

The Passion of Christ

Why did Christ suffer and die? The answer to this question depends upon who you ask because every-one sees it differently.

Was it a homicide, a suicide, a martyr for a cause? If it was a homicide then who is culpable? Should indictments be made after 2000 years if indeed we can identify the suspects?

If it was suicide then why did he choose to end his life? Was it depression and hopelessness about the failure of His life and ministry?

If Christ was a martyr then what was the cause for which He died? Was He seeking to reform corrupt Judaism? Did He offend the Roman authorities? What did He do that caused His crucifixion?

This is only part of the many questions that arise when the death of Christ is evaluated.

If we are to find the right answers we must evaluate the evidence that we have before us which is 2000 years old, from which different people have made so many different conclusions.

Let us be good detectives as we handle the evidence to investigate an event so ancient and subject to so much disagreement.

Let us rope off the crime scene as best we can to preserve the integrity of the evidence from compromise by the sands of time. There has been much contamination of the evidence by the curious sightseers, souvenir collectors, and those seeking to plant evidence that prevent a truthful conclusion.

When Mel Gibson reproduced the crime scene, some were offended because of who they believe was responsible, the Jews or Romans. Gibson made every person who ever lived responsible, Jew or Gentile, and regardless of their alibi, present or not.

Let us first consider the historical evidence and then we will look at the spin that has been put upon the crucifixion.

The crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth 2000 years ago in a Roman province of the Roman Empire is a turning point in human history. It was an event which changed the course of human history, even the calendar by which man keeps track of time. This is a true historical fact regardless of how a person may understand the crucifixion. His birth and teaching would not have

survived without the Resurrection and the Resurrection is only significant in light of his death.

The Resurrection is the reason for the impact of Christ upon history. This also is an obvious fact whether one believes that he did rise from the dead or not. His disciples believed it and turned their Jewish world upside down and a Jewish ruler believed it and turned the Roman world upside down. This Jewish Rabbi from Tarsus (Paul) claimed to have encountered the risen Christ while on assignment from Temple authorities to go to Damascus, to arrest and bring back for trial any Jewish man who believed that Jesus was alive. He then joined the Sect of Jews who believed and later was brought to trial himself by those who had his former job.

Under Jewish law it was a capital offense to be a false Prophet of God. Jesus had been tried and crucified under this law, now any Jew who claimed that Jesus was alive was guilty of the same offense because a Resurrection meant that Jesus was a true prophet that God justified by raising from the dead.

The Resurrection therefore becomes the catalyst for the spread of a blasphemy which later was called Christianity.

The historical source for the events of those days reveal that every Jew brought to trial under the charge of this heresy proudly confessed to the charge and many were executed leaving many widows and orphans among the Sect of the Nazarenes.

I mention the Resurrection because it was the (faith) doctrine of the Disciples who founded Christianity in those Jews who believed that Christ was alive, but it was not the Doctrine used to launch Christianity out into the world apart from Judaism.

The Resurrection was (Gospel) good news to any Jew which believed because it meant that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah but there were different ideas as to what that meant.

What they believed about the Resurrection event was the cause of their trial and execution not what they believed about the crucifixion of Christ. Those early Jewish martyrs spoke of the crucifixion as bad news. It was a Bad Friday long before it was called Good Friday. The Resurrection was the good news to which they confessed under oath and were executed.

There is no good news in the arrival of a Messiah to anyone apart from the remnant of Jews whose ancestors had survived the Babylonian captivity. Many in those days had made Messianic claims, but were executed by

the Romans who scattered their Disciples bringing an end to all their hopes.

None of these Messiahs impacted their own times or future civilizations. They had only a few hundred followers who went back home after their death to wait and look for another, never to be heard from again.

How did the Messianic claims of Jesus survive His crucifixion to become the religion of the Roman Empire three hundred years later?

The difference in Jesus and other Messiahs was the claim of his followers that He had risen from the dead. How can this be good news to the Jews who arrested Him or the Romans who crucified Him? What the Resurrection meant depended upon who heard about it. To believe in the Resurrection was to believe the teachings of Jesus which were very offensive, therefore as the news spread among Jewish families they were divided even to the shedding of blood.

Where there had been hundreds who followed Jesus now thousands believe in the Resurrection who never heard Him teach or saw Him crucified or risen from the dead.

The Resurrection got its meaning from the life and death of Jesus therefore if His life and death are misunderstood then so will be His Resurrection.

Everyone believes in the Crucifixion whether Jew or Gentile because it happened for all to see.

There was a corpse which remained for all to see that witnessed the crucifixion and these witnesses consisted of people from all over the Roman Empire made up of Jews, Romans, Greeks, Jesus's family, Disciples and sympathizers. But only a few claimed to witness a risen corpse and you had to take their word for it unless you were one to whom He was revealed.

The soldiers guarding the grave only witnessed the empty tomb and they said that someone must have stolen the body.

This shows us how Christianity began with a national Gospel dependent upon the truth of those who claimed to have seen something, but the world Gospel was dependent upon the truth in the meaning of an event that (is without question) everyone saw. Can we find meaning in an event which no one at the time understood?

The crucifixion was seen by all as good or bad based on how you felt about the claims of Jesus to be of God. No one gave it a meaning which was beneficial to all mankind until Paul. He made Jesus to be the Savior of

the world not just the nation. A claim made by Jesus, but nothing Jesus ever said about his crucifixion was understood by those who heard him teach and saw him die.

Paul said that he had talked with the risen Christ but did not actually see and touch the body as others had claimed and that he was not there at the crucifixion to witness the suffering and death

Paul said that Jesus gave him a new assignment in His Kingdom, to go to the whole world and preach good news in the (cross) Crucifixion.

Paul claimed to be an Apostle of the risen Messiah, but sent to the uncircumcised world, not to the remnant of Judah. Circumcision identified a Nation which was in tribute to Rome, but with hope of restoration in a Messiah. Now Paul is taking Good News and Hope to everyone in the Death of Jesus. This is a different Apostleship to a different people with a different message.

Paul also explained the Resurrection meant Christians were alive with Christ because the Baptism of the Spirit had regenerated them from Death in Adam.

They had previously celebrated only the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Now they could believe that they had passed from death to life also.

The meaning that Paul gave the crucifixion allowed the Gospel to go to anyone and the meaning that he gave the Resurrection made every Christian an equal heir to the promise of God regardless of Religion, Nationality or Race.

This removed the preferential access to God through circumcision and opened the door for all to join them as brethren in the Family of God. It literally removed the ritual of Circumcision altogether from practice in Christianity and drastically changed the worship and culture as Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire.

Such are the historical facts from the event which changed the world. Now then just what is the meaning which Paul gave the Crucifixion which enabled it to impact the whole world for two thousand years?

I first set forth the facts because most all Historians will agree, but when we speak of the meaning of the Crucifixion event we will conflict with all the spin given through the ages.

Paul interpreted the Crucifixion from the ancient Hebrew manuscripts, not from the meaning given it by those eyewitnesses of the present.

Paul taught that Jesus was the Second Adam as well as the second Moses, Joshua and David. That Jesus related to all the descendants of Adam just as Moses, David and Joshua related to all the Children of Israel. That Jesus had paid a ransom with his life to rescue the Children of Adam from Death and the grave. This Ransom was a price equivalent to the life which the First Adam lost in the Garden.

This meaning of the cross would of course change the meaning of the Resurrection also and make the preaching of the cross Good News to everyone who believed. Paul's Gospel would open a door of Faith for the world just as Peter's Gospel had opened a door of Faith for the Jews.

Peter and the Disciples had established the Faith among a Jewish remnant now Paul and others would take it out into the world.

When the Jewish Gospel was preached it was very offensive and divided families even to the shedding of blood for it was blasphemy to those who heard it, but Paul's Gospel of a Savior for the world was not at all political and even if it sounded like Religious heresy the response was not murder. Some believed, some did not believe, and others simply did not know yet what they thought of it.

The Gospel as first preached by the eyewitness Apostles was not Good News to everyone, therefore it was preached to the Jews only. Paul's Gospel was yet a mystery to be revealed by him to the Church, so that it could embrace the world with the message of Hope.

With the spin Paul gave to the Crucifixion There will be a change from bad news for anyone who believes to Good News for anyone who believes.

While it changes the meaning of His death it also will change how you perceive His life and teaching as well as His Resurrection and the Baptism of the Spirit.

Now we can see how the Resurrection establishes the faith in Judaism at Pentecost and how the Crucifixion established the Faith in the Roman world of the first century. Then we are faced with the spin that others have put on Paul's Gospel for nineteen centuries which has given the world so many branches of faith from a single event:

We are very far removed from the scene of the crime and are very likely to believe what others have to say about it. There is no physical evidence to examine, only the Historical evidence, and the record God has given in His Word.

When the Life and Death of Bonnie and Clyde was given on film it tended to give them virtue which they did not have, but since many eyewitnesses are still around like Jack Brown we can ask them about the life and death. Not so with Christ two thousand years ago.

Jack Brown said that the death scene was accurately reproduced but the implied meaning was greatly flawed and those observing are deceived.

How much more deception exists by observing the Crucifixion from so far away, when those who saw it were all deceived and so many have made it beneficial to themselves in this life, rather than Eternal prosperity for everyone.

Observation without Revelation may lead to speculation. Let us objectively examine the evidence that Paul gave for his Gospel which came from the Hebrew Bible of the first century.

When the Gospel is anchored in the Crucifixion it depends upon The Truth of Revelation regarding the event, not the fact of the event. The Resurrection Gospel depended completely upon the integrity of the historical event, which many denied as fact.

The Good News of a Risen Messiah for the Remnant depended upon the truth of the eyewitnesses, while the Good News of the Crucifixion would depend upon the truth of God Himself in testimony of it.

We may receive a different account from a different eyewitness; The Disciples were there when Christ was crucified, but so was God. The Disciples became Apostles and reported what they observed, but so did God who gave his report through Paul the Apostle to the world. The report given by the eyewitnesses to the crucifixion was not the same as that given later by revelation to the Gentile Apostle.

We have witnesses who saw the (murder) crucifixion taking place. Some were taking an active part others were observing passively, but no eyewitness to the crucifixion saw the active voluntary subjection of the victim. Everyone thought that His life was being taken from Him and therefore would blame those who took His life, but if he was suicidal then no blame whatever can be placed upon those who took His life.

A person with a death wish, (for whatever reason) who steps into the line of fire is himself responsible for his own death, and those officers of the law who shot him are not culpable.

Paul was not an eyewitness to the event, but testified to the culpability of the victim and explained his (suicidal) humble subjection to the crucifixion.

The question for us who survey this event today is, do we accept the testimony of those who witnessed the event? Or the testimony of one who says that God revealed to him the cause?

This will determine whether it was homicidal or suicide and who we will indict.

How can a Messianic Gospel become a Christian Gospel? The answer is found in Why Christ Died? not in Why Did He Suffer? because one sin caused His suffering and another sin caused His death.

Paul says that The Sin of Adam caused His death and that The Sin of Israel caused His suffering. This is very different from those who say that the sins of the world caused both.

Paul identifies the cause of Jesus death to be the work of God to restore mankind back to life with God. This life was lost by the First Adam but restored by Jesus The Second Adam. The ransom which would release the world from death (The wage of Sin) was an equivalent life to that taken by sin from the First Adam. Life is now taken from Jesus by the sinning of the world which explains His suffering under Pontius Pilate and persecution by His own people the Jews.

We have a record of the historical events surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament narratives and Epistles, but the Epistles of Paul are very different from the eyewitness Apostles for they alone explain how Jesus did something for the whole world.

Paul was not an Eyewitness Apostle and said that he was not taught by them, rather that his Gospel was revealed to him by God. Paul preached his Gospel to the world while the eyewitness Apostles preached their Gospel to the Babylonian remnant.

Paul supported his Gospel from the Hebrew text and when some heard how different it was they searched the text for conformation. They had never heard such things taught from their Bible.

Paul's early ministry was to the Jews, teaching that Jesus was the Christ. This was the same mystery revealed by the other Apostles, but when he goes to the Gentiles who were not heirs to the Mosaic Covenant, he must justify the invitation given to them. He does this by showing from the Hebrew Bible that God had promised a Spiritual Kingdom to the world through Jesus before he promised the earthly kingdom to Israel through Moses.

This meant that the Church of Christ preceded the Church of Moses in the promises that God made to

Abraham. Paul points out that there were two different promises made to Abraham. One in uncircumcision, the other in circumcision. The first would be fulfilled by Jesus, the second would be fulfilled by Moses.

God had promised to bless all the families of the world before he promised to bless one chosen family and since the Church was heir to the uncircumcised promise, then being a Jew meant nothing in the Kingdom of Christ. There was no blessing for the Gentiles in the Covenant that Moses cut with animal blood, but Paul found an inheritance of eternal life in the Covenant cut with the blood of Christ.

This connects the Mystery of Christ (Messianic) with the Mystery of the Cross (crucifixion) and reveals how Christ died for the Sin of the World and why.

Redemption from Egypt by a Passover Lamb was necessary to free the Children of Israel to enter their inheritance of Land in The Kingdom of Moses on earth. Likewise Redemption from death by a Passover Lamb was necessary to free the Children of God from the grave to obtain their inheritance of Life in the Kingdom of Christ from Heaven.

Separating the promise of Life to the world from the promise to the Jews enabled Paul to invite Gentiles into the Kingdom of Christ without becoming Jews. It also related the Crucifixion to everyone since it was the sacrifice of the Lamb of God to redeem fallen man from the wage of Adam's sin (death).

This gives Paul a Gospel in the Cross about a world Savior which may be preached to anyone, Jew or Gentile, where the eyewitness Apostles only had Good News to the remnant in the Resurrection Gospel.

Paul is the first to give the cause of death for Christ to be in the sin of Adam and to show benefits in the Resurrection for everyone. When news of the Messiah's resurrection was heard by the Jews of the exile it meant the restoration of the fallen nation, but Paul explained that it meant the restoration of fallen humanity and the beginning of a new day of immortality.

Thus, the mystery of the Cross was made known, and why Christ submitted to trial and crucifixion when he could have called on his Father God to rescue him.

If you accept Paul's revelation of the Cross, you know Jesus was not a martyr for a lost cause, you also know whose sin He paid for with His forfeited life.

Jesus had taught about the Mysteries of His Kingdom and Paul is the one who explained them. There is

no mystery in the Passion of Christ; it is misunderstood only when we accept Revelation¹ from others.

As revealed by Paul, the crucifixion is the love of God at work in fallen humanity to bring man back to Himself.

This separated state of God and Mankind is not the same as that of God and individuals (or cities, or nations). God and the world were separated by one sin which resulted in a separation which the Bible calls death, and Paul explains how this death mutated into humanity through the seed of man.

This state of death (separation) passes upon all in Adam and has no prevention or cure. The only remedy is the provision made by God in a resurrection. Man born in death may now in Christ pass from that Adamic Death to Christian Life.

There is therefore a separation from God when a person is conceived by a dead seed. This is the separation¹ which Jesus died to remedy. His death did not resolve the subsequent separation of God and people caused by their sinful behavior.

Jesus died for the wage of one sin inherited by all at conception, not the many subsequent sins committed by all afterward. The wage on these many sins may be a few stripes or many stripes, but the wage on original sin is always death.

The people sins of the world do separate God from the people who commit them, but these separations are communion with God in relationships; such as promises, covenants, stewards, etc. Not a life and death separation.

These sins by persons, cities and nations of trespass and failure are resolved from their wages through confession, repentance and forgiveness.

The one sin which condemned all to its wage cannot be resolved in this manner because no one earned the wage by what he did. No one can merit this death wage, but then neither can anyone merit any genetic inheritance. He can only merit that which comes from his own works. One may only confess culpability to that which he did.

The death-wage requires Redemption and Regeneration for resolution; and for that Christ died. Christ could not have died in our place to prevent

us from dying, because we all die. Neither could He have suffered in our place for we still suffer from the things we do.

To claim that people today are culpable for His Passion is to find the cause two thousand years after the crime. From Paul we learn that the cause is to be found in Adam's sin and God's promise to redeem mankind from its wage with another life.

Death entered in the Garden and is passed on in the womb by a corrupt seed. This makes death contagious by procreation and means everyone is dead before they begin to sin on their own.

It also means everyone needs to be rescued from the wage of Adam's sin before they merit wages from his own sin. Jesus did not die to save us from the consequences of our sins. He died to resurrect us from the consequences of Adam's sin.

All who are dead need life; so just as death comes from birth in Adam, life comes from birth in Christ.

This makes the Virgin Birth of Jesus necessary if he is to have original life like that in the Garden before death entered. If he is born of the corrupt seed of man then he must die his own death.

Since he was born of God and incorruptible seed, then he has the same life of God which the Creator breathed into the First Adam. This means that whether he dies or not it is up to him and his will, just as it was with Adam. We who are born in death have no choice but to die. We are condemned to die when born and nothing that we do whether good or bad can affect this judgment

The Virgin Birth gave Him life with no condemnation of death. If He is to die as a lamb so death might pass over others, it must pass on Him. Since He is not subject to it by birth He must submit to it by behavior. Death humbles mortals. He humbled Himself to embrace (taste) it for all who died in Adam.

The stripes that we see in His Passion were given by His own people just as Isaiah had foretold, but the death that He died was for all people just as He Himself explained.

Those who stripped and killed Him were not charged or condemned since they did not know what they were doing. However, they were offered immortality if they would believe He was sent by God.

Jesus asked God to forgive those who crucified Him and Peter offered forgiveness for the murder seven

¹ When defined Biblically, death is simply separation whether it is Spiritual Death (God and man) or physical death (Spirit and Body).

Permission to copy in full context only. Our desire is to know more tomorrow than we do today. Comments welcome.

weeks later. Then Paul said that they would not have killed Jesus had they known who He was.

Since all sin does not carry a death-wage, how can Jesus die for sins that are not a capital offense?

Jesus could not have died for a murder-sin by those who crucified Him, for they were never indicted.

If Jesus dies for the sin of the world then the sin must be an offense which condemns to death, and the only such sin is the one by Adam which condemned the world to death.

Conclusion

We cannot understand the Crucifixion by listening to the testimony of the eyewitness accounts given at the time of the event, because none of them had a clue to what they were observing.

We can only survey the cross from the revelation testimony given by God of His promise, purpose and provision related to it.

From God's testimony given by Paul, the Revelator, we find the cause of Jesus death back in the Garden before the people of the world began to sin. The ransom death of the Second Adam becomes necessary for the redemption of the world from death, even before there are sins which need forgiveness. The people sins of the world are not the cause of Christ's death..

Christ did not die to save people from the consequence of their sins rather the consequence of Adam's sin which is death.

The salvation provided by Jesus does not prevent anyone from death rather it rescues the dead from the death which they inherited at birth.

The Passion involved both the inner man (Spirit) and the outer man (body). There was suffering in both and there was death in both, the suffering resulted from rejection and scourging by the people of the first century, but His death would benefit people born in every generation since Adam.

Physical death occurred when His Spirit was driven from His body from lack of blood and breath. Spiritual death occurred when forsaken by God and lack of Spiritual breath.

Since man's sin caused His physical suffering and death, those who took part at the scene are culpable.

God's righteousness to keep a promise resulted in His spiritual death. God's Grace to keep a promise resulted in spiritual-life for all who believe.

The sin (behavior) of His people (Jews) caused His physical death. The sin (birth) of all people (world) caused His spiritual death.

Adam and Israel are the ones who are culpable for His death. Believers and Christians are the beneficiaries. The benefit is a resurrection from a mortal-death to an immortal-life which is a gift from God.

All that is left from any investigation of the crucifixion is Hallelujah, Thanksgivings and Glory to God.

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