

# Murder, But...

Exodus 20:13; Acts 2:22-39




## Murder

Read Exodus 20:13: “You shall not murder.”<sup>1</sup>

## Killing of Jesus

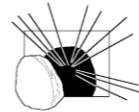
The Jewish leaders plotted to have Jesus killed (*Luke 22:1-2*). They seized Jesus and eventually handed him over to the Roman authorities who tried (examined) and executed (killed) him (*Luke 22:47-23:46*). About seven weeks after Jesus’ death, Peter gave a speech.<sup>2</sup> Read Acts 2:22-23.

1. Considering that Jesus’ trial and death penalty was carried out by the government, and was part of “God’s deliberate plan,”<sup>3</sup> would you call Jesus’ death a “murder?” Explain.<sup>4</sup>

 Stephen later said to the Jewish leaders, “Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One [Jesus Christ]. And now you have betrayed and murdered him...” (*Acts 7:52, NIV*)

## Raising of Jesus

Jesus was killed, but he did not stay dead! (*Luke 24:1-8*) Read Acts 2:24-36.



In verses 25-35, Peter quotes portions of two psalms of David, the highly esteemed former king of Israel. Verses 25-28 are taken from Psalm 16:8-11, which is a psalm of confidence in God. This psalm expresses gladness, joy and peace because of God’s presence.

2. Why does the psalmist’s body “rest in hope” (*Acts 2:26b*)? What does verse 27 say?<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ‘murder’ (*rāṣah*) - the Hebrew word usually refers to murder, though it can also refer to accidental killing (*Numbers 35:11*). The word is used only one time for legal execution of a convicted killer. It is *not* used for killing in war. The dictionary defines ‘murder’ as ‘the unlawful killing of a person.’ Of course, the laws of the state are not necessarily consistent with God’s law, and God’s law has higher authority.

<sup>2</sup> Peter’s speech occurred on ‘the day of Pentecost’ (*Acts 2:1*). Pentecost was a Jewish festival that occurred 50 days after the first Sabbath of Passover. Jesus had told his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit upon them (*Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8*) and that is what happened on this ‘day of Pentecost’ (*Acts 2:1-13*). The disciples were ‘filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (languages) as the Spirit enabled them’ (2:4). In response to the crowd’s reaction to this event, Peter explained that this was a fulfillment of prophecy (*Acts 2:14-21; Joel 2:28-32*). Then Peter proclaimed the truth of Jesus’ resurrection and identity (*Acts 2:22-36*).

<sup>3</sup> It was God’s deliberate plan to provide the way of salvation for sinful humans, and ‘all have sinned’ (*Rom. 3:23*). Jesus’ death *for our sins* was necessary for our salvation (*Rom. 4:25*). He died to bring us to God (*1 Peter 3:18*).

<sup>4</sup> Jesus Christ, the perfect man, was completely innocent of any wrongdoing. Yet he was subjected to the greatest act of injustice in history. The Jewish leaders plotted to kill Jesus (*Matthew 26:3-4*). Jesus was betrayed by Judas (*Luke 22:47-48*); beaten by the temple guards (22:63-65); rejected, condemned, and falsely accused by the Jewish leaders (22:66-71; 23:1-2, 5, 10). Though Pilate (the Roman governor) found no basis of a charge against Jesus (23:4, 14-15), Pilate gave up to the Jewish leaders’ insistent demands to crucify Jesus (23:21-24). Jesus was severely beaten (*Mark 15:15*) and crucified by the Roman government (*Luke 23:33*). Though it was God’s plan (*Acts 2:23*), humans were still responsible for their actions, and their actions against Jesus were ‘wicked’ (*anomōn* – lawless) and wrong.

<sup>5</sup> Interpretations of Psalm 16:10 (in its original context) vary. Does ‘holy one’ refer to David, the Messiah, or both? The discussion can be complex, but Peter’s interpretation in Acts 2:29-32 governs the meaning in this context.

3. How does Peter interpret and apply Psalm 16:8-11? See Acts 2:29-32.<sup>6</sup>

David died and is still buried, but the Son of David (the Messiah/Christ)<sup>7</sup> died but was raised to life! Peter knows this is true because he and many others are “witnesses” of the risen Jesus Christ (2:32).<sup>8</sup> They are “eyewitnesses” because they have seen him with their own eyes.

4. What do *you* believe about Jesus’ resurrection from the dead? Why do you believe or not believe? How important is eyewitness testimony in your beliefs about his resurrection?<sup>9</sup>

Peter proclaims that Jesus was “raised to life” and “exalted to the right hand of God” (2:32-33). From that position, he has poured out the Holy Spirit as Peter’s audience now sees and hears (2:1-12). Peter then quotes Psalm 110:1 to further proclaim Christ’s unique status (2:34-35).

5. How does Peter conclude his speech? What does Jesus’ resurrection prove about his identity (who Jesus is)? (2:36)



### *People's Response & God's Provision*

6. Read Acts 2:37-39. How are the people affected by Peter’s speech, and why? (2:37) What do they ask, and how does Peter answer their question? (2:38)

7. What will the Lord do for those who follow Peter’s instructions? (2:38) What difference should this make in their daily lives?

This passage presents the usual process of becoming a Christian. We 1) hear the message of the crucified and risen Jesus, which 2) brings awareness of our sin and our need his salvation, which 3) leads to a response of repentance (turning to God) and faith in Jesus, which 4) is signified by public commitment to Jesus Christ in baptism. As we respond in faith, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit who transforms us and enables us to live the Christian life according to God’s will.

### *Reflection/Application*

- Where are *you* in the above process? If anything is keeping you from going to the next step, what do you think it is? Talk to a mature Christian friend about it.
- Brothers and sisters, you have already received the gift of the Holy Spirit! Are you “living according to the Spirit”? Read Romans 8:1-17. Are you sharing the risen Christ with others?

<sup>6</sup> Peter interprets Psalm 16:8-11 as pointing to the One who fulfills God’s promise to David concerning the Messiah (Acts 2:30; 2 Samuel 7:12-16). The promise to David is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Luke 1:26-33), the Holy One. Jesus was killed and buried but his body did not ‘see decay’ because he was raised to life (Acts 2:27, 31).

<sup>7</sup> ‘Messiah’ (Greek ‘Christ’) – the expected king who would save his people and establish his everlasting kingdom.

<sup>8</sup> John 20:11-21:14; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Acts 1:1-11.

<sup>9</sup> The first disciples believed in Jesus’ resurrection because they saw him with their own eyes after he was raised. Since that time, millions have believed because they have accepted the eyewitness testimony of the first disciples, as recorded in the Bible. Luke wrote his gospel and the book of Acts, which are full of eyewitness testimony, so that people would know with certainty the things taught about Jesus (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3). Likewise John wrote his gospel, which is also full of eyewitness testimony, so that people would believe (John 20:31; 21:24). Blessed are those who have accepted this testimony and believed! (John 20:29) If you do not believe, find out why so many do!