



Written by [Becky Akers](#) on April 21, 2011

Who Killed Jesus Christ?

Theologically, of course, we all did. Our sins plaited the crown of thorns and jammed it on His brow, wielded the whip tearing the muscles from His back, drove the spikes impaling Him to the cross through His arms and feet. But humanly, legally speaking, government murdered our Savior. Rulers staged a mock trial in a kangaroo court; politicians from two factions, the conquered and the conquerors, united to murder a Man one of them openly proclaimed innocent (though mere murder didn't satisfy them, so they tortured Him for hours with some of the most unspeakable brutality government ever devised); the State's soldiers pounded metal through living, pulsing flesh.

As we commemorate Holy Week, we love and laud a God Who willingly sacrificed Himself for us. But let us also ponder the Crucifixion's lessons about government.



It's not as if our gracious and merciful God hadn't warned us before — and often. When He announced [the Ten Commandments](#) at Mt. Sinai, He specifically prohibited the Big Three that keep government in business: murder, theft, and lying. He granted no exemptions, either. Wearing a uniform or winning an election doesn't license you to murder (even if you call it "war"), to steal (even if you euphemize it as "taxation"), or to lie by re-naming murder and theft in the hope that folks will then shrug at your evil.

The Lord also cautioned us against this ravaging wolf via parable. In [Judges 9](#), a would-be governor massacres his family to eliminate any competitors — wickedness so horrific and unnatural that politicians have plagiarized it ever since. A half-brother escapes the bloodbath to warn his countrymen via anecdote: "The trees went forth ... to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

The foolish plants next solicit the fig tree: "Come thou, and reign over us." But the fig also produces something valuable — "sweetness, and my good fruit" — and he disdains to quit so he can "be promoted over the trees" to worthlessness. Ditto the grapevine: he refuses to stop providing his "wine, which cheereth God and man," so that he can harm the latter by governing them.

But the trees find a very eager candidate in the useless bramble. In fact, he threatens to incinerate them if they change their minds about his leadership: "If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

The Lord again admonishes us against government a few hundred years later, and plainly: no more



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fables of figs and fire. [When free people plead for the State's shackles](#) ("make us a king to judge us like all the nations"), Jehovah answers with a catalog of government's outrages: "... the king that shall reign over you ... will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.... And he will take your daughters, ... your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards... And he will take the tenth of your seed," – oh, how we wish it were only a tenth! – "and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. ... ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you..."

The rest of the Old Testament, with its royal tyrants and the prophets who denounce them – and who often wind up [imprisoned](#) or [dead](#) for their trouble — adds more evidence to the overwhelming stacks against the State. Even the "good" kings are unanswerable arguments for anarcho-capitalism: [David cruelly and randomly slaughters](#) or enslaves prisoners of war, not to mention [his abuse of Uriah](#); his son [Solomon buys his glory with taxes so harsh](#) that after his death, his serfs plead with the new king for mercy (surprise: he denies their request).

The New Testament begins with more of government's savagery: an impecunious [girl, expecting her first Child](#) any moment, hikes 75 miles on crude roads so that a wealthy empire may swipe her betrothed's few pitiful pence. And at the climax, the Crucifixion, government commits its most barbaric atrocity — but one that is completely characteristic.

As a child, I assumed Christ's cross was unique, that Satan had worked overtime inventing the most excruciating death possible for his Nemesis. But no. Ancient empires from the Persians to the Greeks to the Romans murdered so many men on crosses that they dotted the land. Christ carries the *patibulum*, the cross-beam, to Golgotha because the *stipes*, the upright, already stands there, in place, awaiting its multitudes of victims.

Imagine a brawny soldier's hammering [a spike through your wrist](#). Now the other one. And your feet. You might think the shock would kill you, especially because Roman whips have already flayed the skin from your back — which raw flesh is now pressed against rough wood. Instead, depending on your physical condition, you might hang on the cross for days, plural. You die slowly of asphyxiation: your weight, hanging from your pinioned arms, squeezes your chest. You cannot breathe unless you relieve the pressure on your diaphragm by lifting your body. That requires pushing against the cross with your wounded feet — impossible as you weaken.

Crucifixion punished the State's enemies, not ours: your child's murderer would probably not writhe on a cross unless he had also insulted the government. Then as now, flouting rulers' whims infuriates them far more than do crimes against us. Ergo, Alexander the Great crucified 2000 Phoenicians who resisted his demands of surrender and tribute. Pilate released Barabbas, a rebel "[who had committed murder in the insurrection](#)," to crucify a political Prisoner in his place. The two thieves dying beside Him are unusual if they stole from their fellows; more likely, they robbed the empire, perhaps as tax-collectors who lied to Rome about their take.

In its lethal torture of God's Son, [the State revealed itself as Satan's citadel](#) — a fact no decent person, let alone a Christian, should ever forget.



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