

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG92 – The Crucifixion Of Christ – Part 3

Hello, and welcome to this podcast. The title of the podcast today is *The Crucifixion of Christ – Part 3*. Now I have to say, I never anticipated this being like a multi-part study. But it is such a necessary subject, in order to deal with the anti-Semitism that is happening in the Church and in the world today. So, I am trying to be as specific and detailed as I can, even though we are really trying to have fairly short podcasts. It is always a problem with a podcast: you do not have all the time in the world to really lay something out in a study format, but I am going to do the best I can. This is the third part. I encourage you, if you are just getting to this one, go back first and listen to shows 1 and 2 of *The Crucifixion of Christ* and catch up to this point, because that will be very helpful for you in the process.

We are looking to get rid of this mindset that is rife within the body of Christ about the Jewish people killing Christ, or killing God, and therefore they need to be punished. I have started this teaching born out of something on the Internet that I heard, which relates to the Rapture doctrine, in which part of the Rapture doctrine believes that during the great tribulation, the Jewish people are left here. The Christians, of course, have been raptured out, in that theory, that doctrine, and the Jewish people are left here to suffer because of their unbelief and their part in the crucifixion of Christ. I really want to hit head on this idea about Christ being crucified and somebody having to take the blame for it. It is as I said before, if you are asking the question, "Who crucified Jesus?" it is the wrong question to be asking. It is not pertinent to the reality of the cross. The cross came to bring forgiveness, not to point blame. So if you think the cross happened, and as a result of the cross, some people, group or individuals have to be blamed and punished and suffer because of the cross, then you are sort of nullifying the reality of the cross, which was to bring forgiveness and salvation. And you are forgetting the fact that the cross itself was God's perfect predestined plan, from before the foundations of the world, to bring salvation to all of mankind for our sin. So we have got to break this thinking, because it is just a lie that is painted upon the Jewish people. And it is a very dangerous lie, because as happened in the Holocaust, because of certain Christian doctrines and beliefs and teachings that existed, the Nazis were able to slaughter the Jewish people in the Holocaust. I hate to think that we still have, unfortunately, teachings and doctrines within the Church which would open that same type of door in our day and age; but they are there, and we must get rid of them.

I am going to give a short summary here of what we have been reviewing, looking at who are the parties that are culpable in the death of Jesus on the cross. Number one is the Father. The cross is the predestined plan of God to bring salvation and deliverance to all mankind. God Himself sacrificed His Son to bring salvation to the world. Next is Jesus Himself, Yeshua. He chose to do the will of God, and the will of God was for Him to go to the cross to bring about salvation. We see that reality in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He asked if there was another plan, and there was not; and so He submitted to the plan of God, which was Him going to the cross. We know, as Yeshua said, "No one takes My life. I lay My life down." He did willingly the will of the Father. So He laid His life down, that we might all have salvation, the forgiveness of our sins, and enter into eternal life.

The third party that we have identified is satan. Satan and the demonic forces were a very heavy influence upon the humans that were involved – whether it was Judas, or whether it was the Romans, or whether it was the Jews themselves, the High Priest, the elders, whoever was there involved that were human. We see much of that was born out of the influence of the demonic realm. This, of course, takes us back to the Garden of Eden, and the influence of satan upon Adam and Eve for original sin and disobedience; and that has been carried on down through the history of humanity. So we see that the cross is not only the place where Christ wins forgiveness and salvation for humanity, it is also the place where judgment is brought upon satan for his works and his acts. We know this is true, because the Scripture itself said, "Had he known, had the demonic realm known what was going to happen out of the cross, they never would have slain Christ in the first place." If they would have known that this was bringing their judgment, it never would have happened; he would not have manipulated people to do this.

The next group is the children of Israel who, by covenant and by prophecy, have to be a part of the sacrifice of Christ for the purpose of bringing about salvation. That can only be done by the fulfillment of the prophecies and the plan that God had made, which was a plan and a covenant made with the children of Israel. The next individual is the High Priest. It had to be that the High Priest was involved, for the whole idea of the cross is not only dealing with Passover and the sacrifice of the lamb at Passover; it is also dealing with the Day of Atonement, and what transpires at and through the Day of Atonement, which requires the involvement of the High Priest to act in order to accomplish that. Then lastly, we see that the Romans are involved, which is dealing with the reality of actually the whole Gentile world. They represent the Gentile world in the process of the cross. And I think there is a place you get to, when you have really a meeting with the Lord and you come into a salvation experience, that you have to understand, at some point, that you yourself are having to agree to the crucifixion of Yeshua, of Jesus, on the cross; because without that crucifixion, and without His death, you do not receive salvation. So at some point in your experience of being saved, as we call it, you are actually saying, "Yes, He must die in order for me to live." Without the death of Christ, without the blood sacrifice on the cross, there is no salvation for mankind. So at some point, when we open our heart to receive Him as our Savior, we are also participating and agreeing in His crucifixion which brings that salvation.

That is a summary of where we have been up to this point. I want to pick up now in more detail with the children of Israel. What we have done in the previous sessions is to go through each of these individuals or groups that are involved and read the Scriptures relating to the fact that this is the plan of God, and that the Word of God, the prophecies of the Scripture, were being fulfilled at this time, and that they must be fulfilled for salvation to function. So now we are at the children of Israel. We know that the children of Israel were a part of the crucifixion – there is no question about it. We know they were very influenced, as all the humans were who were a part of this, by what satan was doing. We know that satan entered the heart of Judas to betray Him. We know that he was influencing the crowd. A matter of days before, the same crowd, the children of Israel, had been declaring Jesus, Yeshua, the Messiah. They were welcoming Him into Jerusalem, saying, "Hosanna! Hosanna!" and worshiping "the One who comes in the name of the Lord," which is what they had to do. All of these acts that the children of Israel, that the Jewish people, are involved with, are all necessary things for the fulfillment of prophecy over Christ in order to bring about the salvation. And we see that is what is unfolding here.

In Acts 2:22-23, it says, "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God,

you nailed to the cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death." Here again we have emphasized in the book of Acts the fact that what took place was the pre-determined, the pre-destined, plan, the foreknowledge of God, and that the Jews were involved, the children of Israel were involved, in nailing Him to the cross. But again, I think it is interesting that it is very specific: they did not do that themselves. The Jewish people did not nail Jesus to the cross, the Romans did. And so we recognize this. He says, "You delivered Him over, but by the hands of ungodly men you put Him to death." So, again, you have the foreknowledge of God. You have God's plan. You have the Gentile involvement. And you have the Jews, who are fulfilling the idea of Passover and the necessary sacrifice of the lamb.

Verse 24 goes on to say, "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held by its power." We go to Acts 13:29: "When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb." Again, this is referring to the Jewish people. What does it say of them? "When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him." It is very important, if you understand the sacrifices and the plan of God that was executed and finalized at the cross, that all these things must be done, they must be carried out, they must happen according to God's plan and pattern. And so, in a sense, here in Acts 13, he is actually giving them credit to say that "you carried out all that was written concerning Him." It was this carrying out of the Word, and in this carrying out of this predetermined, predestined plan of God, that made the death of Jesus, of Yeshua, on the cross, that which brings about salvation.

You have to remember, thousands of people were crucified on crosses during this time. It was the preferred method of killing people with the Romans, and it was their method of carrying out capital punishment. We see that many, many people died during the days of Yeshua, many Jews died. None of them accomplished the salvation of God, only He did; and it was only done because of the fulfilling of His plan and the fulfillment of the Word that the Scriptures speak about Him. You have to remember, again, part of the plan was that the Jewish people did recognize Him, and they did proclaim Him to be the Messiah. People say, "Well, no, He was rejected by the Jews." No, you are not reading the Scriptures. You are listening to somebody else, and you need to study this yourself. Come on, get into the Word and read what happened, what really took place. Who were the twelve disciples? They were Jews. Who were the ones following Him? They were all Jews. We know on the Day of Pentecost there were a hundred and twenty that were there. Those were Jews, those were Jewish believers. You read your New Testament, which was written by Jews; they were followers. The original Church for fifteen plus years were all Jewish believers, not Gentiles. So this idea that the Jews rejected Jesus is just a lie on its face. The fact that they did participate in the crucifixion of Christ is very true; but so did the Gentiles; so did the Romans; so did satan; so did God; so did Jesus Himself, by laying His life down. You can't put a finger on somebody and say, "These people killed Jesus, or killed God." That is a lie, it is craziness. But it is dangerous, because it brings about and it is the root of anti-Semitism that has been used so effectively by satan through the ages to bring persecution and pogroms against the Jewish people, including the Holocaust.

We have got to root out the lies and the untruths and the half-truths, and realize that these people were involved; but, where is the positive story of their involvement? Like we have in Mark 11, at verses 7-10. It says, "They brought" – speaking of that multitude of Jewish people that were in Jerusalem at the time of Passover – "they brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it. And many spread their coats in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" They recognized Him as being the Messiah, sent by God into the earth. "Blessed is the

coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!" They recognized Him as Messiah. They recognized Him as King, coming to sit upon the seat of David. These are the same people, admittedly, that a few days later are yelling, "Crucify Him!" That is why I think you have to so carefully look at the involvement of the demonic realm that was manipulating the humans involved, as it was Judas, where he entered his heart and made him to betray Him.

We go on to John the twelfth chapter, and it says in verses 12-15, "On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.' Jesus, finding a young donkey sat on it; as it is written, 'Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.'" So again, we have this story told twice in the Gospels of how the people recognized Him, and shouted that He was the Messiah, that He was the King of the Jews, that He was going to sit on the throne of David. All of this was a part of it. This was done by those same Jewish people who now people are trying to point to and say, "Well, they killed God. They crucified the Lord." There was something deeper going on. And if you can't recognize it, you are not correctly reading the Scriptures. I encourage you to pray that the Holy Spirit of truth open your eyes to see what happened, to see how they were manipulated. They did cry for His crucifixion. They had to; it was part of the fulfillment of the Passover type, and only the children of Israel could be those to fulfill the type of Passover in order for salvation to come.

In First Corinthians 5:7, it says, "Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed." Paul is recognizing here, in preparation for Communion, that the Passover lamb was sacrificed; that Christ was the representative of that Passover lamb; and that by virtue of the sacrifice of the lamb, the blood was then available over the people for deliverance and release from death, because that is what the Passover lamb represented. We will read it out of Exodus chapter 12, starting at verses 5-8. It says, "'Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the house in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.'" Exodus 12:12, "'For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the Lord.'" So here we see the necessity of Passover, which came to bring the judgment on the gods of Egypt, those gods that were holding the children of Israel in bondage. Of course, we understand that satan, from the time of the Garden of Eden, had been holding humanity in bondage through deception and temptation, bringing them into disobedience to the will of God. So God brings a solution, and He begins to bring and proclaim the judgment of Himself upon the gods of Egypt. That judgment is accomplished by the children of Israel, and what did they do to accomplish it? They took the lamb, they took it into their house, and then they slayed the lamb. They put the blood on the doorposts, and when that happened, God passed over them and had deliverance for them, but brought judgment upon on all of the gods of Egypt, and all of the Egyptians that served those gods.

In verses 13-14, it says, "The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance." Passover was given to

the children of Israel, to the Jewish people, as a permanent ordinance. And it had to be fulfilled, it had to be followed, it had to be done, lest they be cut off. And so, in Matthew 27:24-25, it says, "When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves.' And all the people said – listen to this, this is a prophetic cry – "'His blood shall be on us and on our children!'" The Passover is a permanent ordinance; but there was no race of people, there was nobody else that could bring the sacrifice of Passover. It was given as an ordinance, as part of the plan of deliverance and salvation through God, through covenant, to the Jewish people. They were the ones that sacrifice the lamb and they were the ones that, prophetically – and I know this has been used as a curse against the Jewish people, but read it again and see how prophetic it is – these people, as they are crying for Him to go to the cross, are saying, "The blood shall be on us and on our children." It is exactly the type of Passover being fulfilled over them. And so it was that His blood was shed. And so it is that His blood was provided for them and their children down through all generations.

John 4:22 says, "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews." Salvation had to come from the Jews. It had to come through the Jews. Jesus was a Jew. Yeshua, He was a Jew. He is the Messiah, and He came through the Jewish people by covenant, by promise. They also had to be involved in the sacrifice of it, because salvation comes from the Jewish people. It was their fulfillment of the type of Passover that put the blood over them and over their children and over all the world. He was the Lamb of God. You say, "Well, they are guilty of killing Him." He came here in order to be sacrificed as the Lamb of God. He had to die. And when you take Communion, and when you receive Him as your Savior, you also are participating in the crucifixion of the Lamb of God; because your sin requires it, just as does the sin of the whole world. John 19:31 says, "Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." So again, we see the Jews, after the fulfillment of all things, are having Him taken from the cross so that the Sabbath not be violated. All of the prophecies had to be fulfilled, and the Sabbath could not be violated. It was the Jews who did that. Pilate didn't care if He stayed on the cross; the Romans didn't care if He remained on the cross through the Sabbath; they didn't celebrate the Sabbath. And so they were going to break the legs, but again, the prophecies are fulfilled – He was already dead, and therefore His legs were never broken, in keeping with the fulfillment of every detail of prophecy.

I want to go to Hebrews 8, starting at verses 7-8: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, 'Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.'" There was the covenant. What happened with Christ on the cross was a fulfillment of the covenant. It was bringing an answer, because the covenant that they had did not work. Why? Because of our flesh. The flesh of humanity did not allow it to work. There was no way that we, as humans, were able to be obedient to the will of God as we needed to be in serving Him, in following His Law and His covenant. And so He instituted His plan. He knew it from the beginning. He instituted His plan, and He brought a new covenant. That covenant is for the house of Israel and the house of Judah, because by promise, they will walk in and receive all that God has made available to them.

In Luke 22:15-22, as they celebrated the Passover, Yeshua said to them, "'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'" And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, 'Take this and share it among

yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.' And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table. For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed.'"

We see what is called the Last Supper, which was most likely a Seder meal, it was about what? The Passover. This time was the fulfillment of Passover for all of Israel, and it shall be celebrated forever by them, and by believers of faith. It was given for us. But it was required that the Jewish people be those that enter into it. You say, "Well, the Jewish people rejected Him." No, they are sitting right here with Him at the Last Supper. They are not rejecting Him, they are receiving it. And you say, "Well, it was the twelve." No, there were many more there. One of the reasons for having Passover celebration is to teach the children. So, you know, the children of all those that followed Him were there. There were probably close to the same hundred and twenty that were there on the day of Pentecost with Him during the time of the Last Supper. I cannot prove it by Scripture, but it certainly follows the pattern. And they were there with their hearts open to receive what He was giving to them.

We see that when the children of Israel cried out, "Let His blood be on us and on our children," they were prophetically receiving everything that God had done, and was doing, in that salvation. In Acts 13:26-29, it says, "'Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him. And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb.'" You understand that the Jewish people that were there carried out all that was written. They fulfilled the Word and the prophecies, which were absolutely necessary if salvation was to work and be effective.

Next we have the High Priest. The Day of Atonement had to be fulfilled, and only the High Priest could fulfill it. Christ is the Atonement sacrifice; and the High Priest has to choose the lamb that is to be offered. He has to send that lamb to be sacrificed, and he recognizes that that one lamb is dying for all of Israel. Those are things that are done by the High Priest, and by the High Priest alone. So for Christ to be the Atonement sacrifice, He had to be chosen and offered up by the High Priest. He was chosen over Barabbas, and He was sacrificed by the High Priest. The High Priest sacrifices Yeshua to fulfill the Day of Atonement. All Israel sacrifices Him to fulfill the Passover lamb, and the blood that was to be over them; but only the High Priest can make the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, and so it was done that way. In John 18:14, it says, "Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people." So it was proclaimed by the High Priest that Yeshua was the sacrifice of the Atonement lamb for all people. He did choose Yeshua, Jesus, over Barabbas. Barabbas was released, just like on the Day of Atonement – one lamb was released, and one was sacrificed. But that had to be chosen by the High Priest and sent to that sacrifice. And His blood then had to be spilled – for not only the High Priest, but for the Tent of Meeting, and for all of Israel.

In Matthew 27:19-26, "While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him.' But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to put Jesus to death.

But the governor said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.' Pilate said to them, 'Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Crucify Him!'" But they all said "Crucify Him" because they had been manipulated by the High Priest to say it. Pilate goes on, "'Why, what evil has He done?' But they kept shouting all the more, saying, 'Crucify Him!' When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves.' And all the people said, 'His blood shall be on us and on our children.'" How prophetic. That is the purpose of the blood of the Passover sacrifice. "Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified."

We see that Pilate was making a decision of what to do. And we see again, in Mark 15, that as he was offering them another choice, it was the chief priests that made the choice. In verses 10-11, it says, "For he was aware that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask him to release Barabbas for them instead." So it was the chief priests making the choice, making the declaration, "One man shall die for everyone," and sending the sacrifice; as well as releasing the Barabbas goat out from death. We see this again in Matthew 27:15. And when we come to the story then of the road to Emmaus, we again hear of the involvement of the High Priest, which was well-known by those who were there. In Luke 24:19-20, it says, "And He said to them, 'What things?' And they said to Him, 'The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and in word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.'" See, the chief priests and the rulers sent Him to be crucified. That had to be, for Him to be the Atonement Lamb of God. For there to be salvation where sin is forgiven and washed away, there has to be the sacrifice of blood that was following the pattern and fulfilling the requirement of the Day of Atonement. And so it was done, and it was done through the involvement of the High Priest.

In Acts 3:17-19, it says, "'And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.'" I think he is recognizing here the manipulation there was happening by satan, by the rulers. It says, "'But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all of the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.'" God has fulfilled this. "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.'" And so it is that we have this great salvation.

One last thing I would say about the High Priest that was done in fulfillment, is that the High Priest proclaimed Psalm 22 – which you would have to go read all of Psalm 22; I am not going to do that here because it is too long. But it is a prophecy. It is about the suffering of the Messiah and about the resurrection of the Messiah, and this was proclaimed by the priesthood. Matthew 27:41-43, "In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him and saying, 'He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. He trusts in God; let God rescue Him now, if He delights in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" These quotes are coming directly out of Psalm 22, declaring that God delights in Him, and declaring that God will rescue Him through resurrection. And that did happen, and we know that is what seals our salvation – not only the cross, and the pattern of that, but the waving of the sheaf of the first fruits which was part of the Passover celebration. It declared the resurrection that did come with the resurrection of Christ from the grave.

Lastly, we are going to talk very quickly about the Romans. The Romans represented the Gentile world, and they inflicted His suffering and pain. In Acts 2:23, it says, "This Man, delivered over by the predestined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death." It is the hands of the godless men that we are recognizing here, and we are recognizing that there had to be at the involvement of the Gentile world. There had to be the involvement outside of the children of Israel and the Jewish people in order for its salvation to reach all of humanity, and to the ends of the world. When we go to Revelation 5:9, we see the Scripture, "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.'" We see that He purchased for God with His blood men from every nation, tribe, tongue and people. This is what Christ did – salvation reached to all of humanity. It was not limited to the Jewish people. It was brought by the Jewish people, salvation is from the Jews; but that salvation in the process of the cross reached beyond the Jewish nation out to all of humanity and to all nations.

Ephesians 2:11-15 says, "Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by the so-called 'Circumcision,' which is performed in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace." Here we see the great revelation that both Jews and Gentiles are all covered within the reality of the cross and the salvation that was brought by that cross. So there had to be this involvement of the Gentile world, and it was there through the Romans. Think about it – the Gentiles sentenced Him to death. Not the Jews, they couldn't do that, they couldn't sentence anyone to death. It required the Gentiles, the Pilate, to do that. They hung Him on the cross. The Gentiles nailed Him to the cross. It was their form of punishment. The Romans, in their involvement in the cross and the crucifixion, fulfilled many, many Messianic prophecies that proved that Christ was the Messiah – not only for the Jewish people, but for the Gentile world. Think about it: they are the ones that placed the sign over Him on the cross, declaring Him to be the King of the Jews. They proclaimed Him that. They fulfilled the following Messianic prophecies also: they divided His garments by the casting of lots; they gave Him the bitter wine; they whipped Him, and they beat Him almost to death; they mocked Him about being King of the Jews; they placed the crown of thorns on Him; they are the ones who crucified Him; they are the ones who speared His side; they nailed Him to that cross – and think about it, those nail prints, and the mark of that spear in His side, leave permanent scars that are seen on His resurrected Body throughout all eternity. When Christ appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, He showed them those nail prints. He showed them where the spear had cut Him open. That was not done by Jews; that was done by the Romans. They were the ones who fulfilled the prophecy by not breaking His legs, because He was already dead. There is so much that was done by the Roman people. In fact, much of the suffering that we read about in Isaiah 53 was done by the Romans. When you read the story, there is very little about Him being hit or slapped. He was hit, He was slapped and spat upon by the Jewish people; but nothing compared to what was done by the Roman guard after He was turned over by Pilate to them.

In Matthew 27:26-37, it says, "Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged," – that scourge of whips was one of the greatest sufferings that Christ went through; that was leather

thongs with metal through it, that gouged flesh out, dug flesh off of His body – "he handed Him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole Roman cohort around Him. They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head. After they had mocked Him, they took the scarlet robe off Him and put His own garments back on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. As they were coming out, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon, whom they pressed into service to bear His cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull, they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink. And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots. And sitting down, they began to keep watch over Him there. And above His head they put up the charge against Him, which read, 'This is Jesus the King of the Jews.'"

Isaiah 52:14 says, "Just as many were astonished at you, My people, so His appearance was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men." He was tortured, not by Jews, by Romans. If you want to put it all on the Jews, okay; they sent Him to be crucified. But this didn't have to be done to crucify Him. This was done by the Gentile world. And when you read about these things that were done, go into the Scriptures, and you will find that almost every one of these incidents that was carried out by the Romans, the soldiers at that time, was a fulfillment of a Messianic prophecy somewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures.

We know that this all took place because all of humanity was involved. If you want to point a finger of guilt, we have got to point it at humanity. We have to point it at ourselves, every time we take Communion and declare that He was crucified for our sins. But the bigger answer is that just as He was dying, He said, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." That is the ultimate answer. The cross is not the place of blame, it is the place of forgiveness. It is the place of forgiveness for Jew and for Gentile. It is the place of forgiveness for you and for me. And if we try to find who is complicit in the death of Jesus, we misread the whole story, if we do not recognize: we are all involved, and we all play our part, and it is because of our guilt that it was necessary.

Lord root out of us every anti-Semitic thought, every concept that the cross is something that requires the pointing of the finger or the accusation of blame. It is the place of grace, it is the place of salvation, the place of release for all humanity from our sin. We ask You, Lord, that we appropriate Your complete salvation, and that we free ourselves from every root of anti-Semitism. Amen.