

Who do you say that I am?

The Reasons for Jesus' Crucifixion

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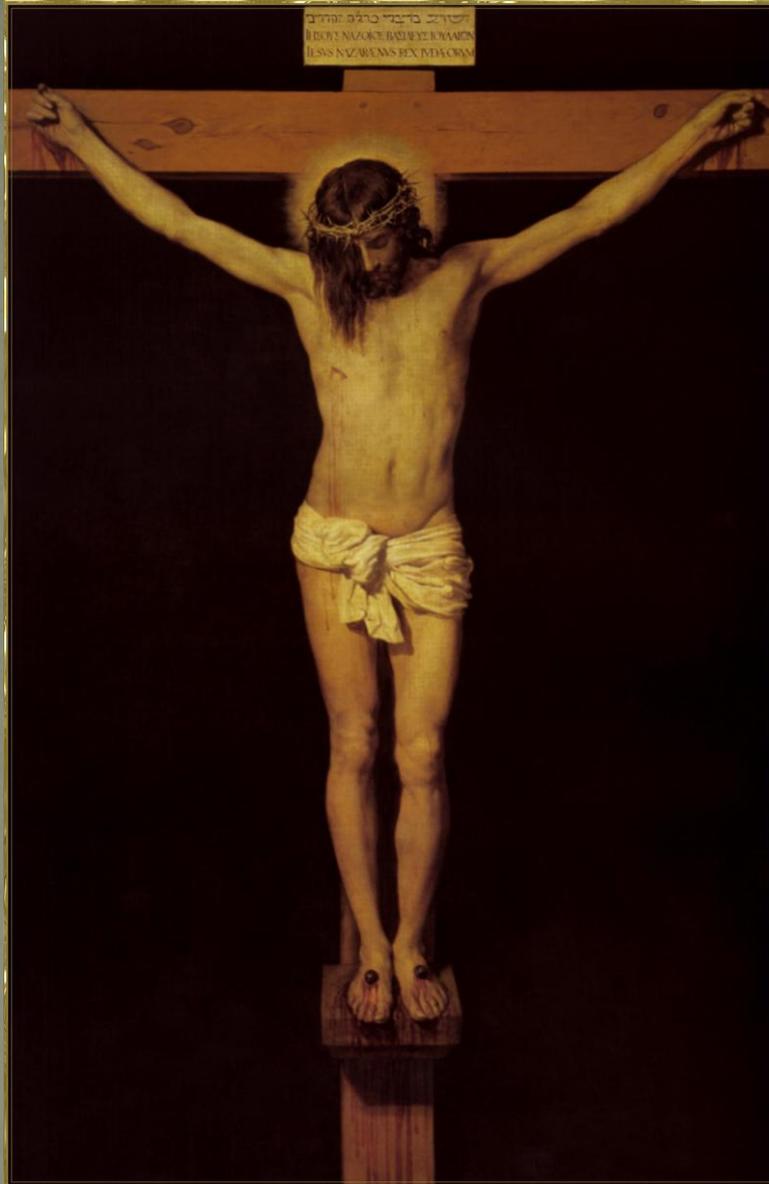
Introduction

Introduction

- Why did Jesus die?
 - Reasons are a mix of History/Politics/Theology.
 - Why did the Roman Authorities execute Jesus?
 - Why did the Jewish leadership seek to have Jesus executed?
- What was Jesus' Intention in his death?
 - The Key Symbol
 - The Sayings and the Symbol
 - Eschatological Redemption in Judaism
 - The Strange Victory

The Reasons for Jesus' Crucifixion

The Roman Charge



The Roman Charge

- Crucifixion as a powerful symbol
 - We are in charge
 - You are our property
 - Absolute sovereignty of Rome and Caesar
- It says, “This is what happens to rebel leadership!”

The Roman Charge

- The Charge: Jesus was executed as a political rebel against Rome.
 - As one more in a long line of would-be messiahs
 - Examples: Judas the Galilean or Simon bar Giora
- “While his accusers handed him over, and Pilate executed him on this charge, *both parties knew he was not guilty of it.*” *JVG p. 544*
- Pontius Pilate as a leader:
 - Provocative and bullying

Philo on Pontius Pilate and the Golden shields in the Herodian Palace

- “He feared that if they actually sent an embassy they would expose the rest of his conduct as governor by stating in full the briberies, the insults, the robberies, the outrages, and wanton injustices, the executions without trial constantly repeated, the ceaseless and supremely grievous cruelty. So with all his vindictiveness and furious temper, he was in a difficult position. He had not the courage to take down what had been dedicated nor did he wish to do anything which would please his subjects. At the same time he knew full well the constant policy of Tiberius in these matters.”



Pontius Pilate

- Would not have seen Jesus as a threat
- Would not have wanted to do what the Jewish leaders wanted
 - They understood how to leverage his submission to the Emperor
 - “If you let this man go you are not Caesar’s friend” Jn. 19:12
- The Sign on the Cross
 - “The King of the Jews”



The Reasons for Jesus' Crucifixion

The Jewish Charge

The Jewish Charge

- Jesus Temple Action → question about Messiahship → Trial before Pilate as Insurrectionist
- Pilate: “Are you the King of the Jews?” Mt. 27:11
- But why would the Jewish authorities determine to get rid of Jesus?

The Jewish Charge

- The Jewish Authorities evoked Deuteronomy 13:
- ¹ If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a sign or wonder, ² and if the sign or wonder spoken of takes place, and the prophet says, “Let us follow other gods” (gods you have not known) “and let us worship them,” ³ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer...⁵ *That prophet or dreamer must be put to death* for inciting rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. That prophet or dreamer tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. *You must purge the evil from among you.*

Babylonian Talmud

“Jesus was hanged on the eve of Passover. The herald went before him for forty days, saying, ‘He is going to be stoned because he practiced sorcery and enticed and led Israel astray. Let everyone knowing anything in his defense come and plead for him.’ But nothing was found I his defense, so he was hanged on the eve of Passover.”

The Jewish Charge

- At issue, Jesus' speech and symbolic action against Temple and Torah, among other cherished symbols.
 - His redirection and redefinition of loyalty to Temple and Torah to *loyalty to himself*.
 - *The works of power were seen to be sorcery. (the works of Beelzebub.)*
- The general populace was wanting Jesus to be the kind of revolutionary that, if Pilate caught him, would meet a cross.
- The Jewish Authorities needed a reason to discredit Jesus to the general Jewish populace and meet the requirements of Roman execution.
- Pilate would not care about "leading Israel astray".
- The Jewish authorities opposed Jesus for different reasons:
 - The Pharisees would oppose him because of his resistance of their militant Torah centered nationalistic aspirations.
 - The Chief Priests and Scribes because of the notoriety might bring Roman ire down on the official structures and Temple.
 - ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. "What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation."

John 11

⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. “What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.”

⁴⁹ Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all! ⁵⁰ You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”

Luke 22

- ⁶⁶ At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. ⁶⁷ “If you are the Messiah,” they said, “tell us.” Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me, ⁶⁸ and if I asked you, you would not answer.
- ⁶⁹ But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”
- ⁷⁰ They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?”
He replied, “You say that I am.”
- ⁷¹ Then they said, “Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.”

Luke 23

- ¹ Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. ² And they began to accuse him, saying, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king.”
- ³ So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”
“You have said so,” Jesus replied.
- ⁴ Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”
- ⁵ But they insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.”

The Jewish Charge

“He was sent to the Roman governor on a capital charge:

1. Because many (not least many Pharisees, but also, probably, the chief priests) saw him as a ‘false prophet, leading Israel astray’.
2. Because, as one of aspect of this, they saw the Temple-action as a blow against the central symbol not only of national life but also of YHWH’s presence with his people.
3. Because, though he was clearly not leading a real or organized military revolt, he saw himself as in some sense a Messiah, and could thus become the focus of serious revolutionary activity.
4. Because, as the pragmatic focus of these three points, they saw him as a dangerous political nuisance, whose actions might well call down the wrath of Rome upon the Temple and nation alike.
5. Because the crucial moment in the hearing, he not only (as far as they were concerned) pleaded guilty to the above charges, but also did so in such a way as to place himself, blasphemously, alongside the God of Israel.” (JVG, 551-2)

The Reasons for Jesus' Crucifixion

The Intention of Jesus (1):The Key Symbol

Introduction

- Did Jesus intend to die in the manner he did, and if so why?
- Did Jesus go to Jerusalem to work or did he go to Jerusalem intending to die?

The Last Supper: Symbol and Significance

- Passover Meal
- Told the Story of Israel's Exodus
- Promised the hope of future restoration from Exile

Matthew 26

- ¹⁷ On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” ¹⁸ He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.
- ²⁰ When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ³⁰ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mark 14

- ¹² On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" ¹³ So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴ Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹⁵ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."
- ¹⁶ The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.
- ¹⁷ When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve...
- ²⁶ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Luke 22

- ⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.” ⁹ “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked.
- ¹⁰ He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, ¹¹ and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹² He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.”
- ¹³ They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.
- ¹⁴ When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵ And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

Passover Meal

- Spoke of leaving Egypt at the mighty hand of God
- It pointed to the new exodus, and return from exile, and the great covenant renewal spoke by the prophets.
- For Jesus the meal indicated that the “new exodus” was happening *in and through Jesus himself.*”
- “We might suggest that it was *necessary* for Jesus *not* to celebrate the Passover on the regular night; he was precisely not keeping it as simply one more in the sequence, as part of the regular Jewish cult, dependent on the Temple for the necessary sacrificial lamb.” (JVG, p. 557)
- Temple action \leftrightarrow Upper Room: Jesus was intending to replace the Temple with his meal, or rather *with himself.*
- *Ended with a Hymn, Hallel...Psalms 115-118.*

From Word to Symbol

Matthew/Mark

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”

Luke

¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

Mishnah, Pesachim 10.5

“Rabban Gamliel used to say:

Whoever does not mentioned these three things on Passover does not discharge his duty, and these are they: the Passover-offering, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs.

[The] Passover-offering [is offered] because the Omnipresent One passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt.

Unleavened bread [is eaten] because our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt.

[The] bitter herb is [eaten] because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt.

“In every generation a person must regard himself as though he personally had gone out of Egypt, as it is said:

“And you shall tell your son in that day, saying: ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.’”

Therefore it is our duty to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, extol, and adore Him Who performed all these miracles for our ancestors and us;

He brought us forth from bondage into freedom, from sorrow into joy, from mourning into festivity, from darkness into great light, and from servitude into redemption.

Therefore let us say before Him, Hallelujah!”

Implication: Jesus’ body as the Bread—He is the means of Redemption from Bondage

From Word to Symbol

Matthew/(Mark)

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many [for the forgiveness of sins.]

Luke

²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you....”

Zechariah 9:9-11

⁹ Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!

Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰ I will take away the chariots from Ephraim
and the warhorses from Jerusalem,
and the battle bow will be broken.

He will proclaim peace to the nations.

His rule will extend from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹ As for you, *because of the blood of my covenant with you,*

I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.

Isaiah 53

12 because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.

For he bore the sin *of many*,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹ “The days are coming,” declares the LORD,
“when I will make a new covenant
with the people of Israel
and with the people of Judah.

³² It will not be like the covenant
I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they broke my covenant,
though I was a husband to them,”
declares the LORD.

³³ “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel
after that time,” declares the LORD.

“I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbor,
or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest,”
declares the LORD.

*“For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more.”*

From Word to Symbol

Matthew/(Mark)

²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

- Matthew and Mark allude to subsequent "new" meals.

Luke

¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

- Luke says this will be the last meal.

From Word to Symbol

Luke 22:19b

- “...do this in remembrance of me.”

1 Corinthians 11:24, 25

- ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; *do this in remembrance of me.*” ²⁵
In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; *do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.*”

The Reasons for Jesus' Crucifixion

The Intention of Jesus (2): The Sayings and the Symbol

The Sayings and the Symbol

- The Kingship of YHWH was happening, the story of Israel reaching its long awaited goal *in him and through him*.
- *What did Jesus think would happen next?*
- *Jesus was announcing “the Great Moment” had come...what would that moment look like?*
 - Jesus envisaged some type of battle, not against the pagan occupiers, but against the evil behind the evil—the Satan.
 - His own clashes with the ruling authorities were part of that battle as they had been dupe by the Satan.
- How would the real battle against the real enemy be fought?
- Jesus would teach a double revolution:
 - Turn the other cheek/ go the extra mile vs. armed rebellion
 - Assertion that Israel’s God is at last becoming King in opposition to all who would oppose such an exaltation.
 - Pick up your cross and follow me.

Riddles of the Cross: The Rejected Son

- Matt: 21: 33 “Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. 34 When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. 35 “The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. 36 Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. 37 Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.
- 38 “But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ 39 So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.
- 40 “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”
- 41 “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”
- 42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:
- “The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes’^[1]?”
- 43 “Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. 44 Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”^[1]
- 45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them. 46 They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

Riddles of the Cross: The Great Commandment

- Mark: 12:28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”²⁹ “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’³¹ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”
- ³² “Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him.³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”
- ³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Riddles of the Cross: Anointing for Burial

Mark 14:3-9

- ³ While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.
- ⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? ⁵ It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.
- ⁶ “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ The poor you will always have with you, and, you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. ⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

Riddles of the Cross: The Green Tree and the Dry

Luke 23:27-31

²⁷ A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. ²⁸ Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ ³⁰ Then

“they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!”
and to the hills, “Cover us!””

³¹ For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

Hosea 10:1-3, 8, 10, 13-15

¹ Israel was a spreading vine;
he brought forth fruit for himself.
As his fruit increased,
he built more altars;
as his land prospered,
he adorned his sacred stones.
² Their heart is deceitful,
and now they must bear their guilt.
The LORD will demolish their altars
and destroy their sacred stones.
³ Then they will say, “We have no king
because we did not revere the LORD.
But even if we had a king,
what could he do for us?”...
⁸ The high places of wickedness will be
destroyed—
it is the sin of Israel.
Thorns and thistles will grow up
and cover their altars.
Then they will say to the mountains,
“Cover us!”

and to the hills, “Fall on us!”...
¹⁰ When I please, I will punish them;
nations will be gathered against them
to put them in bonds for their double sin....
¹³ But you have planted wickedness,
you have reaped evil,
you have eaten the fruit of deception.
Because you have depended on your own
strength
and on your many warriors,
¹⁴ the roar of battle will rise against your
people,
so that all your fortresses will be
devastated—
as Shalman devastated Beth Arbel on the day
of battle,
when mothers were dashed to the ground
with their children.
¹⁵ So will it happen to you, Bethel,
because your wickedness is great.
*When that day dawns,
the king of Israel will be completely
destroyed.*

Riddles of the Cross: The Hen and the Chickens

Matthew 23:37-39

³⁷ “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. ³⁸ Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Implications

- The image is that of a farm yard fire where the chicks take shelter under the “shadow of the wings”. Then hen may die but the chicks are spared.
 - Jesus believed that he would suffer the fate hanging over Jerusalem, he desired to take it upon himself that she might avoid it.
 - The fate of Jesus and Jerusalem are inextricably locked together.
- Because of the abandonment of the proffered shelter, Israel is left defenseless. The House has been abandoned—YHWH has left the Temple.

Implications (cont.)

- **Read Psalm 118** “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.” (cf. The Stone the Builders rejected has become the Cornerstone [of the new Temple].)
 1. Jesus envisaged himself as the true Temple-builder, coming on no ordinary pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
 2. The Present Temple, abandoned by YHWH was under threat of destruction, having refused the message of peace, and his offer of escape.
 3. The only hope was to acknowledge him as the true pilgrim, and to welcome him, so that the stone rejected by the builders might indeed become the head of the corner.

Riddles of the Cross: The Baptism and the Cup

Luke 12:49-50

49 “I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed!

Mark 10:38-40

³⁸ “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

³⁹ “We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

Riddles of the Cross: The Baptism and the Cup

Mark 14:36

³⁶ “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”



The Cup of the LORD's Wrath

Isaiah 51:17-23

¹⁷ Awake, awake!

Rise up, Jerusalem,
you who have drunk from the hand of
the LORD
the cup of his wrath,
you who have drained to its dregs
the goblet that makes people stagger.

¹⁸ Among all the children she bore
there was none to guide her;
among all the children she reared
there was none to take her by the hand.

¹⁹ These double calamities have come
upon you—
who can comfort you?—
ruin and destruction, famine and
sword—

who can^[u] console you?

²⁰ Your children have fainted;
they lie at every street corner,

like antelope caught in a net.

They are filled with the wrath of the
LORD,
with the rebuke of your God. ²¹

Therefore hear this, you afflicted one,
made drunk, but not with wine.

²² This is what your Sovereign LORD
says,

your God, who defends his people:
“See, I have taken out of your hand
the cup that made you stagger;
from that cup, the goblet of my wrath,
you will never drink again.

²³ I will put it into the hands of your
tormentors,
who said to you,
‘Fall prostrate that we may walk on you.’
And you made your back like the ground,
like a street to be walked on.”

Riddles and Authenticity

- Did the early church write these stories and riddles back into the history.
- The Early Church did not speak in riddles about the Cross.
- There is not a developed atonement theology in the riddles such as we find in Paul's letter to the Romans.
- Jesus death was anticipated and expected by Jesus.
 - The main sign post is the Lord's Supper
 - "Jesus' own death--the death of the strange non-messianic Messiah--was somehow bound up both with the fate of the nation and with the coming new exodus in which YHWH would at last establish his kingdom." JVG, p. 574

Predictions of the Passion

- Mt. 16:21
- Mk. 9:12
- Mt. 17:22
- Mt. 20:17-19
- Mt. 20:28
- Mt. 26:31
- Lk. 22:37
- Mt. 26:45
- Mt. 26:56

The Reasons for Jesus' Crucifixion

The Intention of Jesus (3): Eschatological Redemption in
Judaism

The Reasons for Jesus' Crucifixion

The Intention of Jesus (4): The Strange Victory