

# Martyrdom: The Seed that Dies

(9/14/25)

*I was 9 years old when my older sister died*, and I was confronted with an ancient question: **Why her?** It wasn't just that she was young and had her whole life ahead of her, I felt like she was a decent person. Years later I saw pictures of Gaddafi being killed and then Saddam Hussein. I watched the interview with guy from Seal Team 6 who killed Osama bin Laden and a voice inside me said *"people like that deserved it...but my sister didn't."*

Right after my sister passed **a Billy Joel song** would play on the radio and I would be instantly triggered. The chorus went "only the good dieeeee young (x2)." Whenever I would hear it, I would either go into a minor rage or start crying because it reminded of the horrible unfairness that my 15 year old sister was gone from this world, while plenty of evil people seemed to prosper, gather more power and wealth, and live to a ripe old age w/o any justice coming to them.

Then something happened: **every Easter my mother would watch "The Greatest Story Ever Told"** on TV about the life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus. I was always moved by this film, but after Melody died my reaction to the people choosing Barabbas, and Jesus being crucified, was visceral. I was sitting on the floor in front of mom, who was on the couch. When they were driving the nails in His hands and lifting Him up on the Cross, I exploded. I turned to mom and angrily demanded to know why they killed Jesus! All the man ever did was good. He healed people, drove demons from them, fed them, loved them, and said encouraging things.

I didn't realize it, but I was yelling, because **it didn't make any sense why people would reject Him and cheer/celebrate His death.** If He'd been a Hitler, that would be different. I grew very angry with God, telling Him it made no sense for Him to allow His only Son to be rejected and killed like this.

## **My overactive imagination created a different scenario.**

Remember the scene in the Bible where Jesus is hanging from the cross, and the people jeer at Him, saying *"come down from the cross and we'll believe in you!"*? I created an alternate history in my mind where, upon hearing this, Jesus' face suddenly goes Clint Eastwood. With a mighty heave, He pulls his arms and legs free then floats down to the ground in front of astonished onlookers. He shucks off his crown of thorns and loincloth, and takes on shining armor and a glowing crown! You know how Superman has heat vision? I pictured Jesus' eyes glowing white and laser beams shoot forth and incinerate all those who mocked Him!

## **Why did I create that story? Because I was angry and**

**confused.** I was trying to make Jesus and the world fit into MY version of justice and righteousness. He called Peter “Satan” for denying that He should go the Cross and die.

**Why did so many people hate Him?** Why did they choose Barabbas to be released? Please understand *it wasn't just the religious establishment* that despised Christ, so did many of the people.

- It was the people who tried to throw Him off a cliff (Luke 4:28-30).
- It was the people who tried to stone Him to death TWICE (John 8:59 and John 10:31).
- The 2 scenes in John's Gospel were “Charlie Kirk” type events where Jesus is among a crowd of people, telling them the truth, they respond in a hostile manner, and He corrects them.

***The same happened to the Apostles.*** With the preaching of the Gospel after the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, the Apostles faced constant physical attacks, imprisonment, and mobs of people trying to murder them. In every case, those who rejected the message the Apostles were angry to the point of actual murder. Stephen's ministry barely got off the ground when he was stoned to death in 34 AD, only a few years after the Resurrection. James, John's brother, was martyred the same year for the same reason. WHY? For preaching the Gospel.

**11 of the 12 original disciples were martyred** and John was exiled to Island of Patmos—he was cancelled—just for sharing the Gospel.

**Both Jesus and the Apostles equated hatred with murder, hatred clearly being the driving force to inspire someone to kill another.**

**Why the hate?** You may ask.

- What is it about Jesus and His message—the Gospel—that drives someone to violence and murder?
- What's the root of this hatred?

**Satan is the root.** I know that's a church cliché, so we must go deeper.

**Jesus was more than just a really good Guy Who never sinned—He was God come down from Heaven to earth.**

**[Phl 2:5-8 ESV]** 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 **who, though he was in the form of God**, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, **being born in the likeness of men**. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

When He was here 2000 years ago, **the people didn't recognize that Jesus was God**, neither the Jews nor the Gentiles.

***But Satan and his demons did:***

**[Mar 5:5-7 ESV]** 5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he [demon possessed man] was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. 6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. 7 And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me."

IDK exactly when Satan discovered that Jesus had come to earth, but whenever that was, **I can only imagine he called an emergency meeting with his fellow rebellious angels**. I can hear panic and fear in his voice as he reports what's happened and that they need to do something ASAP or else.

**Or else what? They lose earth. They lose the people of earth.**

**Jesus first coming was His initial step to an invasion.**

For 4000 years, ***Satan and his angels ruled all the nations of the planet uncontested...except Israel***. Even in the days of David and Solomon, when Israel was at her strongest, she didn't attempt to expand her territory. God never gave the Hebrew people the evangelism mandate to "make disciples of all nations" nor did He ever lead them on a crusade to expand their borders beyond what He had given them. Although it must have frustrated Satan that he couldn't snuff out Israel and its people, he at least controlled everything else.

**In 63 BC the Romans conquered Jerusalem** and in 6 AD made Israel an official Roman province. I can only imagine the devil was feeling quite good and secure because God didn't seem to be doing anything about it.

***When did Satan discover the same God he once served had come to the planet?*** IDK...but I'll bet he panicked. He needed a solution and he needed it now. It could NOT be good news for him that God had finally showed up on earth in human form!

Let's go back in time to Satan's rebellion: ***when he left God he rejected ALL of the Lord***. He completely untethered himself from Christ, and remember that Jesus IS the embodiment of truth. Psalm 2 tells the story of both human kings and the angels uncoupling themselves from the Lord to live by their own rules:

***[Psa 2:1-3 ESV]*** 1 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."

When this happens, a person is given over to what Paul referred to in Romans 1 as ***"the reprobate mind."*** The reprobate mind is the searing/erasure of the God-given conscience the Lord gave to all of humanity, both believers and unbelievers. The conscience has the moral commandments of God written on it, enabling us to separate what God considers good and what He calls evil.

**When a human being rejects the Gospel message and, like Satan, decides to go their own way then they begin the process of dulling the conscience.**

**Have you ever gotten angry and wanted to deck someone in the face?** I have. But I have this annoying voice inside saying "don't do it" and that's the voice of my God-installed conscience. I think the Lord installed a sense of humor too. I picture some headline saying "local pastor assaults man."

One time I recall getting mad at God and ***demanding something*** and the immediate response was "thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." If I want to lie about something, the same darned voice says "that would be bearing false witness and that's a sin."

**Our conscience is like a straight-laced friend who's with us all the time**, telling us to restrain from evil and do good. When we're convicted by the Holy Spirit (providing we're Saved), our conscience acts as a second witness against us.

**The reprobate mind has mostly forsaken the conscience, and therefore the "restraints" are off.** This is why we see riots, looting, assassinations, and violence in the world today.

*What are people so angry about?* Why try to murder, steal, and destroy?

**Jesus is coming and He's bringing His Kingdom with him.** He's going to invade and, right now, he's gathering a massive army so vast even ChatGPT can't count it.

We pray: *"thy kingdom come, they will be done, ON EARTH as it is in heaven."*

**In heaven God reigns supreme.** There is only light and not darkness. There is only righteousness and no sin. And everyone bows and kneels to Jesus and calls Him "LORD."

This is the Kingdom of God, **He's bringing it here,** and the devil is angry...really angry. When He comes, massive army of resurrected saints and angels follow Him!

The gathering of that *army started 2000 years ago on His 30<sup>th</sup> birthday.* He finally went public and His sermon was really short:

**[Mat 4:17 ESV]** 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The recruitment phase had begun!

**Do you know what every pastor hates?** When another pastor steals his sheep. I tell you what: they should set up a Christian MMA ring so we can handle this like men! LOL—just a joke.

When Jesus showed up and said that the Kingdom of heaven was NEAR, like knocking on the door, **He began to move people out of Satan's Kingdom into His.**

**Anyone who heard and received the Gospel was delivered—FREED—  
from darkness and brought into the light!** They were moved from death to life!  
From sinfulness to righteousness!

What's more is that **this freedom and righteousness was permanent,** unlike the Old Temple-based covenant which had a never-ending cycle of sin, repentance, blood sacrifice, forgiveness, then we start all over again. In other words, Satan wasn't going to "get back" any of the people who left his church and started attending Jesus's!

***Satan is a murderer and anyone who murders and condones murder is being influenced by the devil.*** What drives an assassination and approval of assassination are demons. Demons who have untethered themselves from God and are trying to erase the conscience of the humans they're whispering to.

**What was Lucifer's response to Jesus and His army recruitment?** To kill Him.

**[Mat 26:3-4 ESV]** 3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, 4 and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.

**[Jhn 11:53 ESV]** 53 So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

You know that part of the story. Jesus was whipped 39 times, crown of thorns on His head, then made to carry His cross up to Calvary Hill. **There He was crucified and died.**

Let's pause before we go on. **When a great influencer dies for any reason, the people who grew to love and depend on them mourn greatly...and lose hope.** When Billy Graham died, people despaired and wanted to know who would pick up his mantle? John MacArthur recently passed away and many Christians depended on him to discern God's Word for them.

**When a seed is planted into the ground it dies...but then what happens?**

***Why did Jesus have to die?*** Why couldn't He have come down from the cross in the dramatic fashion I envisioned as a kid, incinerate all His mockers, then take the throne over earth?

**Why did the Apostles have to die?** For the last 2000 years Christians have died for their faith and the Gospel. It's still happening today, and not just to Charlie Kirk. In Islamic dominated countries, Christians are being killed just for being Christians and refusing to renounce Jesus at the point of a gun.

**Funny thing is Christians make great citizens.** We pay our taxes, submit to authority, and don't make trouble in society. When Charlie Kirk was assassinated our response was to hold prayer vigils. We're not looting, rioting, or destroying. We're not indulging in "an eye for eye" by targeting someone we consider an enemy.

If that's the case, **then why is the church in Satan's bullseye?**

*After Jesus died the disciples despaired and lost all hope.* They locked themselves in a house for fear of being next. In their hearts, the entire movement was dead...and I'll bet the unbelieving priests, the people, and Satan thought so too. Everything hinged on Jesus and now He was dead.

**Yet He appears among them, risen with eternal life**, death no longer having any dominion over Him! Later He Baptizes them with the Holy Spirit and they immediately fulfill the great commission: *the go into ALL the world and do what: MAKE DISCIPLES.*

The Apostles left the upper room and **immediately made thousands and thousands of converts!** They were unstoppable! Satan must have been like “*what's going on? Why is this happening? We killed Him! It should be over!!!*”

**[1Co 2:8 ESV]** 8 None of the rulers of this age [Satan & his angels] understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

**Satan didn't understand that Jesus would come back from the dead and be more powerful than ever.** He didn't get the concept that when a seed dies, it's about to bring forth new life that's far greater and more than it! A seed turns into a tree that bears much fruit!

**[Jhn 12:24 ESV]** 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

**The devil did everything he could to shut the Apostles down.** He got 11 of the 12 of them killed and sent the last on to lifelong exile. Did that kill the church? Did it stop the Gospel from being spread? Not a chance.

*In 2025 there are approximately 2.6 billion Christians worldwide* which is 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the global population.

**Jesus Christ is the most famous name on the entire planet** despite every effort to minimize, diminish, and snuff out His name and fame. His celebrity has not just endured the last 2000 years, but increased. The mention of His name causes more hate and murderous intent now than ever.

## **The Second Coming is an invasion, the biggest one ever seen.**

Every person who converts to Jesus becomes part of that army. Every Christian who dies for any reason has entered into their next step of preparation to fight in that army.

*Satan is a cornered animal. He knows his days, his rule, are numbered.*

**[Rev 12:12 ESV]** 12 Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

When Jesus finally decides to invade, there's nothing the devil can do. *He's going to lose everything he's ever worked for...and he's really, really angry.*

*So why all the hate?* Why murder? The devil is losing and despite all his efforts for thousands of years, his empire is going to come crashing down. He's desperately trying to hold on and therefore increasing his measures to do so which includes public assassinations.

*What's our response?*

This leads into next week's sermon: **but we must speak. Use words...specifically God's Word.** Passionately, but not angrily. Be zealous, but not obnoxious. We need to share the good news with people. We need to stand on the truths of God's moral commandments and not compromise or back down on them. We cannot be silent.

*"But Scott, didn't all that get Jesus and the Apostles killed? Charlie Kirk too?"*

YUP. **Becoming a Christian is easy, but being one isn't.** As a matter of fact, it tends to cost us things...lots of things. We were given a cross here in this life. The throne comes in the next one.

*We need to stop being afraid to speak.* We need to make more recruits for God's army because Jesus is coming.

**[2Ti 1:7-10 ESV]** 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10 and which now has been



manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

I end today with this:

"The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.'" (Revelation 11:15).

When Jesus comes back, it will be a hostile takeover. For now we must occupy until He returns. We must not give ground by being silent and being afraid of the consequences. **Preach the Gospel in and out of season.**