, I am the son of God.

He had said, God endorses me as Messiah. The Jewish rulers have said, no way. We reject God's endorsement on your life.

We reject your claim to be the son of God. You're a blasphemer. And they handed him over to Pilate to be crucified, the lawless man.

Which I take to mean that any time someone rejects the endorsement of God on Jesus' life, they vote for blasphemy. And when they vote for blasphemy in the Sanhedrin, they hand him over to be crucified. The issue this morning is not whether you were there bodily to cry out, crucify him, crucify him.

That's not the issue. Don't get hung up on that. The issue is, do you this morning embrace the endorsement of God on Jesus' life? Or do you stand against God's endorsement of Jesus? And what I see in this text is a kind of bracket.

I see it begun in verse 23 with the indictment. You killed him. I see it ended in verse 36.

You crucified him. And in between those two indictments, I see five contrasting ways the way God treated Jesus. God didn't kill him the way you killed him.

God didn't crucify him the way you crucified him. God endorsed him. You rejected him.

God accepted him. You killed him. God raised him.

Now, I want you to see this. And so I'm going to take these endorsements one at a time. I see five of them.

And at each point, I want you to be asking the question, not just historically, about how they fit into that situation, though that's important. I want you to say, do I this morning side with God in his endorsement of Jesus? Or do I find myself resisting God in his view of Jesus? All right? Number one. God endorsed Jesus by working miracles and signs and wonders through him.

Verse 22. Men of Israel. Hear these words.

Jesus of Nazareth. A man. Now watch these words.

Attested to you by God. That's where I'm getting this idea of endorsement. Attested, endorsed to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs, which here comes again, which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

So in that sentence, we see two times. Peter drives home the endorsement of God upon Jesus while he was here on the earth. First, he says he was attested by miracles.

Every time Jesus did a miracle, it was God's vote. I'm for you. You are my son, my beloved.

I delight in you. Listen to him, everybody. I attest from heaven to Jesus.

That's the endorsement of God on Jesus life. Every time he did one of those miracles and then the text goes on and says it again. Not only was he attested to us by God, by miracles, but it goes on to say and God worked through him.

God did these miracles through him. God was in Christ healing the sick. God was in Christ raising Lazarus and others from the dead.

God was in Christ delivering people from demons. God was in Christ stilling the storm. When you see Jesus perform miracles, what you see is the attestation of God almighty maker of heaven and earth on the life of Jesus Christ.

That was the issue in this sermon. The issue in the sermon is God and his attestation. And he means for these people to feel the clash between what they have felt and what God has felt about Jesus.

They killed him. God attested to him. Are you in step with God this morning? That's the question this text poses for you.

Second, God endorsed Jesus by planning his death for the sins of his people. God endorsed Jesus by planning his death. Look at verse 23.

This Jesus delivered up. Here it comes. According to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Now I can hear a superficial cynic say, well, some endorsement. He killed him, right? I'm sure that's impressive endorsement. He just links arms with lawless men, plans the death of his son, gets together and works it out with pilot and the Jews and the soldiers and gets his son crucified.

Some endorsement. That's the way a cynic, a superficial cynic talks who just hears one word and then just runs with it and makes it sound stupid without thinking at all about what is meant. About what the rest of Luke's writings have to say, not to mention the rest of the Bible about what Peter meant when he said he was handed over according to God's definite plan.

Now, what does it mean? How is this an endorsement? Is God just like pilot? He's just handing him over as a pretender, just a pretender. Get rid of him. He's a threat to my authority.

So just get rid of him. Is that all God is doing? Is that the motive? Is that what God is saying by handing over his son? Well, just to stay in Luke's writings for a moment, listen to what Jesus said at the end of Luke's gospel. He said, Thus, it is written that the Christ should suffer.

In other words, it was written, it was planned. Thus, it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise and that repentance and forgiveness of sins, therefore, should be preached in his name to all nations. Now, now we catch on.

Now we catch on to the point when Peter said Jesus was delivered up according to God's plan. What we hear is Isaiah 53. We read it responsibly.

It was the will of the Lord to bruise him. Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole. He is the lamb of God and our iniquities are now upon him.

You talk about endorsements. There is no being in all the world but the Son of God, spotless and blameless, who can bear the sins of the world. When God handed over Jesus according to his definite plan outlined in Isaiah 53, he is choosing Jesus among all the beings in the universe who alone can do the work that would save the Jews and allow forgiveness and repentance to be preached in Minneapolis 2,000 years later.

This is a high endorsement. This is not what Pilate did. God is not just linking arms with lawless men to get rid of a pretender.

God is voting for Jesus by saying this is the lamb of God. This is the spotless one. This is the blessed infinitely worthy one who alone of all beings can bear the sins of the world.

I see the endorsement of God in this verse. Do you endorse Jesus in your life the way God endorses Jesus as the sin bearer? The one who had to die because only one like Jesus could bear sins. Nobody else.

You can't bear your own sins. You'll only go under with your own sins. Only Jesus could.

You endorse God's endorsement of Jesus by receiving that gift. Number three. God endorsed Jesus by raising him from the dead.

Verse 23 says this Jesus you killed and crucified. And then in stark contrast and Peter means for us to feel the contrast here. But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

You voted no. God voted yes. You denounced him.

God endorsed him. You killed him. God raised him.

Are you in sync with God or are you against God this morning? Now, in verses 25 to 31, we could preach a whole sermon on this Old Testament text and its exposition. I'm only going to sum it up in a sentence or two. What Peter wants to do there for his Jewish audience is show that in the Old Testament, the death and resurrection of the Messiah was foreseen by David.

And it's manifest, I think, how he develops that. And we don't have time to go in and in detail except to say this is the point. The point is to add weight to the indictment and to cut deeper to the heart.

It wasn't just anybody that you crucified. It was the Messiah. The one who was to sit on David's throne from his own seed.

The one you regard as Messiah you killed. And God vindicated that Messiahship. He endorsed that Messiahship by raising him from the dead.

That's the one you killed. Are you for God or are you against God? Now, this is really shocking. This is really shocking.

Just picture yourself there. It's 50 days since Jesus had died. Many of the people in that crowd had, in fact, said crucify him, crucify him.

All of them in that crowd had rejected him. And he says, you're a religious people. You're Jews.

You are worshipping people. You're here on Pentecost. It's a holiday for the Lord.

You're here to worship. They are a Bible memorizing people. Jews knew the Bible a lot better than we do.

They are a moral people. And Peter says, you are anti-God. You are diametrically opposed to God because God endorsed Jesus.

You killed Jesus. You reject the endorsement of God. God is here.

You are here. Antagonism. Anti-God.

Now, this is a shocking thing for them to hear. It's a shocking thing for people in America, all of whom, except for a tiny little fraction, say they believe in God. Everybody in America says they believe in God, love God, obey God, worship God, or at least have some kind of vague relationship to God, whoever he is.

And along comes Christianity and says, if you say you love God and know God and do not embrace his endorsement of Jesus as a great miracle worker, you don't know God. If you say you know God and love God and do not endorse God's endorsement of Jesus as the sin bearer of the world, you don't know God. Unless you agree and embrace the endorsement of God as one who raised Jesus from the dead, you don't know God.

You are anti-God. Jesus becomes the litmus paper of true knowledge of God. Now, that's a remarkable thing in a pluralistic society like America.

Almost nobody in America will allow you to say that. And we are so infected by the relativism, pluralism, live and let live, laissez-faire religious atmosphere in which we live that it's hard for you to say, even though you say you know God, if you don't embrace God's endorsement of Jesus, you don't know God. You are anti-God.

You are against God. Now, I wonder how that sounds to you. You see, we live in a culture where you may not say that.

You can have your God and I have my God. You can have your understanding. If Jesus meets your needs, fine.

But if Mohammed meets mine or if the stars meet mine or if my crystals meet mine or whatever, fine. I mean, don't impose your religion on me. You can't be a Christian and agree with that mentality.

Christianity, by definition, is either or. When Peter stood up and preached and said, God worked miracles in him. God planned his death for sin.

God raised him from the dead. But you killed him. He means to say you're against God.

It doesn't matter whether you call yourself religious, moral, Bible memorizing, church attending or anything else. Do you feel the grip of that? The Pharisees were the most religious of all people and they didn't know God. They were the most God relating people in Palestine and they didn't know God.

The litmus paper is. What do you do with God's endorsement of Jesus? That's it. What do you do with God's endorsement of Jesus? If you reject that, you reject God.

Number four, God endorsed Jesus by exalting him to his right hand and putting all his enemies under his feet. Verse thirty three. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God.

And then in verses thirty four and thirty five, he quotes Psalm 110 to show the meaning. David did not ascend into the heavens. But he himself says, the Lord, that is God, the father said to my Lord, that is the coming Messiah, Jesus.

You, Jesus, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a stool for your feet. The ultimate horror of crucifying Jesus was not only that it was a rejection of God's endorsement of the Messiah. It was also a rejection of God's endorsement of the Lord of Glory.

God took Jesus. Not only did he work miracles through him. Not only did he ordain him as the lamb that takes away the sin of the world.

Not only did he raise him from the dead and vindicate his Messiah ship. He brought him all the way up into heaven, seated him on the throne of the universe is putting all of his enemies under his feet. And that is the ultimate horror that that one should be crucified, that that endorsement of God should be rejected.

Is what cuts to the heart of those in whom the Holy Spirit is moving both then and now this morning. And so I want to ask the question. Did you kill Jesus? And, you know, now I don't mean were you there bodily crying, crucify him, crucify him.

I mean, do you reject God's endorsement of Jesus as the worker of wonders, as the one who dies spotless for sinners? As the Messiah raised from the dead, as the Lord of Glory and King of Kings seated at the right hand of the father. Do you reject that endorsement of Jesus and say it's irrelevant to my life? Or do you embrace that endorsement of Jesus and say, if God feels that way about Jesus. I feel that way about Jesus.

I endorse Jesus. I take Jesus. I exalt Jesus.

That's the question. And now in closing, there's one more endorsement. I save it for the end because it's real encouraging to me.

It's in verse thirty three. And it is that God endorses him by making him counting him worthy to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit and pour it out on the church. Verse thirty three says, being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the father the promise of the Holy Spirit.

He has poured out this which you see in here, that is the Pentecostal praise and prophecy and languages. Here's the situation. God.

Has endorsed Jesus as the worker of miracles. He has endorsed Jesus as the one who dies for sinners. He has endorsed Jesus as Messiah risen from the dead.

He has endorsed Jesus at his right hand to sit on the throne of the universe. And he looks at him and he says, son, you are worthy to receive the promise that I have made for ages past of the Holy Spirit's blessing upon your body. The church.

I give you the spirit to dispense according to your good pleasure. Go ahead. That's a great endorsement of the son.

No one knows the father except the son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him. No one has the Holy Spirit unless he is brought by the son into your life through new birth and conversion. And no one receives that extraordinary outpouring, that baptism, that filling, that clothing with power.

No one receives that unless the son seated at the right hand of the father says, now is the time. These are the people and I will pour out my spirit upon this church. Did you kill Jesus? Are you embracing the endorsement of the father upon his son? The great miracle worker, the one who dies spotless for sinners, the one who rises to vindicate his Messiah ship, the one who is exalted as Lord of Lords, supreme over all the universe and the one who received the promise of the Holy Spirit.

And now, according to his good pleasure, pours it out on his people. Let's pray. Father, I endorse Jesus.

We endorse Jesus in his five-fold glory this morning. Help people in this room right now who have not embraced your endorsement of your son to do it. As a way of closing, I think the Lord would really enjoy hearing our endorsement of his son since it's obvious he has such an affection to endorse his son.

And perhaps we could do it with the words, we endorse you, Lord Jesus. Let's say those words two times. We endorse you, Lord Jesus.

We endorse you, Lord Jesus. And all the people said, amen. Amen.

Our mailing address is Desiring God, 2601 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406. Desiring God exists to help you make God your treasure because God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.

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