

## The Father's Will to Crush His Son

Before we were created and even before we sinned against our Creator, in eternity past, God planned to send his Son to the world to die on the cross to redeem a people for himself.

Speaking to the Jews, the apostle Peter said, "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). It was the greatest act of betrayal by Israel, the covenant people of God, to reject and murder their Messiah. But in so doing, they were unwittingly fulfilling God's eternal plan for his Son, according to "God's set purpose and foreknowledge."

The early Christians were fully conscious of this truth. They prayed to God: "Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen" (Acts 4:28). The Jews and the Romans did not surprise God or frustrate his plan by their evil behaviour. On the contrary, they did what God's "will had decided beforehand should happen." The crucifixion of Christ had been determined God.

Elsewhere the apostle Peter explained how "God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer" (Acts 3:18). For instance the prophet Isaiah had written some 700 years before the birth of Christ that "it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer" and that the LORD would make "his life a guilt offering" (Isaiah 53:10).

The cross was the central and ultimate goal of Christ's ministry. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve," he told his disciples, "and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He came to give his life for us.

During his public ministry Jesus repeatedly told the disciples that he should suffer and die. "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life" (Matthew 16:21). He must be killed, because it was so determined by God in eternity. He must be killed, because by his blood, God's eternal plan for our redemption would be accomplished.

Elsewhere he said, "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" (John 12:24). The prospect of the cross troubled his soul, but he was resolute to embrace the cross and obey the Father's will. "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!"

Famous people achieve their great accomplishments and discoveries during their lifetime; for them death is the end of everything. Christ accomplished more than anyone in his life, but his crowning work, his opus magnum, his divine mission was accomplished in and by his death on the cross. He came for that reason, he came for that hour, he came to die for our sins according to the plan and purpose of God.