The background is a composite image. On the left, the lower portion of the Colosseum is visible, showing its iconic tiered arches. On the right, a large, classical marble bust of a man's head is shown in profile, facing left. The upper portion of the image features a map of the Roman Empire, with various regions labeled in Latin: DACIA, MYSIA, MARE, TRACIA, MARE, and others. The map is overlaid on a textured, aged parchment-like background.

ROME & THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY

A wooden cross stands on a small, rocky hill. The cross is made of rough, weathered wood. Two thick, light-colored ropes are tied around the horizontal beam of the cross, one on each side. The background is a dramatic sky with dark, swirling clouds and patches of vibrant red and purple light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

Series Summary

Part 1: Introduction and History of Rome

Part 2: Caesar Augustus

Part 3: Caesar Augustus (continued)

Part 4: In the Fullness of Time

Part 5: The Trial of Jesus Christ

Part 6: The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

Part 7: The Meaning of the Cross

Part 7: Introduction

Jesus Christ was arrested, charged and cross-examined, condemned, mocked, beaten, scourged, and crucified in the context of Roman domination and power. We have found ourselves horrified, once again, at the unfathomable brutality and torture which our Lord endured in Jerusalem. Over the centuries, many have asked the question, “Who killed Jesus Christ?” Was it the Romans, the Jews, or Judas? In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus announced that “the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being **betrayed** into the hands of sinners” (Mt. 26:45). In Matthew 27:2, we read that the chief priests and elders of the people “bound Him, and led Him away, and **delivered Him** up to Pilate the governor.” Matthew also makes it clear that Pilate released



Introduction

Barabbas, “but Jesus he scourged and **delivered** over to be crucified” (Mt. 27:26). All three of these texts use the same Greek word, *paradidomi*, meaning “to hand over” or “betray.” As John Stott notes, “Herod and Pilate, Gentiles and Jews...had ‘conspired’ against Jesus” (Acts 4:27). But then he adds, “More important still, we ourselves are also guilty. If we were in their place, we would have done what they did. Indeed, we *have* done it. For whenever we turn away from Christ, we ‘are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace’ (Heb. 6:6). We too sacrifice Jesus to our greed like Judas, to our envy like the priests, to our ambition like Pilate. ‘Were you there when they crucified my Lord?’ the old spiritual asks. And we must

Introduction

answer, 'Yes, we were there.' Not as spectators only, but as participants, guilty participants, plotting, scheming, betraying, bargaining and handing him over to be crucified. We may try to wash our hands of responsibility like Pilate. But our attempt will be as futile as his. For there is blood on our hands. Before we can begin to see the cross as something done **for** us (leading us to faith and worship), we have to see it as something done **by** us (leading us to repentance). Indeed, 'only the man who is prepared to own his share in the guilt of the cross,' wrote Canon Peter Green, 'may claim his share in its grace.'" Ultimately, **Jesus willingly offered His life**. "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative" (Jn. 10:18).

No One Has Taken My Life Away From Me

- “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and **delivered Himself** up for me” (Gal. 2:20).
- “He who did not spare His own Son, but **delivered Him up for us all**, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things” (Rom. 8:32).
- “Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and **gave Himself up for us**, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma” (Eph. 5:2).
- “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and **gave Himself up for her**” (Eph. 5:25).



God's Sovereignty & Man's Responsibility

- “Men of Israel, listen to these words...this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death” (Acts 2:22-23).
- “It is essential to keep together these two complementary ways of looking at the cross. On the **human level**, Judas gave him up to the priests, who gave him up to Pilate, who gave him up to the soldiers, who crucified him. But on the **divine level**, the Father gave him up, and he gave himself up, to die for us. As we face the cross, then, we can say to ourselves both, ‘I did it, my sins sent him there,’ and *He* did it, his love took him there’” (Stott).

Christ's Humility & Obedience

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:5-11).

Christ's Humility & Obedience

- He **emptied** Himself of His divine prerogatives (Phil. 2:7).
- He **humbled** Himself and became **obedient** to the point of death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:8).
- He **endured** the cross and **despised** the shame (Heb. 12:2).





Our Condition Before Salvation

- We were **dead** in our transgressions and the uncircumcision of our flesh (Col. 1:13).
- We were **helpless** (Rom. 5:6).
- We were **ungodly** (Rom. 5:6).
- We were **sinners** (Rom. 5:8).
- We were **enemies** of God (Rom. 5:10).
- “Sin is a radical disruption in the core of our being. In sin, we turn from God’s good commandments, his kingdom and glory, faith, and love” (John Frame).

“Nobody’s Perfect”

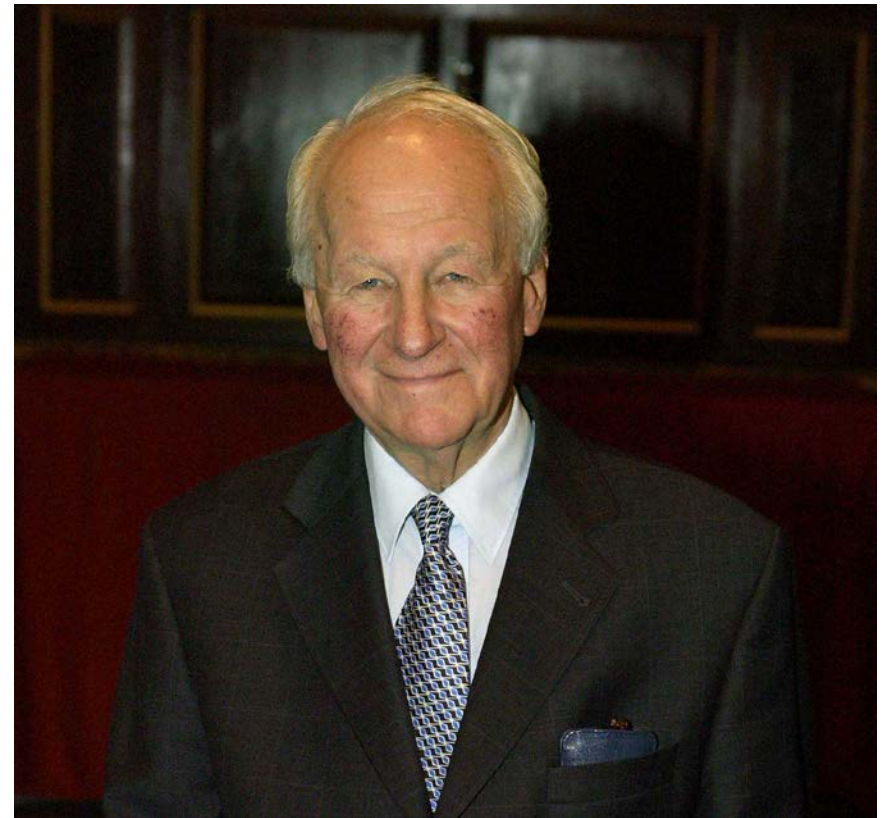
“All sin is serious. Even the smallest sin is an act of rebellion against God. Every sin is an act of cosmic treason, a futile attempt to dethrone God in His sovereign authority.”



R.C. Sproul
1939 -

What Did Jesus Accomplish For Us?

“Moved by the perfection of his holy love, God in Christ substituted himself for us sinners. That is the heart of the cross of Christ. It leads us to turn now from the event to its consequences, from what happened on the cross to what was achieved by it. Why did God take our place and bear our sin?”



John R.W. Stott
1921-2011

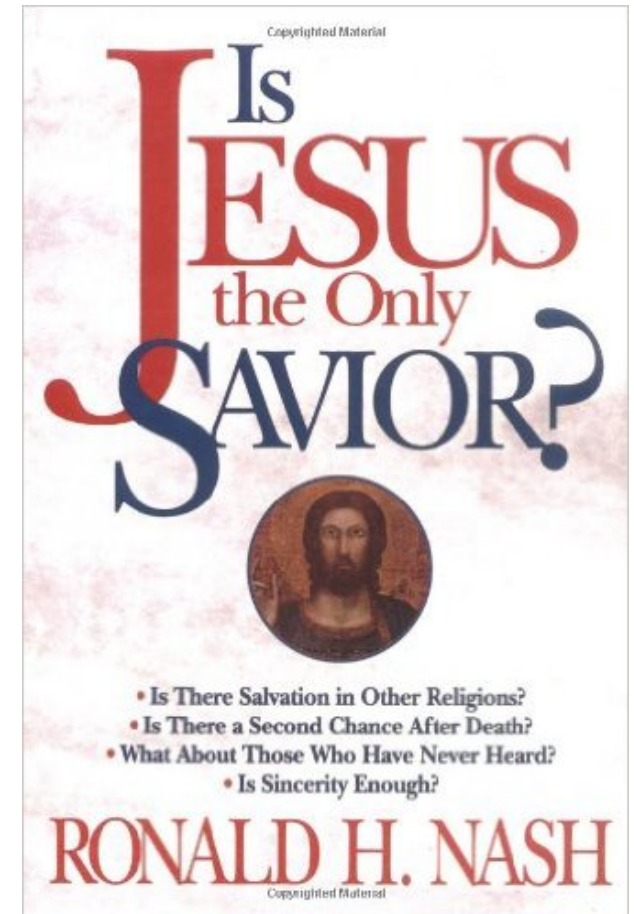


He Died For Our Salvation

- The Greek word, *soteria*, means “deliverance, preservation, to be rescued from a dangerous or threatening situation.”
- In the Scriptures, salvation refers to our ultimate redemption from sin and reconciliation to God.
- Salvation is from the ultimate calamity – the judgment and wrath of God.
- “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for **salvation** to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).
- “And there is **salvation** in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Is There Salvation In Other Religions?

“J.I. Packer believes inclusivists are more influenced by the ‘American idea of fairness’ than by anything they have learned from Scripture....What we find in inclusivism is a troubling example of how good and sincere people allow their feelings to get the better of them. Once they convince themselves emotionally that a certain belief *must* be true, they conclude that it *is* true and must therefore be in the Bible. It is a matter of doing theology by imagination.”





Sacrifice

- “For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate” (Heb. 13:11-12).
- Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice and also as a priest.
- The work of Christ is expiatory (making satisfaction for an offense).
- Our sins and guilt were transferred or imputed to Jesus Christ, i.e., He offered Himself as a sacrifice for us.
- In offering Himself, He expiated guilt and purged away sin so that we may draw near to God. “Jesus wiped our slate clean” (Frame).