

The Jews Thought They Killed Jesus

by Paul Bramsen

The sermon explores the misconception of the Jews believing they killed Jesus, emphasizing his voluntary sacrifice and divine peace in his death.

Topics: "Jesus Death", "Martyrdom Sacrifice"

Description

Paul Bramsen reflects on the concept of death, highlighting how it can be perceived differently based on circumstances, such as the age of the deceased or the righteousness of the individual. He delves into the tragic nature of death, especially when it involves young people or righteous individuals, and how it can sometimes lead to martyrdom. Bramsen explores the narratives surrounding the death of Jesus in both the Qur'an and the Bible, emphasizing the differing perspectives on who was responsible for Jesus' death and the significance of his sacrifice.

Transcript

Sometimes the death of a good man is a beautiful thing. Surrounded by his wife and children, he blesses each one and closes his eyes and is gone. There is always deep grief. But particularly if he lived to be an elderly man; there is the feeling that death is a natural final step that comes to everyone. To the elderly, death may seem an ally or friend, the way a hard working man is glad to close his eyes in rest at night after working his fastest and most efficient way during the day.

Death is more tragic when it comes to young people, when it comes because of a murderous plot of jealous people, or when the man who is killed is a righteous man. Death in war is often a heroic self-sacrifice for others. How many men and women have given their lives in battle, fighting to protect their own or to oppose evil that would enslave their nation? Many people believe that those who die fighting for God's truth are guaranteed life in Paradise.

When religious leaders, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or Mahatma Gandhi are killed, they are sometimes treated as martyrs and their movement gains momentum out of the devotion their followers have for them.

Surely, life as we know it is a struggle between good and evil. It seems that evil sometimes wins. Good is killed. Mercy is extinguished in the flames of hate, greed and bigotry. Perhaps the greatest tragedy is when a truly righteous man is killed by evil.

In the Qur'an we find that the Jews argued with Jesus. The Jewish leaders hated Jesus. In a final time of calculated jealous anger, they killed the man they believed was Jesus. Then they boasted of their accomplishment saying, "We killed Christ Jesus, Mary's son, the apostle of God." They didn't believe he was the Messiah nor did they accept him as an apostle. They said those words using them derisively against him.

It certainly seemed to them that they had succeeded in stamping out the life of the man who had troubled their consciences so much. As far as they knew, Jesus, the victim of their bitterness and hate, was dead, killed by them. (Sura 4:157) The Qur'an asserts that the Jews were mistaken. They didn't kill Jesus.

Often readers of the Qur'an believe that Jesus did not die when they read Sura 4:157. But the statement could also mean that it wasn't the Jews that killed Jesus. They thought they killed him, but in fact Jesus died in another way.

In the Bible there is a statement made by Jesus which seems to corroborate the teaching that the Jews were mistaken when they thought they killed Jesus. The statement asserts that what the Jews thought they were doing was not what was actually happening.

Jesus said these words:

"The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life - only to take it up again. No one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." (John 10:17-18)

In other words, the Bible teaches that when Jesus died he laid down his own life. He determined when and how he would die. He decided to lay down his life at the exact time the Jews thought they were killing him. It was his decision to die as he hung nailed to the cross. The Jews didn't kill him. He allowed himself to die. Just as he had power to raise the dead, he had power to lay down his life in death when he chose to do so.

In the Qur'an, Jesus asserts that he will die. The infant Jesus defended his mother Mary by saying God's peace was on him the day that he was born, the day of his death and the day he would be raised from the dead. (Sura 19:33)

The Bible also mentions peace both at Jesus' birth and at his death. In the Bible, the peace comes from God through Jesus to the people. For the peace at his birth, see chapter 6. For the peace at his death, listen to these words of Jesus spoken just before his capture:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you." (John 14:27)

After the terrible suffering and agony on the cross and in the very last moments of his life, Jesus spoke the following words loudly, indicating his total oneness and harmony with God, that is, his total peace:

"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." (Luke 23:46)

Isn't it amazing how mistaken those Jewish leaders were? They had not understood his birth or death. They even assumed they were responsible for killing him. However, they did not consider the insight the prophet Isaiah gives us. We read in Isaiah:

"Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer." (Isaiah 53:10)

Jesus' death was part of God's plan and Jesus was at peace because he was perfectly fulfilling God's will. He died of his own choice using the power God had bestowed upon him.

Because the Qur'an does not elaborate on the purpose of Jesus' death, we will not go into that in this book. You will find very complete teachings about the meaning of Jesus' death in the Bible and should you wish to investigate it further, I suggest you begin with a consideration of Isaiah 53.

Perhaps to end this chapter, I will quote from a blessing known and loved by all Jews and also cherished in every age by Christians. This blessing embodies the spirit of peace that Jesus gave to humanity, and that is the hope I have in my heart for all who read these lines.

"The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord make his face shine upon

you and be gracious to you;

the Lord turn his face toward you

and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)

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