



# God the Son

## He was rejected

*This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. Acts 2:23*

### Setting the scene

Jesus was the Son of God, and many acclaimed Him; yet He was “killed by the hands of lawless men”. It was an outrage and a tragedy. Christians nevertheless believed that God had control, “a definite plan and foreknowledge”.

Why was Jesus rejected? Would we have wanted Him out of the way?

### His own people gave Him no welcome

*He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. John 1:10-11*

“His own people” means the Jews. The Jews were a special people, the people of the covenant God had made with Abraham and his descendants. All people of the earth were to be blessed through Abraham and here, before them, stood the promised One, the Messiah, but the Jewish people in general had no room for Him. He spoke of a spiritual kingdom; their dreams were of earthly glory. They wanted a leader who would drive the Romans from their land and rule the earth from Jerusalem. They called Him a deceiver (Matthew 27:63), and pressed on with their own plans. Pride, ambition and selfish ways, wherever they are found, give Jesus no welcome.

### The leaders of the people plotted against Him

*Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. “But not during the Feast,” they said, “or the people may riot.” Mark 14:1-2*

His teaching was fresh and alive and menaced the standing of the Jewish religious leaders. “It will be better for the whole nation to have this man put to death” said Caiaphas (John 11.49-50). “Better do it quietly”, another voice added, “or else the Romans will take over”.

At the Passover, all the male population of the land who had reached a certain age were expected to be within the walls of Jerusalem. This could have amounted to some two million people. The Passover was an exciting time but there was the danger of riot and bloodshed among ‘the people’,

who for the most part took Jesus for a prophet. The religious authorities, therefore, put any plans they had for seizing our Lord aside until after the Passover. However, Judas came forward with an offer of handing over Jesus, an offer they could not refuse. They paid Judas to betray Him with twenty pieces of silver. Jesus, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, had to die at the Passover and so God overruled their petty schemes.

The leaders had authority in religious matters, so they charged Jesus with blasphemy. “Hasn’t He said something about being the Son of God?”

### The disciples forsook Him

***“But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. Matthew 26:56***

Jesus took care to forewarn the disciples about His suffering and death. Before they went out to Gethsemane, Jesus told them, ***“This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’”*** Matthew 26:31. They seemed to take no notice at all, in fact they denied it. Peter declared, ***“Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.”*** And all the other disciples said the same. Matthew 26:35.

The eleven disciples fled when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. Success they could accept, but not by way of seeming defeat. ***“We thought He was going to make Israel a free nation”,*** said the two walking to Emmaus, ***“but now He is dead, and we don’t know what to think.”*** Luke 24:20-21. After the Crucifixion, afraid and unbelieving, the disciples locked themselves in a room for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them and said, ***“Peace be with you!”*** After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. ***The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. John 20:19-20.***

### He died utterly alone

Read Matthew 27:38-46.

Casual passers-by, the religious leaders and one of the thieves, all disowned Jesus. His followers were in hiding. Using the words of the Psalm of Suffering (Psalm 22), Jesus expressed a forsakenness we cannot understand when, for the first time in eternity, He was forsaken by God - ***About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”—which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*** Matthew 27:46

This cry gives us the anguish hidden in the words “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Only He could do what was done there. Christ, by his offering upon the cross, made atonement for the sins of the world.

## Discussion

- Would Jesus be welcome in our modern world?
- What groups might feel themselves under challenge from Him? Perhaps we all have reason to fear that challenge.
- Reflect on the anguish of God at the Crucifixion.