

## **What Kind of God Dies?**

*Presented by Mary Lowman*

Air Dates: March 30 – April 3, 2026

### **Day One**

It's the week before Resurrection Sunday. I hope you have been preparing your heart to celebrate this Sunday, for it is truly the most important celebration for us as Christ-followers. And in preparation, I'd like us to focus on a very unusual question, which is: What kind of god dies?

If you or I were given the assignment to determine how the sins of mankind could be forgiven, would we ever have come up with a plan that God becomes man and dies? The disciples certainly had difficulty hearing Jesus when he repeatedly said he had come to die. Even though there were many clues and prophecies from the Old Testament showing the coming Messiah would die, their belief at the time was Jesus was Messiah, and he had come to save them from Rome, not from their sins.

I've been trying to put myself in the disciples' shoes as they grappled with Jesus' mission.

Clearly Jesus told them, *the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many* (Matthew 20:28).

He told them he was the Good Shepherd, and the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He even gave them an indication of the kind of death he would die when he said,

*Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up* (John 3:14).

But they just couldn't hear it because what kind of god dies?

Only the true, eternal God would have put this plan in place. To send his only Son who was equal with God the Father for the purpose of dying could only come from the mind and heart of God himself.

Then think of this—the way Jesus died was not only the most painful and horrendous way to die, the Jews believed any crucified person was condemned by God. Don't you imagine in those early days following the crucifixion, the disciples must have struggled to understand why Jesus had to die and why he died on a cross. He died this ignominious death, and all along they thought he was from God—which of course he was. But how could he be from God and die on a cross?

### **Day Two**

Have you ever asked yourself this question: What kind of god dies? Jesus kept telling his disciples he came to die and deliver them from their sins, not from Rome. But they just couldn't hear it. After all, what kind of god dies?

If I had been in the disciples' shoes at that time, I'm sure I would have struggled with understanding the Messiah—the one I had faithfully followed for over three years, the one I hoped was going to redeem Israel from Rome—was going to die on a cross under God's curse. No doubt the disciples knew the passage from Deuteronomy 21:23 which says *anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse*.

When Pilate ordered Jesus to be crucified, the Jewish leaders were very pleased for they thought this would be the end of this troublemaker and his followers. Surely those pesky disciples would give up after Jesus was hung on a cross. This helps us understand why the disciples went into hiding after the crucifixion and were frightened they would be found out. They were bearing not only the grief of losing Jesus but also the shame and disgrace of the way he was killed—on a cross.

A crucified Messiah was not their idea of a hero, a Savior, their hope. And up to the end they just couldn't believe it—Jesus was going to be crucified on a cross? They must have wondered why God sent Jesus to die and why he had to die on a cross. What kind of god dies?

With clear hindsight now and the New Testament to explain it to us, we can look back and see why God the Son had to die—and yes, even his method of death, a cross, was part of God's plan.

Remember, no one took Jesus' life from him; he gave it. This was all part of God's eternal plan, every detail of his death was predetermined by God.

The reason Jesus had to die was because sin has consequences, and a Holy God cannot just overlook sin. The price had to be paid for sin; this is what God declared. He does not ignore our sins, but he makes it possible for our sins to be forgiven in Jesus Christ. Of course, God also never intended for death to have dominion over Jesus, and we will celebrate again his resurrection this Sunday. What a glorious truth!

### Day Three

I hope you're looking forward to Resurrection Sunday as much as I am. It truly is the best day of the year, when we sing the glorious truth that Christ the Lord is risen! But when the disciples expected Jesus to rescue them from Rome, they never imagined he would die—especially not on a cross, which was considered cursed by God.

Yet his death was absolutely necessary if any of us were to be forgiven. Even if we could somehow pay for our own sins, we would simply die in them. The price would be paid—death—but there would be no redemption. Jesus, the perfect Son of God, had no sins of his own to pay for, so he alone was qualified to take ours upon himself. He paid the price we could never pay so we could be forgiven and have access to God through his sacrifice.

Scripture tells us *without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness* (Hebrews 9:22). The cross was God's chosen way for his Son to die—his blood shed, the curse taken, the penalty paid.

*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us* (Galatians 3:13).

And here is the good news: though *the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Romans 6:23). As we approach Resurrection Sunday, it's the perfect time to deepen our understanding of why Jesus died—and why it had to be on a cross.

The disciples didn't understand at first. But once they grasped why he came, saw him risen from the grave, and were filled with the Holy Spirit, everything changed. Their despair turned to unshakable faith in their crucified and risen Messiah, and because he lives, so can we.

### Day Four

As we prepare for Easter Sunday, it's important to rehearse again this incredible truth that God, the Son, came to earth to die to pay the debt you and I owed—one we could never pay—for the forgiveness of our sins. And because Jesus died and then rose again after three days, he has

conquered eternal death for us. If you have been born from above through faith in Jesus Christ, then your debt has been paid, and that is the most amazing truth.

Think about the disciples as they were witnessing Jesus' trial and crucifixion. No doubt they could not comprehend how Jesus could come to this end. They believed he was their Messiah, and he would save them from Rome. Instead he came to save them from their sins. But after the resurrection when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they finally understood, and they were changed people.

In a statement to the Sadducees, who had just put him in jail for preaching the Gospel, Peter said,

*The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree (Acts 5:30).*

Peter points to the tree—the curse of the cross—and says despite their intention to bring Jesus to disgrace, God raised him from the dead and reversed the stigma.

Paul went even further to show how the cross became their message. He said,

*We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).*

The fact Jesus was crucified was a great stumbling block to Jews in that day. How could their Messiah die and on a cross of all things? And for the Gentiles—those who are not Jews—this idea of a god dying seemed foolish. There were lots of gods worshipped in those days. The Romans had false gods for every occasion. But none of their gods died by crucifixion! That was foolishness to them.

The amazing truth is once the disciples understood the purpose of Jesus' death on the cross, that very shameful act of being crucified transformed the disciples and their message, and the thing that once had been so repugnant to them became the thing in which they boasted.

And that is what we boast in this Easter season. Don't let this celebration pass you by this year without taking time to remember that Jesus set you free by dying for you and then rising from the tomb. And because of that, you are free indeed!

## Day Five

I've been focusing on the death, burial, and resurrection of our Savior. Can I ask you: Of what or who do you boast? Or in our vernacular, what do you brag about?

*Paul said to the Galatians: May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Galatians 6:14).*

Can you imagine what this sounded like to Jewish people of his day? Boasting in the cross? That was unthinkable—and yet it is because of the cross that Jesus was able to purchase our salvation.

I have led many tours to Israel, and each time I go to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus spent those agonizing hours before he was arrested, I am reminded it's not a fairy tale. It's not just a story that has been passed down through the ages. No, the cross of Jesus Christ was real. He suffered a shameful death for me—and for you—so God could forgive our sins. Because of him, we can have the righteousness of Jesus Christ credited to us, qualifying us to spend eternity with God.

There's something about sitting in that garden, still filled with olive trees, and knowing we are on sacred ground, walking and meditating there where Jesus agonized until his sweat was like drops of blood

falling to the ground. Where he prayed “Not my will but thine be done,” as he faced the reality of being separated from his Father and bearing in his own body the sins of the world. Each time I come away from that Garden more humbled and more aware of just what it meant for Jesus to give himself as a ransom for many—for me—and to be willing to die on a cross.

As you and I celebrate the resurrection of our Lord this Sunday, let us glory in the cross, because without it, we have no hope. Boast about the cross and what Jesus has done for you. Tell everybody you can and why this celebration is so vital and precious to you. And we will celebrate with great joy the fact that the grave could not hold Jesus; death had no victory over him. He arose from the grave.

What kind of god dies? Only the true God, the only God, who died so we could live. Let it sink into your mind and heart as you stand in awe that Jesus died for you. Don't ever take this story, this truth, for granted. Understanding the enormity of his death on a cross is sobering and amazing, and his resurrection is reason for great joy.