

# Did the Jews Crucify Jesus?

by Sebastian R Fama

Down through the centuries, there have been those who have persecuted the Jewish people because of the role played by some of their leaders in Christ's crucifixion. This is a bit baffling as one of the foundational teachings of Christianity is that Jesus went willingly to the cross to pay the price for our sins. In short, we sent Him there. The small group of Romans and Jews who condemned Him and nailed Him to the cross were only doing our dirty work. And thus, they became the necessary instruments of our salvation (John 3:16). God used the evil in the hearts of men to accomplish His own purpose.

Does that mean the evil acts of those who plotted against Jesus were justified? No, not at all! Just as Judas was punished for his role in Jesus' crucifixion, (Matthew 26:24) so too were the others (Hebrews 9:27). Furthermore, all those who were guilty died 2,000 years ago. Persecuting their present-day descendants is nothing more than an exercise in bigotry.

Judging from their complaint, the individuals in question seem to believe Jesus should have never gone to the cross. The apostle Peter thought that too. And Jesus called him Satan for it (Matthew 16:23). While chiding the men on the road to Emmaus, Jesus said: "Oh how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:25-26). Do we not refer to the day Christ died as "Good Friday?" Surely not because of Christ's suffering but because by His suffering, the gates of heaven were opened to us.

When establishing the nation of Israel, God said to Abram: "I will make of you a great nation ... I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you" (Genesis 12:2-3). You may be thinking: "but that is the Old Testament. In the New Testament things are different. Not so! In the New Testament Paul makes this very clear: "I ask then, has God rejected his people? Of course not! For I too am an Israelite ... In respect to the Gospel, they [Jews] are enemies on your account; but in respect to election, they are beloved because of the patriarchs. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:1, 28-29).

While expressing solidarity with the Jews prior to World War II, Pope Pius XI said among other things: "Antisemitism is inadmissible" and "Spiritually, we are Semites" (Speaking to Belgian pilgrims, September 6, 1938). So, any animosity held against the Jewish people is totally unwarranted. Rather than being concerned with who nailed Jesus to the cross, we should focus on our own sinfulness. Lest we add insult to injury by rendering Christ's sacrifice meaningless in our own lives.