

Vicarious Sacrifice: Jesus Asserts His Innate Authority to Lay Down His Life & to Take It up Again, John 10:18; Erroneous Accusations that the Jews, Pilate, or the Soldier at the Cross Killed Jesus; the Ritual Baptism of Jesus, Matt 3:16–17; the Lord's Pleas to Be Spared the Judicial Imputation of Human Sin, Matt 26:39, 42; Six Principles

John 10:18 - "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." (NASB)

1. In verse 17, the Lord says that He laid down His soul. In verse 18, He indicates that no man will take it away from Him. Finally, He says He will lay it down from His own volition.
2. There are some that assert the Jews killed Jesus; others that the Pontius Pilate did it; still others blame the Roman soldier who ran the spear into His chest.
3. But the Lord says, "No one has taken it away from Me." The verb "taken away" is the futuristic present active indicative of the verb **αἶρω (aíro)**: "to lift up."
4. The verb was initially used for removing by force, even by murder. The victim's head was lifted up and his throat cut.
5. The word took on other meanings later on including "to remove." The Lord indicates that no outside agent "removed His soul from Him."
6. This means that no one killed Him. Instead He will remove His soul from His body by His own volitional decision.
7. The futuristic present tense denotes an event which has not yet occurred, but which is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass.
8. "I lay it down from My own initiative," indicates that He will personally permit His soul to exit His human body under the protection of the Holy Spirit.

9. The verb “lay down” is τίθημι (*títhēmi*), another futuristic present active indicative verb indicating that the Lord will, at a certain future time, dismiss His soul.
10. For the salvation plan to work, Jesus had to willingly make decisions that would move the process forward.
11. The plan included the necessity for both spiritual death and physical death. Spiritual, for the judgment of mankind’s sins in Christ, and physical, necessary for the subsequent resurrection.
12. The Lord made several statements regarding His willingness to “remove His soul” from His body beginning with the virgin birth:
Hebrews 10:10 - By His will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all.
13. At His baptism:
Matthew 3:16 - After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,
v. 17 - and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”
14. The baptism of Jesus was a ritual baptism in which water represented the Father’s will. His immersion into the water represented His identification with man’s sins.
15. The Lord’s emersion out from the water represented His identification with the judgment of man’s sins followed by His physical death and resurrection.
16. John 10:18 expresses the Lord’s permission from the Father to lay down His life and take it up again.
17. The final expression of the Lord’s willingness to die spiritual and physical death on the cross is found in His prayers in the garden of Gethsemane:

Matthew 26:39 - He went a little beyond them [the disciples], and fell on His face and prayed, and saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup [the judicial imputation of the sins of the world upon Jesus] pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.”

v. 42 - He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.” (NASB)

18. Jesus had the authority to lay down his life and then to take it up again. The word “authority” is the noun **ἐξουσία (exousía)**: “the power to do something.”
19. Jesus had the power to die spiritual death and, after judgment was completed, He had the power and authority to die physically and then be resurrected.

John 10:18 - “No one removes My soul from Me but, contrarily, I lay it down from My own free will. I keep having the authority to lay it down, and I have authority to receive it again. This command I receive from My Father.” (EXT)

20. Here are some principles from verse 18:
 - (1) Jesus had the authority and power to die from His own volitional decision. No one killed Him.
 - (2) By the same authority, He had the personal power to take up His life again in resurrection.
 - (3) Had men killed Jesus, then death had power over Him and He would not have been resurrected.
 - (4) Man does not have the power to legitimately choose the moment of his death.
 - (5) The futuristic present *active* indicated of **τίθημι (tithēmi)** indicates that Jesus personally produced the action of deciding His own death.
 - (6) The *active* voice of **λαμβάνω (lambánō)** indicates the Lord produced the action of taking it up again.