

## Crucifixion of Jesus

John 19:16b-29

*FAR FROM BEING A VICTIM, JESUS TRIUMPHED THROUGH THE CROSS!*

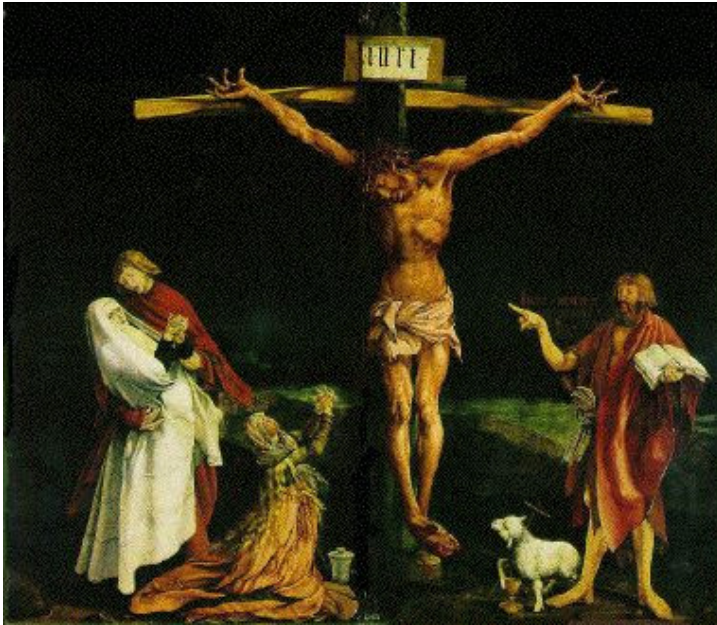
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**John 19:16b-29** So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. <sup>17</sup> Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). <sup>18</sup> Here **they crucified him**, and with him two others--one on each side and Jesus in the middle. <sup>19</sup> Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: **JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.** <sup>20</sup> Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. <sup>21</sup> The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." <sup>22</sup> Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." <sup>23</sup> When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. <sup>24</sup> "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the **scripture might be fulfilled** which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did. <sup>25</sup> Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," <sup>27</sup> and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. <sup>28</sup> Later, knowing that **all was now completed**, and so that the **Scripture would be fulfilled**, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." <sup>29</sup> A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

### INTRODUCTION:

- A. As symbols go, the golden arches of MacDonalds and the Shell Oil Company logo are more recognizable than the Christian cross, according to a survey of people in Australia, Germany, India, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The most widely recognized symbol in these six countries was the five linked rings of the Olympic Games, which was identified by 92% of respondents. In contrast, 88% identified the MacDonald's symbol and Shell's seashell logo. Only 54% identified the cross as symbolic of Christianity. (Baptists Today, Sep 21, 1995)
- B. That's really too bad, seeing that the cross is the preeminent symbol of Christianity, despite the fact that it is such an unlikely symbol:
- You see it on the roof when you turn in the drive.
  - You see it on the front wall when you walk in this room.
  - And you hear about the Cross in the preaching. Like today.
  - It's on your Bible cover.
  - It's on a gold chain around your neck
- C. Paul announced: **Galatians 6:14**, *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*  
*For Paul to say that we should boast only in the cross...is shocking.... [I]t's like saying: Boast only in the electric chair. Only exult in the gas chamber. Only rejoice in the lethal injection. Let your one boast and one joy and one exultation be the lynching rope. (John Piper, Don't Waste Your Life, Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL, 2003, 49-50)*
- D. **John Eldridge** cites an historical note (from art historian Kenneth Clark) to the effect that the Crucifixion does not appear in Christian art until AD 430, and then only in a minor role. Eldridge exclaims, *Four hundred years of the earliest and most vibrant Christianity goes by without the cross as its rallying point?! Those who walked with Jesus, and those who walked with those who walked with Jesus—their didn't make the cross central? Why? As the record goes, what the Apostles preached was the Resurrection (Acts 1:15-16, 21-22; 4:1-2; 4:33; 17:18)*  
He adds: *The cross was never meant to be the only or even the central symbol of Christianity.--*  
**John Eldredge**, *Waking the Dead*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 2003, 64)
- E. Is that right? It is certainly true that the Apostles made much of the Resurrection—in fact Paul exclaims that if Jesus didn't rise from the dead our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins and are of all men most to be pitied. However, look at the evidence for the centrality of the Cross:

- **1 Corinthians 1:18**, *For the message of the cross is...to us who are being saved ... the power of God...*
- **Galatians 6:12**, *Christians are...persecuted for the cross of Christ.*
- **Galatians 6:14**, *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*
- **Ephesians 2:16**, *God healed the hostility between Jews and Gentiles and reconcile[d] both of them to God through the cross,*
- **Philippians 3:18**, *Opponents of Christianity are enemies of the cross of Christ.*
- **Colossians 1:20**, *God's great work of reconciliation was accomplished...by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*
- **Colossians 2:14**, *What about the condemnation of the Law?--...having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.*
- **Colossians 2:15**, *What about demonic powers and authorities? And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*
- **1 Corinthians 11:26**, *...whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*
- **1 Peter 2:24**, *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree...*



**1 Peter 2:24**, *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree...*

- F. There are three great incidents in the earthly journey of Jesus; three great truths about his work of redemption: 1) His incarnation with the mystery of the Virgin Birth and the wonder of the God-Man; 2) His death, and 3) His resurrection.

What sets the Death of Christ apart from the Incarnation and the Resurrection is that it is uniquely an act of “destruction.” To create a baby without a human father and to bring life from the dead are actually fairly easy things for God to do. Now, please don’t misunderstand me here—both the Incarnation and the Resurrection are amazing miracles of God and are central doctrines of the Christian faith. And the Incarnation did involve deep condescension on the part of the Son of God. But what I am trying to emphasize is that the Death of Christ sent shock-waves through the Trinity (*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*). And ponder the inscrutability of what it meant for God to die and for Jesus to become *sin for us*.

- *The other gods were strong, but you were weak,  
They rode, but you stumbled to your throne.  
To our wounds, only a wounded God can speak*

*And not a God has wounds but you alone.*

*--Edward Shillito*

- G. Now the reason that the Death of Jesus and the Cross stand so prominently on pages of Scripture and theology is that this is the crux of God's great, eternal plan of salvation. The crucifixion is not some tragic, unexpectedly thing that happened to Jesus—it was his deliberate plan and always had been.

**BIG IDEA: FAR FROM BEING A VICTIM, JESUS TRIUMPHED THROUGH THE CROSS!**

There are **three clues** to Jesus' mastery of His own crucifixion...

CLUE #1: NOTICE THE ABSENCE OF TRAGIC DRAMA.

A. All the Gospels Are Understated about the Pathos.

1. There are no flogging details.

**Matthew 27:26**, *...he had Jesus flogged...*

**Mark 15:15**, *He had Jesus flogged...*

**John 19:1**, *Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.*

2. There are no "crown of thorns" details.

**Matthew 27:29**, *...and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head.*

**Mark 15:17**, *...then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him.*

**John 19:2**, *The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head.*

3. There are no nailing details.

**Matthew 27:35**, *When they had crucified him...*

**Mark 15:24**, *And they crucified him.*

**Luke 23:33**, *...there they crucified him...*

**John 19:18**, *Here they crucified him...*

**NOTE:** The purpose of the Gospel writers and the Holy Spirit is not to arouse us to outrage...because the Cross is not a surprise; Jesus is not a helpless victim. When Peter engaged in defensive swordplay in the garden, Jesus told him, **Matthew 26:52-53**, *"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. <sup>53</sup> Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"*—That's 72,000+ angels!

B. But None So Much as John's Gospel.

1. John deletes the mockery.

**Matthew 27:39**, *Those who passed by hurled insults at him...* (Mark 15:29)

**Matthew 27:41**, *In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him.* (Mark 15:31; Luke 23:35)

**Matthew 27:44**, *In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.* (Mark 15:32; Luke 23:39)

**Luke 23:36**, *The soldiers also came up and mocked him.*

**WHY DOES JOHN DELETE THIS?**—

- Likely because it doesn't serve his purpose.
  - **John 20:30-31**, *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
  - That is Jesus' identity. That is who He is. Therefore it doesn't really matter what mere men think Jesus is.
  - John's great passion is to show Jesus on the Cross as Divine Conqueror.
2. John deletes the Via Dolorosa—Latin for "Way of Suffering."
- Matthew 27:32**, *As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross.* (Mark 15:21)
- Luke 23:27-28**, *A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. <sup>28</sup> Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. This little speech of Jesus' continues on another 3 verses as he predicts to coming (about 40 years hence) destruction of*

Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans in 70 AD. In other words, as these women mourn for Jesus, he is telling them that they are actually the ones who are in trouble.

#### **WHY DOES JOHN DELETE THIS?**

- Please don't misunderstand me. The physical sufferings of Jesus have always deeply touched my heart. Especially when I hold the elements of communion. From my childhood I was catechized by my parents to know what the bread and the grape juice represented.
- But there is a danger of over-dwelling on the physical sufferings of Jesus. We can so become absorbed in the bodily pain as to let it eclipse the greater reality of what is going on here. Jesus is not the Victim. Jesus is the Intentional Sacrifice for the Sin of the World.
- The main thing about the Crucifixion of Jesus is not the human pathos of it all. *Jesus was not the first person to die on the cross. The practice was widespread. Alexander Jannaeus, king and high priest of Judea, crucified eight hundred Pharisees in 76 B.C. The rebellion of Spartacus lined Rome's Appian Way with crosses. Many of the Seleucids, who ruled in Palestine after the death of Alexander the Great, crucified their captives with vast fields of crosses.* (Calvin Miller, *The Book of Jesus*, Simon and Schuster, 1996, 383)

- I am impressed with a sermon by **B. F. Westcott** on John 12:32 [**John 12:32** *But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.*] entitled, *Christ Reigning from the Cross*. It opens like this:

*The student of the Gospels cannot fail to be deeply impressed by the contrast that St. John's record of the passion which we have heard today offers to that of the other Evangelists. It is from beginning to end a revelation of majesty. No voice of suffering, no horror of thick darkness, find a place in it. Every indignity is so accepted by the Lord as to become part of a gracious and willing sacrifice.*

—B. F. Westcott, *Christ Reigning from the Cross*.

**NOTE: Here is additional biblical evidence for Westcott's assertion—**

- **Isaiah 53:10**, Yet it was **the LORD's will** to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will **prosper in his hand**.—as Jesus hung on the Cross he was outworking the plan of God and he was “prospering” it!
  - **Hebrews 12:2**, ... Jesus... who **for the joy** set before him endured the cross, **scorning its shame**, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- Some missionaries showed the *Jesus* film to a primitive tribe in the jungles of East Asia.

*Not only had these people never heard of Jesus, they had never seen a motion picture....*

*Imagine again how it felt to see this good man Jesus, who healed the sick and was adored by children, held without trial and beaten by jeering soldiers. As they watched this, the people came unglued. They stood up and began to shout at the cruel men on the screen, demanding that this outrage stop.*

*When nothing happened, they attacked the missionary running the projector. Perhaps he was responsible for this injustice! He was forced to stop the film and explain that the story wasn't over yet, that there was more. So they settled back onto the ground, holding their emotions in tenuous check.*

*Then came the crucifixion. Again the people could not hold back. They began to weep and wail with such loud grief that once again the film had to be stopped. The missionary again tried to clam them, explaining that the story still wasn't over, that there was more. So they composed themselves and sat down to see what happened next.*

*Then came the resurrection. Pandemonium broke out this time, but for a different reason. The gathering had spontaneously erupted into a party. The noise*

was now of jubilation, and it was deafening. The people were dancing and slapping each other on the back. Christ is risen, indeed! (Ben Patterson, "Heart and Soul," *Leadership Journal*, Summer, 1999, 122)

CLUE #2: NOTICE WHAT JOHN EMPHASIZED.

A John Emphasized Jesus' Identity.

1. John has the most detail about the written notice.

**John 19:19-20**, Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: *JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS*.<sup>20</sup> Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek.



**Matthew 27:37**, *THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS*. (the "charge")

**Mark 15:26**, *THE KING OF THE JEWS*. (the "charge")

**Luke 23:38**, *THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS*.

- John has the fullest title...
  - But more than that, he notes the widespread reading of the sign... **Roman rhetorician Quintilian**: *Whenever we crucify the guilty, the most crowded roads are chosen, where the most people can see and be moved by this fear.* (96) *The legacy of death by crucifixion is still with us in the word "excruciating," which literally means "out of the cross."* (98) (Michael Card, *A Violent Grace*, Multnomah Publ, Sisters, OR, 2000)
  - And he notes the three languages, which covered all the bases—the world of the Jews, the world of the Romans, and the world of the Greek. Everybody could read it and everybody got it.
  - He also explains the dispute about the sign: **John 19:21-22**, *The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews."*<sup>22</sup> *Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."*
    - So, on a human level, this was all a little power struggle between Pilate and the Jewish leaders. He was very aware that they had outmaneuvered him and pushed him into a corner on the conviction of Jewish.
    - So Pilate gets his comeuppance, gets in a little dig, with the wording on the sign.
    - That's all on the human level.
    - But there is divine irony here. The Jews didn't believe the words. Pilate didn't believe the words.
    - But truer words were never displayed. God used the unbelief and pettiness of unbelieving men to graphically proclaim the true identity of Jesus. [NAS] **Psalm 76:10**, *For the wrath of man shall praise Thee...*
    - He is Jesus=Savior.
    - He is The King of the Jews, i.e., the Hebrew Messiah, the long-awaited Chosen One of God, the Deliverer, the King. In the Greek tongue that came out in the title, Christ. Christ, Messiah, King.
2. John includes Jesus' relationships.  
**John 19:25-26**, *Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.*<sup>26</sup> *When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby...*

**NOTE:** The other Gospel writers do not include this. How does this contribute to Jesus' identity? 1) The presence of Mary reminds us of the Virgin Birth—this helps define who

Jesus is. 2) Mary Magdalene reminds us of Jesus' compassion and his miraculous healing powers. **Luke 8:2** explains that Jesus drove seven demons out of her—this helps define who Jesus is. 3) John's presence (*the disciple whom Jesus loved*) reminds us that there were eleven men who had forsaken everything to follow Jesus as their Lord and Master—this helps define who Jesus is.

B. John Emphasized Jesus' Inevitability.

1. John alone employs "active" grammar.

**John 19:17**, ...*he went out to the place of the Skull...*

**Matthew 27:31**, *Then they led him away to crucify him.*

**Mark 15:20**, *Then they led him out to crucify him.*

**Luke 23:26**, ...*they led him away...*

**NOTE:** On the human level, yes, the soldiers led Jesus; even John records that *the soldiers took charge of Jesus (verse 16)*. But John captures a deeper truth: Jesus **went out** to the place of the Skull—the path to the Cross was drawn on the eternal map by the finger of God. Jesus is blazing the trail of salvation as he walks the Via Dolorosa. **Hebrews 10:19-20**, ... *we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,* <sup>20</sup> *by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body...*

2. John alone quotes Old Testament prophecy.

**John 19:24**, *"Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." [Psalm 22:18] So this is what the soldiers did.*

**John 19:28**, *Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." [Psalm 69:21]*

- Of course he was thirsty. He had not had anything to drink since the previous evening. He has been beaten and humiliated. He has been scourged. He is bleeding. No wonder he is thirsty.
- There was ...*a guild of women in Jerusalem who added a touch of mercy to the scene by offering a stupefying drink to all who had to undergo the ordeal. They offered this relief to Jesus before he was placed on the cross, but he refused the wine mingled with myrrh (Mk. 15:23). He wanted to meet death in the full possession of his mental powers. Had he taken the drink, we could not have had the clear-cut statements from his lips during those last hours that are recorded in the Gospels. (Everett F. Harrison, A Short Life of Christ, Eerdmans, 1968, 220)*
- **NOTE:** Jesus is executing the foreknown, eternally decreed plan of God as evidenced by Old Testament prophecy. **Josh McDowell** in his *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* lists 29 Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in the last 24 hours of Jesus earthly life (dealing with his betrayal, trial, death, and burial).

CLUE #3: NOTICE JESUS IN CHARGE.

A. Jesus Carries His Cross.

**John 19:17**, *Carrying his own cross...*

- [ARV] ...*and he went out, bearing the cross for himself..*
- *John's "for himself" puts a certain stress on the fact that Jesus did this particular piece of work. John's emphasis may be on the fact that Jesus accomplished the world's salvation alone.—LEON MORRIS*

B. Jesus Cares for His Mother.

**John 19:26-27**, *When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," <sup>27</sup> and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.*

- *There is something infinitely moving in the fact that Jesus in the agony of the Cross, in the moment when the salvation of the world hung in the balance, thought of the loneliness of His mother in the days when He was taken away.---WILLIAM BARCLAY*

- This is incredibly tender stuff here. Here is Jesus in unbelievable pain, and he is taking care of his mom.
- Pain tends to eclipse our concern for others. Starving refugees will fight over UN food stuffs. Don't expect much sympathy from someone with a major migraine. In fact, better stay out of their way!
- Mary herself is suffering incredibly here. Remember what old Simeon said way back at the temple dedication when Mary held the baby Jesus in her arms? He prophesied about Jesus, *"This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, And he had a prophecy for Mary also: 35 ....And a sword will pierce your own soul too."* (Luke 2:34-35)
- I don't know why Jesus told John to adopt Mary as his mother. Mary had a whole family of grown kids. We even know the boys names: there was James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. There were some sisters, too, but we don't know their names. (Matthew 13:55) Maybe it was because Jesus' half-siblings had not yet believed in Jesus as the Son of God. Back in **Mark 3:21**, *When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."*
- But at least some of them did soon believe: James who wrote a book in the New Testament and became a prominent leader of the church in Jerusalem, and his younger brother Judas (or Jude) who wrote the next to the last book of the New Testament.
- But for whatever reason, the best home for Mary was John's home and John was her best surrogate son.

C. Jesus Is Aware of His Mission.

**John 19:28**, *Later, knowing that all was now completed...*

1. **"Teleo"** (1) as completing something *bring to an end, conclude, complete* (Matt. 7:28); (2) as obeying a rule or ritual *carry out, fulfill, perform* (LU 2:39); (3) of obligatory taxes, tolls, dues *pay* (MT 17:24); (4) passive, of duration of time *be over, end, be finished* (RV 20.3)
  - *How completely self-possessed the Saviour was! He had hung on that cross for six hours, and had passed through suffering unparalleled: nevertheless His mind was perfectly clear and His memory entirely unimpaired. He had before Him, with perfect distinctness, the whole truth of God. He reviewed in a moment the entire scope of Messianic prediction.—ARTHUR W. PINK*
  - *The word translated "It is finished" (tetelestai) was used in Greek commercial life. The term signified the completion of a transaction by the full payment of a price or the discharge of a debt by a completed payment.... When Christ died, He gathered to Himself the accumulated debt of a sinful race and offered to God a payment for past sins. In other words Jesus was saying, "The debt has been paid in full." (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, Academie Books, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1981, 487)*
2. Compare **Luke 9:31**, *They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.*
  - "Departure"=*exodus*, the entire death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.
  - "Fulfillment"---*...is the key theme of this verse; the events discussed are part of God's plan, which will come to pass.* (Darrell L. Bock)
3. Compare **"the hour"** of Jesus [NAS]:
  - **John 2:4**, *"My hour has not yet come."*
  - **John 7:30**, *They were seeking therefore to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.*
  - **John 8:20**, *He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.*
  - **John 12:23-27**, *And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>27</sup> "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour '? But for this purpose I came to this hour.*

- **John 13:1**, *Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that **His hour** had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*
  - **John 17:1**, *"Father, **the hour** has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee..."*
4. *This was in keeping with Christ's own statement, "The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life-- only to take it up again. 18 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)*
  5. *Christ did not die because life slowly ebbed from His veins. His life was not taken from Him. Christ died because by an act of His will He dismissed His soul from His body. Christ was sovereign over His death as He was sovereign over His resurrection. (J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, Academie Books, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1981, 487)*



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