

## The Crucifixion of Jesus: The Politics and Power of God

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290 A man shall hereafter come forth out of thee who shall rule over many nations, and his kingdom shall increase every day and be raised up to heaven. This people hath God for its guide all the way from Egypt, who leads on their multitude in one line.

291 Therefore they shall devour many nations of their enemies, and they shall take all their fat as far as their very marrow, and shall destroy their enemies with their far-shooting arrows. He shall lie down to rest like a lion, and like a lion's whelp, fearing no one, but showing great contempt for every one, and causing fear to all other nations. Miserable is he who shall stir up and rouse him to anger. Blessed are they that bless thee, and cursed are they that curse thee." (Philo of Alexandria, Vit. Mos. 1:290-291)

### Looking at the Crucifixion of Jesus: John 19:1-42

#### The Politics of Killing the Messiah

1. Jesus showed himself to be the king of Israel not only through his words but through his deeds. But his final deed was an act of submission. He was beaten as a phony, a pretender, and mocked as king by the Romans. (vv.1-5)
2. The Jewish leaders forced the hands of the Romans by expressing the problem of releasing a person who claimed to be king. Augustus and his successors knew themselves as sons of the gods. Jesus's claim to be God's son or a king was suspect and dangerous. The Jewish leaders wanted Jesus gone. (vv. 6-12)
3. "Here is your king!" The Jewish leaders, and those who heeded their voices, said, get rid of Jesus because at this point the crowd had been stirred against Jesus. During Passover, there were many Jews in Jerusalem and the nationalist mood was high. There was a higher presence of the Roman guard in Jerusalem and they were on edge. When Jesus was presented as the king by the Romans, at this point, they had decided, if he is some sort of pretender, he needed to die. It did not mean much to the Romans to kill someone who claimed to be a king because he would serve as an example to everyone else that rebellion led to automatic death. (vv. 12-22)
4. Mistreatment of capital offenders was common, even taking their clothes. But with Jesus this meant that he was to be embarrassed in front of all of people as a public spectacle. All of this was part of the colonial tactics of dismissing rebellions before they ever could happen. Jewish people, however, did not heed the warning as they attempted a rebellion about 30 years later. (vv. 23-24)

#### The Power of God

1. Jesus's submission was still an embrace of God's power on the cross. He surrendered himself by not speaking much nor offering a reasoned defense. He resigned to his fate as a sacrifice on the cross. He was prepared as the Passover lamb who would take on death itself. (v. 14)
2. "He came to his own and his own did not receive him" (John 1:11). When the Jews rejected their king, they were saying that they did not want the one whom God had given them. This displays not only their recalcitrance to the will of God but our own. Human beings reject God's rule over us and this is suggested in their rejection and even killing of Jesus (v. 15).

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3. The Fulfillment of Scripture: These two points of emphasis show the words of Jesus as a means to confirm that Jesus was in the will of God and God's will was taking place in his crucifixion. He drank vinegar when he said I thirst. This act was done as a prelude to his death showing that he was ready to die. He also declared "it is finished." In the Greek, this is *tetelestai*, which means that everything that God had intended for this moment had been completed. And it also meant that everything that God desired thereafter would happen. This is why John shows the bleeding of Jesus. The flowing of his blood is meant to highlight the shedding of the blood of the sacrifice, demonstrating the Passover had been slain for the salvation of the people. (vv. 25-37)