

KILLING OUR REDEEMER

I. Various Scriptures

A. It's become a thing in recent years for pranksters to steal the Baby Jesus from Nativity scenes. It actually happened to us several years back. I wrote about it in the Buckeye Lake Beacon and shortly thereafter our Baby Jesus was returned, howbeit the repentant thieves heaved it up into our Buckeye Tree. So I wrote the Beacon a second time, this time writing that even as the Baby Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger, He was always destined to hang upon a tree where He would die for the sins of thieves and sinners of every stripe, including us...

B. When exploring the journeys of Jesus this past Sunday, we read about the Holy Family's flight to Egypt when a jealous King Herod sought to kill Jesus following the Magi's visit. Warned by an angel in a dream of the coming onslaught, Joseph woke the Family in the middle of the night and they fled. Meanwhile Herod's tirade included the slaughter of all Bethlehem's boys, 2 years old and under. But this wouldn't be the last time someone tried to murder the Son of God...

C. Luke 4:28-30 (ESV) happens in the Nazareth synagogue right after Jesus reads portions of Isaiah 61 and 58 and essentially tells the hometown folks it's referring to Him. And how do they respond? *28 When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. 29 And they rose up and drove Him out of the town and brought Him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw Him down the cliff. 30 But passing through their midst, He went away.*

D. John 7:25-31 (ESV) takes place with Jesus attending the Feast of Tabernacles: *25 Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the Man whom they seek to kill? 26 And here He is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to Him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? 27 But we know where this Man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where He comes from." 28 So Jesus proclaimed, as He taught in the temple, "You know Me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of My own accord. He who sent Me is true, and Him you do not know. 29 I know Him, for I come from Him, and He sent Me." 30 So they were seeking to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. 31 Yet many of the people believed in Him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will He do more signs than this Man has done?"*

E. John 10:22-33 (ESV) unfolds at the temple at another festival: *22 At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. 24 So the Jews gathered around Him and said to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name bear witness about Me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not among My sheep. 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one." 31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to*

stone Me?" **33** The Jews answered Him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone You but for blasphemy, because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."

F. John 11:45-53 (ESV) takes place after Jesus raised His friend Lazarus from the dead. That got a lot of folks' attention: 45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what He did, believed in Him, **46** but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. **47** So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this Man performs many signs. **48** If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." **49** But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. **50** Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." **51** He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, **52** and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. **53** So from that day on they made plans to put Him to death.

G. John 19:9-11 (ESV) takes place in front of Pontius Pilate after Jesus is first tried by the Jews who are seeking His death: 9 He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. **10** So Pilate said to Him, "You will not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You and authority to crucify You?" **11** Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over Me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered Me over to you has the greater sin." (Of course Pilate buckles to the pressure and Jesus is sentenced to be crucified...)

H. But remember the many times Jesus says to the effect, 'My time has not yet come.' But now it seems it has. So what took so long you might ask? How'd they all finally make this happen? We might also ask who was responsible, who put this Chosen One, born in a humble manger, on the cross? Was it the Jews? Was it the Romans? Was it Satan and his demons? Or was it us, and sinners like us, around the globe and down through the ages? Certainly it was a collaborative effort, a collection of evil deviants--thieves, murderers, adulterers, pagans, idolators, and us! who bear the blame. But let me suggest *Another*. You see no one kills God but God! Peter in His famed sermon on Pentecost tells it straight up. **Acts 2:22-24 (AMPC): 22** "You men of Israel, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man accredited and pointed out and shown forth and commended and attested to you by God by the mighty works and [the power of performing] wonders and signs which God worked through Him [right] in your midst, as you yourselves know--**23** This Jesus, when delivered up according to the definite and fixed purpose and settled plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and put out of the way [killing Him] by the hands of lawless and wicked men. **24** [But] God raised Him up, liberating Him from the pangs of death, seeing that it was not possible for Him to continue to be controlled or retained by it.

I. And then shortly thereafter, Peter & John stand before the Jewish Council. Once released, believers gather to pray for boldness to carry on. Acts 4:27-28 (AMPC) is a portion of the early believers' prayer: 27 For in this city there actually met and plotted together against Your holy Child and Servant Jesus, Whom You consecrated by anointing, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and peoples of Israel, (Consecrated and anointed for what?) **28** To carry out all that Your hand and Your will and purpose had predestined (predetermined) should occur. (And what occurred? Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures! And He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures!

J. Christmas is the most culturally abducted holiday of all time! Finding Jesus in the midst of this glitter-filled pandemonium is increasingly difficult. Talk about *carnalizing* the incarnation! But as this final week before Christmas unfolds, let me exhort you all this way: Don't look at a manger scene without seeing the crucifixion scene and the empty tomb scene! Because that is why Jesus came! That is why He was sent! From before time began, the foreordained Father-Son mission included the cross and the empty tomb! The first Christmas Tree ever was the Cross! The empty tomb tells us Christ's mission was perfectly accomplished! John 3:16... Let men and angels continue to sing: "*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*" "*Glory to God in the highest!*"

*** Close with Prayer...**

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[Luke 4:28-30 \(ESV\)](#)

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[John 7:25-31 \(ESV\)](#)

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we are going to stone You but for blasphemy, because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

John 11:45-53 (ESV)

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Acts 2:22-24 (AMPC)

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Bonus Goodies

"The Manger" - Anne Wilson & Josh Turner
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cs8lq7cxou0>

"Prince of Peace" - Celtic Worship
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pr2RG-xR2IA>

"Maker of the Universe" - Phil Keaggy Version
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27GUZsrhxJ8>

"Kingdom Come" - Rebecca St. James with her brothers in King & Country
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIQQcQc0eHU>

Who Put Jesus on the Cross? - John Piper (Desiring God)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QD8XMPevR5A>

The First Christmas - Billy Graham
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5eJeizfBIU>

[More Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras](#)

[Luke 20:9-19 \(NLT\)](#)

9 Now Jesus turned to the people again and told them this story: "A man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenant farmers, and moved to another country to live for several years. **10** At the time of the grape harvest, he sent one of his servants to collect his share of the crop. But the farmers attacked the servant, beat him up, and sent him back empty-handed. **11** So the owner sent another servant, but they also insulted him, beat him up, and sent him away empty-handed. **12** A third man was sent, and they wounded him and chased him away. **13** "What will I do?" the owner asked himself. 'I know! I'll send my cherished son. Surely they will respect him.' **14** "But when the tenant farmers saw his son, they said to each other, 'Here comes the heir to this estate. Let's kill him and get the estate for ourselves!' **15** So they dragged him out of the vineyard and murdered him. "What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard will do to them?" Jesus asked. **16** "I'll tell you—he will come and kill those farmers and lease the vineyard to others." "How terrible that such a thing should ever happen," his listeners protested. **17** Jesus looked at them and said, "*Then what does this Scripture mean? 'The Stone that the builders rejected has now become the Cornerstone.'* **18** *Everyone who stumbles over that Stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on.*" **19** The teachers of religious law and the leading priests wanted to arrest Jesus immediately because they realized He was telling the story against them--they were the wicked farmers. But they were afraid of the people's reaction.

[John 17:1-5 \(ESV\)](#)

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You, **2** since You have given Him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. **3** And this is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. **4** I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave Me to do. **5** And now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed.

Romans 3:23-26 (VOICE)

23 You see, all have sinned, and all their futile attempts to reach God in His glory fail. **24** Yet they are now saved and set right by His free gift of grace through the redemption available only in Jesus the Anointed. **25** When God set Him up to be the sacrifice—the seat of mercy where sins are atoned through faith--His blood became the demonstration of God's own restorative justice. All of this confirms His faithfulness to the promise, for over the course of human history God patiently held back as He dealt with the sins being committed. **26** This expression of God's restorative justice displays in the present that He is just and righteous and that He makes right those who trust and commit themselves to Jesus.

Romans 8:32 (AMPC)

32 He who did not withhold or spare [even] His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also with Him freely and graciously give us all [other] things?

The Maker of the Universe

Words by F.W. Pitt

Music by Ludwig von Beethoven as well as Phil Keaggy

The Maker of the universe
As Man, for man was made a curse.
The claims of Law which He had made
Unto the uttermost He paid.

His holy fingers made the bough
Which grew the thorns that crowned His brow.
The nails that pierced His hands were mined
In secret places He designed.

He made the forest whence there sprung
The tree on which His body hung;
He died upon a cross of wood
Yet made the hill on which it stood.

The sky that darkened o'er His head
By Him above the earth was spread.
The sun that hid from Him its face
By His decree was poised in space.

The spear which spilled His precious blood
Was tempered in the fires of God.
The grave in which His form was laid
Was hewn in rocks His hands had made.

The throne on which He now appears
Was His from everlasting years.
But a new glory crowns His brow
And every knee to Him shall bow.

The Meaning of the Manger

John Piper - Desiring God

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-meaning-of-the-manger>

I have walked through 65 Advent seasons as a believer in Jesus. I preached my way through half of them. So, counting Christmas sermons, that would be roughly 150 messages during Advent.

I don't ever recall thinking, "Oh my, how will I say anything fresh this year?" There are some wells that don't run dry. Some horizons that expand as you approach. Some stories that reach back forever, forward into eternity, down to the depths of mystery, and up to the heights of glory. Advent is one of those. It is inexhaustible.

Royalty in a Trough

Luke is the only writer in the Bible to use the word manger in the New Testament. And what he does with this one word — what God does with this one feeding trough — is enough to make us leap for joy.

"Some stories reach back forever, forward into eternity, down to depths of mystery, and up to heights of glory."

Manger comes from the Latin word for chew or eat. It refers to a trough where horses and donkeys and cattle ate. For example, Luke uses it in [Luke 13:15](#): The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?"

And in the most famous Christmas paragraphs in the Bible, Luke rivets our attention on the manger three times. "She gave birth to her firstborn Son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." ([Luke 2:7](#))

"This will be a sign for you: you will find a Baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ([Luke 2:12](#))

"They went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby lying in a manger." ([Luke 2:16](#))

The Manger's Message

What is Luke's message through the manger?

1. The manger was dirty.

Yes, we may be sure that Joseph and Mary cleaned it up as best they could. They, no doubt, padded it in some way to make a comfy little bed. But there is no way to romanticize this bed into anything other than a feeding trough for slobbering animals. The first bed for the Son of God was not a royal cradle. It was a common corn crib. It's meant to hold scraps to be eaten.

2. The manger was planned.

At first, you might think it was a fluke of fate — a random misfortune. Because Luke says Mary “laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn” ([Luke 2:7](#)). But the way Luke tells the story, that won't work.

“The first bed for the Son of God was not a royal cradle. It was a common corn crib.”

God had centuries to get ready for this birth. The prophet Micah lived seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus and prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. “You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me One who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.” ([Micah 5:2](#))

So, God had a good seven centuries (and more!) to plan the details of the incarnation and arrange the arrival of His Son in the right place, at the right time, and in the right way. For example, He could have easily arranged that a faithful virgin and a just man, in the lineage of David, be found in Bethlehem in accord with the prophecy. But instead, He chooses Mary and Joseph, who lived in Nazareth, not Bethlehem. And He plans for Mary to get pregnant far from the prophesied town.

To solve that problem — which God Himself had created — God could have arranged to get Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem by some personal means, say a relative who needed them urgently or a dream or some private legal or business matter. But He didn't do it that way.

Instead, God moved Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem by means of an empire-wide census. In other words, God arranged that the most powerful leader in the world would order everyone in the empire to go to the town of their origin to register. You might call this providential overkill. He's making a point: “You think you know what I am doing globally? You have no idea. I'm putting things in place exactly as I please. Including the birth of My Son.”

In view of that, it becomes ludicrous to think that a God who wields an empire to move one woman from Nazareth to Bethlehem can't arrange for there to be an available guest

room. Planning a bed for His Son was easier than planning a global census. Jesus was lying in exactly the place God planned: a feeding trough.

3. The manger was a sign.

The angel of the Lord said something to the shepherds that was almost too good to be true. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." ([Luke 2:11](#))

To believe this and bear witness, they would need a sign. The angel gave it: "And this will be a sign for you: you will find a Baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ([Luke 2:12](#))

Swaddling cloths? Every baby in Bethlehem was wearing swaddling cloths. That is not the sign. The sign is the manger. In fact, this must have sounded so wildly scandalous, the shepherds probably did not think they heard the angel correctly.

"No other king anywhere in the world was lying in a feeding trough. Find Him, and you find the King of kings."

Savior. Christ. Lord. That's who the angel said had been born. Savior: deliverer from all our enemies — maybe more! Christ: the Messiah, the fulfiller of all the promises of God. Lord: as in "an angel of the Lord appeared to them," and "the glory of the Lord shone around them" ([Luke 2:9](#)). This Savior, Christ, and Lord is lying in a what?

This is the sign. No other king anywhere in the world was lying in a feeding trough. Find him, and you find the King of kings. And you will know something. Something utterly crucial about his kingship.

4. The manger was glorious.

No sooner were the words out of the angel's mouth — "you will find a Baby . . . lying in a manger" — than the heavens exploded with praise: "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest!" ([Luke 2:13–14](#))

Glory to God! The Savior is in a feeding trough! Glory to God! The Messiah is in a feeding trough! Glory to God! The Lord is in a feeding trough! "Glory to God in the highest!" From the highest to the lowest! What a God! What a Savior!

5. The manger is the way of discipleship.

The angel of the Lord came to shepherds, not Pharisees. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" ([Luke 2:14](#))

With whom is the Lord pleased? That word “pleased” (Greek eudokia) occurs one other place in Luke: "Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was Your good pleasure (eudokia).'" ([Luke 10:21](#))

Not the wise. Not the understanding. But the children. The ones who would take no offense at a baby in a feeding trough. The ones that would expect no better bed than their Savior: "As they were going along the road, someone said to Jesus, 'I will follow You wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.'" ([Luke 9:57–58](#))

Except for a manger. Follow me.

6. The manger was step one on the Calvary road.

The Calvary road is downhill. Not because it gets easier, but because it gets lower. The Savior's life starts low and ends lower. This is the point of [Philippians 2:6–8](#): "Though He was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant [starting His life lower than servants — in a feeding trough] . . . He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

This is how the Savior saves. This is how the Messiah fulfills all the promises. This is how the Lord reigns: from infinite deity, to feeding trough, to final torments on the cross.

“This is how the Lord reigns: from infinite deity, to feeding trough, to final torment on the cross.”

For those who have eyes to see, the message of the angels makes sense. Yes, we must follow Him! “Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple” ([Luke 14:33](#)). It is a lowly road. A hard road. But there is no greater joy than to be on this road with this Savior.

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy” ([Luke 2:10](#)). This is no moderate joy. This is Great Joy. “Glory to God in the highest” ([Luke 2:10–14](#)). Great joy to us. Great glory to God.

- John Piper is founder and teacher of [desiringGod.org](#) and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. For 33 years, he served as pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN. He is also author of more than 50 books.