

WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CROSS?

1. Text: Matthew 20:17-19
2. Our Lord's crucifixion was a horrible, historic event; here a perfect person suffered wicked, cruel injustice.
3. But who is responsible? At whose feet can we lay this crime of the centuries? There are five Scriptural answers: The gospel writers blend legal and moral factors. Let's see them:

I. **Pilate Was Responsible.**

1. Immediately: Roman soldiers. But they were instruments of Pilate's will.
2. Typical crucifixion:
3. Pilate's part: Roman governor from 26-36 A.D. Hated by Jews. Immediately sees Jesus is innocent. Tries four ingenious attempts to sentence Him. Why then? John 19:8 says fear. Add to that expediency. John 19:16 "He delivered Him to them."

II. **The Jewish Leaders Were Responsible.**

1. John 19:11 says their sin "greater" than Pilate's.
2. Acts 3:13-15 clearly states Jews were responsible.
3. They did it because of envy. (Matthew 27:18) He threatened their prestige, position, power, pride.
4. No excuse here for Anti-Semitism.

III. **Judas Was Responsible.**

1. In all three gospels' lists he is last. Called the betrayer.
2. Sympathy for him? Was he a mere tool of providence or victim of God's plan? Lord had to die, someone had to betray Him, so why blame Judas?
3. Truth is Judas was a free moral agent, personally responsible, who volunteered as surely as Christ did for the cross. He allowed Satan to influence him (John 13:27).
4. His reason was greed (Matthew 26:14-16) See also John 12:5-6.
5. Through the centuries God has used the wickedness of individual choice for His purposes.

IV. **The Lord Was Responsible.**

1. Remember expression in John 19:11,16 Christ was handed over by others.
2. The same word is found in Galatians 2:20, "The Son of God who loved us and gave or "handed himself over" for us.
3. Also, it's found in Romans 8:32: "God did not spare His own Son but handed Him over for us."
4. So Christ humbly submitted voluntarily to the cross.
5. This is the glorious gospel message!

V. **I Am Responsible (And You Are Too).**

1. My sin and yours put Christ on that cross.
2. Song 962: "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"
3. G.K. Chesterton: "What's wrong with the world? Sir, I am!"
4. Hebrews 2:9 He suffered death so that by God's grace we might taste death for everyone.

Conclusion:

