

Who is Responsible for the Death of Jesus Christ?

Acts 2:22-23

Exactly who was responsible for the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ? From the Christian perspective, His crucifixion was the worst crime imaginable. _____ is self-murder, _____ is the killing of another human being, and _____ is the destruction of an entire race or nationality of people. These three are vicious acts that shock and sicken us, but there is a worse crime. It is called “_____” or “**theocide**,” and it means to kill God. In one sense, of course, an immortal God can’t die. But in the sense that the Lord Jesus Christ is the blessed Second Person of the divine Trinity, God the very God in human flesh, I think you can see the enormity of the crime of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, who was it that killed the Lord Jesus Christ? Christian and Jewish theologians have hotly debated that question for centuries. But today I would like to focus on what the Word of God has to say about the subject to see if we can determine who is guilty of the greatest crime in the universe, the crime of deicide.

The Outline of Our Study

- I. _____ was responsible for the death of Christ.
- II. _____ was responsible for the death of Christ.
- III. _____ and I are responsible for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Humanity was responsible for the death of Christ. “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;” (Acts 2:22–23, NKJV)

A. The _____ were responsible for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. “He (Jesus) came to His own (creation), and His own (people) did not receive Him.” (John 1:11, NKJV) It is not hard to make the case for Jewish responsibility for the death of Christ. You can recall the conversation that took place between the crowd and _____ at the trial of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 27:22–25, NKJV) What haunting words are these, “His blood be on _____, and on our _____.” There is no question that these words have stung the Jewish people throughout the succeeding generations that have felt the sting of persecution. The lash of God has not been off the back of the Jewish nation since those words were uttered.

- Whether it was the _____ who burned, destroyed, and slaughtered the Jews in 70 AD, or
- the Ottoman **Turks**, or
- the Christian **Crusaders**, or
- the _____ Inquisitors, or
- the _____ madmen, or
- the American Ku Klux **Klan**,

The Jews have known the meaning of terror and persecution like no other people. Why? There is a universal law that operates in this universe. “Do not be deceived, God is not _____; for whatever a man **sows**, that he will also _____. ” (Galatians 6:7, NKJV)

This nation rejected the Prince of Life and put Him to death, and from that day, they have been put to death and rejected by the world. What makes the sin of Israel so very evil is the fact that it was a sin against light. Peter points out that they had plenty of evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ was Who He claimed to be.

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a **Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs** which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—” (Acts 2:22, NKJV) Peter points out that God had put His stamp of approval on the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ by **three** means: miracles, wonders, and signs.

- _____ refer to the **supernatural intervention into natural law** and were designed to establish His divine authority, for example, the healing of the man who was sick with palsy or paralysis.
- _____ were **specific calling cards that established His divine authority** to the nation of Israel, like the giving of sight to a man born blind, healing Jewish lepers, and casting demons out of deaf/dumb men.
- And _____ were acts that were done to **call attention to the message of the Lord Jesus Christ**, like the feeding of the five thousand that led to Christ’s message on the Bread of Life.

They had more than enough _____ to see that Christ really was Who He said He was. They simply refused to _____ it! They knew better, and yet they rejected and condemned the Lord Jesus Christ to death, and in so doing, brought the wrath of God down upon them.

B. The _____ were responsible for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let’s not stop by indicting the Jews, however, for Peter points out that the Gentiles were also responsible for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We might miss it if we merely read the surface of the text, but I would like to focus on one little phrase. “...taken by _____ hands, have crucified, and put to death;” (Acts 2:23, NKJV). Crucifixion was a _____ form of execution. The Jews were not alone in their sin of putting the Lord Jesus Christ to death; in fact, they did not carry out His execution. The Gentile Romans did it.

- “Lawless” is the Greek word ἀνόμος (anomos, a = not, nomos = law), and it refers to being “_____ the law of God,” and so what Peter is saying to these Jews is that they got their dirty work done by those who had no moral or righteous compunctions about killing an innocent man. They used the Gentiles who had no _____.
- Peter is not excusing the Gentiles here. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. Every man will have to give an account to God because every man is responsible to God for sin. Pilate knew what he was doing was wrong, even though he had no love for the law of God. His _____ was saying that the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ was innocent, and that no matter how much water he poured on his hands, he could not wash his sins away or eradicate his sense of _____.

II. God was responsible for the death of Christ. Now, I must hasten to add to the record that while mankind as a whole, both Jew and Gentile, bears great responsibility for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is a sense in which it was also _____ responsibility, for Christ died on the cross under the will of God. Peter points this out when he says: “Him, being delivered by the **determined purpose and _____ of God...**”(Acts 2:23a) The Lord Jesus Christ Himself made this very remarkable statement: “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This

command I have received from My Father.”” (John 10:17-18, NKJV) _____ is a curious place. Here, the wickedness and perversity of men meet the sovereignty and grace of God. Human responsibility and accountability were never darker, and yet everything that was done was done to fulfill the Word of God and His wonderful plan for the salvation of humankind. I’ll be honest with you; we are standing at a chasm that is too wide and too deep for my mind to fathom. But let me briefly call to your attention _____ things we can say with real certainty.

A. God’s _____ plan: “Him, being delivered by the **determined** _____ and foreknowledge of God...”(Acts 2:23). Peter makes mention that the “determined purpose of God” was on display here. That’s not the kind of terminology that we use every day, so let me put it like this: God had a plan of which the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was the focal point.

- Way back in the Garden of Eden, when man fell into sin and God was forced to pronounce judgment on him, God announced this plan. Will you listen to this? **Genesis 3:14-15.** **Sin** was so dread and so terrible that it required God’s ultimate judgment upon man through separation from Him for all _____ in hell. To have an appropriate remedy for sin, God spoiled heaven of its richest treasure, His own dear Son, Who would _____ the head of Satan and destroy the power of sin, but He would do so at a dreadful _____.
- The prophet Isaiah gives us a far clearer picture of Calvary than any of the Gospel writers, in the famous 53rd chapter of his prophecy. He gives us the inner thoughts of God, the heavenly _____: Isaiah 53:10-11
- It seems hard to say, but God took righteous pleasure in the death of His Son for our sins, because He loves us so much. Once, I had a man tell me that the Christian message was folly, for Christ committed _____ on the cross. Nothing could be further from the truth. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ was the _____ act of a loving God. He deliberately and with careful planning took our place in judgment and exhausted the fierce wrath of God for sin. This He did with the full knowledge of all that would happen to Him. Never has there been so bold and so definite a true love in God’s great plan.

B. God’s _____ provision: “Him, being delivered by the **determined purpose and foreknowledge of God...**” (Acts 2:23, NKJV) Peter also adds that all of this was done based on the foreknowledge of God. Foreknowledge is a word of the Greek language that has been carried directly over into our English. It is the word “prognosis,” which comes from two Greek words (pro, which means “before”) and (gnosis, which means “to know”). When a physician gives you a **diagnosis**, he is telling you what He thinks is _____ with you according to the knowledge that he has gleaned. Included in that diagnosis is often a **prognosis**, in which your physician will tell you the _____ **outcome** of your condition or treatment. Sometimes the prognosis is good; sometimes it is bad. Luke, a good physician, is using a medical term for the remedy which God, the Great Physician, prescribes for sin. In other words, God arranged in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, for everything to be _____ that was necessary for human salvation, and for the _____ of the human soul. On the principle of _____, God first saw all the needs of every human being and arranged it so that the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ would become the basis upon which every blessing of this life and in the life to come would come to those who believe in Christ. The prognosis is in. You may have trials and tribulations. The storms of life may

threaten your peace. But God has made _____ through the death of His very own dear Son to see you through every crisis and to land you _____ on eternity's shore. God, Himself, was responsible for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we will thank Him for all eternity for it.

III. You and I are responsible for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. I would not want to end this message on such a broad sweep as pointing out that God and mankind were responsible for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's too far removed from all of us, and I will state boldly today that we would not be doing justice to the Scripture if we left matters like that. Peter surely makes it clear that there is a more specific _____ for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ than that of the race of mankind. Peter's preaching to a crowd of unsaved people. Listen to him again. “Men of Israel, _____ these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to **you** by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in **your** midst, as **you yourselves** also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, **you** have taken by lawless hands, **have crucified**, and **put to death;**” (Acts 2:22–23, NKJV)

A. A _____ Responsibility: It does not take an exegetical genius to realize that Peter lays the responsibility for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ directly on the doorstep of the people who were hearing this message. In these two verses, the second person plural pronouns - “you” or “yourselves” - are used five times. Plus, the words “hear,” “taken,” and “crucified” are all second person plural. That makes _____ second-person plurals in _____ verses. Peter boldly says the responsibility really belongs to **every individual human being who has ever lived or who will ever live!** You and I are responsible on a personal level for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. But they were just as guilty as those who nailed Him to the cross. Long or short distance cannot remove our responsibility, for He was taking our **place** on the cross. He was fulfilling the prophecy that was unwittingly made by the high priest. (John 11:49–52, NKJV)

- First, if you are not saved today, it ought to strike you powerfully that you are going to answer to God someday for what you have _____ with the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 6:2, NKJV
- Second, if you are saved, you ought to realize anew and afresh the tremendous _____ of God for your soul. Such love and grace drive me to fall before Him in reverence and awe and offer my service to Him forever with a pure heart of genuine love. Romans 12:1–2, NKJV

B. A _____ responsibility: There is one other thing that I must point out in this passage, and that is the urgency of coming to grips with our personal responsibility for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter is emphatic, “Men of Israel, _____ (imperative) these words...Acts 2:22a The construction of this sentence is powerful. It is a summons before the court of heaven. “Hear these words” is the command and a demand from a living God. You must hear! You must _____! The decision that is not for Christ is against Him. What will it be? You must simply decide that Jesus Christ died for you. You are responsible for His agony on the cross, but it is by that same death that the Lord Jesus Christ can extend to you the blessing and grace of His wonderful love. What will it be? Will you own up to your responsibility?