

“The Cross Of Christ”

Matthew 27:32-46

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Teaching Aim: To examine the events leading to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. To explore the humiliation Jesus faced as the soldiers, religious leaders, celebrants of Passover and even criminals mocked Him. To recognize Jesus demonstrated strength under control as He was led to the cross and died for our sins. To realize Jesus had to take our place, pay the penalty for our sins and face the fury of God’s wrath in order to save us!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The painful journey to Golgotha; the Place of a Skull (Matt. 27:32-37)

1. After being flogged and mistreated by the soldiers, Jesus began His journey up the Via Dolorosa towards Calvary (**vs. 32**). Why did the soldiers force another individual to help Jesus carry His cross to Calvary? Why do you think they chose Simon of Cyrene? What can we learn about Simon from the region he was from? Why do you think the Bible calls Simon by name?

2. Does it appear members of the early church were familiar with Simon and his family according to **Mark 15:21**? (See **Romans 16:13**) If Simon’s sons were followers of Jesus Christ, what can we assume about Simon? Is it possible Simon of Cyrene (a Jew) may have come to faith in Jesus as he carried the cross of Christ and witnessed the events surrounding His crucifixion?

3. The narrow road Jesus walked along on His journey to Golgotha is known as the Via Dolorosa (**vs. 33**). Did Jesus make this journey alone, or were other criminals condemned to death paraded with Him? (See **Luke 23:32**) What did Jesus say to some of the women as they wept along the Via Dolorosa? (See **Luke 23:27-30**) What major event was Jesus prophesying? (Hint: Google Jerusalem in A.D. 70)

4. What two locations in Jerusalem are thought by many to be the location of Golgotha (**vs. 33**)? (Hint: Google it) Which of the two locations do you think fits best with the biblical narrative? What is the meaning of the word “*Golgotha*”? Why do you think this title was chosen for the location?

5. What did the soldiers offer Jesus in **verse 34**? What were the ingredients of this drink and how was it used in ancient times? Did Jesus accept the soldiers offer? Why or why not?

6. What makes crucifixion such a painful way to die (**vs. 35**)? What is the usual cause of death in crucifixion? Are people still being crucified in other parts of the world today? If so, where?

7. Why did the soldiers divide the clothes of Jesus and cast lots for them (**vs. 35**)? Were victims crucified with their clothes on or were the clothes removed to cause further humiliation for those being crucified? How does **verse 35** fulfill the Messianic prophecy found in **Psa. 22:16-18**?

8. Why were the soldiers sitting down after Jesus was crucified (**vs. 36**)? What inscription was placed above the head of Jesus (**vs. 37**)? How many languages were used on the inscription? What did each say? (See **John 19:20-21**) What was the purpose of this sign? Did the Romans crucify people in isolated areas or in high traffic public areas? Why?

Part II: Two robbers with one final choice to make (Matt. 27:38-44)

1. According to **verse 38**, how many other people were crucified with Jesus? How is **verse 38** a fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy found in **Isaiah 53:12**? How do these two criminals represent the choice every person has to make? (See **Luke 23:19-43**)

2. Jesus was crucified during the Passover Festival. According to **verse 39**, how did the crowd interact with Jesus while He was on the cross? What did Matthew mean when he said they "*blasphemed Him?*" (See Dictionary) How does **verse 39** fulfill **Psa. 22:7-8**?

3. What saying of Jesus did the Jews misrepresent in **verse 40**? (See **John 2:19-21**) What temple were the Jews referring to? What Temple was Jesus speaking of? How is the temptation found in **verse 40** similar to that in **Matt. 4:1-11**? What would have happened if Jesus had done what the religious leaders mocked Him to do?

4. Was Jesus in the process of fulfilling the prophecy of **John 2:19-21** at the very moment the Jews were mocking Him in **verse 40**? Who was in the forefront mocking Jesus as He died on the cross for the sins of the world (**vs. 41**)? (See **1 John 2:2**)

5. What are some ways we can tell the true spiritual leader from the false? (See **Matt. 7:15-20**) Why do you think so many Christian churches have wandered astray today?

6. In what way were the religious leaders mocking Jesus in **verse 42**? Do you think these so-called religious leaders would have put their trust in Jesus if He had come down from the cross? Why or why not? Why don't unbelievers see the Lord in the same way that we do? (See **John 3:3; Rom. 8:7-9; Eph. 2:1**) Have you experienced the frustration of trying to witness to unbelieving family members and friends? What makes this so frustrating? (See **2 Cor. 4:3-4**)

7. Have you ever questioned the faithfulness of God when times were tough? Why? Why do you think so many people blame God today when life gets tough instead of focusing their blame on Satan? How were the religious leaders attacking Jesus in **verse 43**?

8. According to **verse 44**, how did the two robbers crucified next to Jesus treat Him? What is the meaning of the word "reviled?" (See Dictionary) Why do you think one of the criminals changed his mind about Jesus? (See **Luke 23:39-43**)

9. Why do so many people today have no fear of God; even on their deathbed? (See **John 3:3**) What did Jesus promise the thief on the cross who put his trust in Him? (See **Luke 23:42-43**) How does this truth relate to us today? What is meant when we say that a person was saved at the 11th hour? Have you ever known someone who was saved at the 11th hour?

Part III: Jesus really was forsaken by His Father while on the cross (Matt. 27:45-46)

1. For how many hours was Jesus on the cross? (See **Mark 15:25, 33-34**) What time of the day was it? What unusual phenomena took place in **verse 45**? Was this a solar eclipse or a supernatural act of God? What did the darkness represent?

2. Was there a time in the Old Testament where a miracle of darkness occurred before the sacrifice of the Passover lamb? (See **Exod. 10:21-29**) How long was this darkness for? In this case, where were the people of God [Israel] being led to? Where will the people of God [Christians] be led to who feast on the real Lamb of God (Jesus)?

3. What took place every day at the temple when the ninth hour [or 3:00pm] arrived? How far was the temple located from where Jesus was being crucified? At 3:00pm Jesus cried out a phrase that was part Aramaic and part Hebrew. What did He say (**vs. 46**)? What Old Testament passage did Jesus quote from as He cried out? (See **Psa. 22:1**) **Psalm 22** was written a thousand years before the birth of Christ and some 700 years before crucifixion was used as a means of execution. What did **Psalm 22:1-22** describe in detail?

4. What made the agony of Jesus so severe (**vs. 46**)? Why was it important for the Father to forsake Jesus on Good Friday? (See **2 Cor. 5:21**) Why do we call "Good Friday" good? What would our state be today if the Father had not forsaken Jesus on Good Friday? (See **Gal. 3:13-14; Rom. 5:8-9**)

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The Jewish proselyte, Simon of Cyrene, may have come to faith in Jesus while carrying the cross of Christ and then witnessing the events surrounding the crucifixion.
- The cross was one of the most humiliating and painful ways for a person to die.
- Golgotha is a small hill outside the city walls of Jerusalem that resembles a skull.
- Jesus refused to deaden the pain with narcotics; He wanted to be fully aware as He made atonement for our sins on the cross.
- Many of the events surrounding the cross fulfilled Old Testament prophesy.
- The so-called religious leaders were relentless and unrepentant in their attacks against Jesus!
- The Father forsook His Son on the cross as Jesus literally became our sin-bearer.
- We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone; there is no other way to salvation.