

The Crucifixion of Christ – Part 1 of 2

Today we continue our study in the life of Christ, and we're going to look at the crucifixion of Christ.

In Matthew 27:31, it says, *And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.*

And when they had mocked him... according to Mark 15:20... they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

Well, there's no doubt that Christ was crucified. And as He went to that cross, we look back and we see a man by the name of Barabbas, the man who should have been crucified. The center cross was not originally intended for our Lord. There was another man who was supposed to be executed on that center cross, but Jesus took his place. And there's a spiritual lesson in this because each of us deserves to die, according to Romans 6:23, but our Substitute took our place, according to II Corinthians 5:21.

Let's learn something about Barabbas and, in doing so, learn about ourselves. On the morning of His death, as the soldiers approached the place of his confinement, remember, Barabbas was sentenced to death. Barabbas must have thought they were going to lead him away on that morning to be crucified, but what a surprise it must have been to discover that they had really come to release him and that Another would die in his place.

Just for a moment, let's put ourselves in this man's place. What must have been going through Barabbas' mind? Barabbas knew that he was guilty and that he had done crimes

worthy of death. And then we see Jesus who was perfectly innocent and guiltless. Barabbas knew that Jesus was his Substitute. Barabbas knew that he had done nothing whatsoever to merit or deserve this substitutionary death of Christ. Barabbas knew that his Substitute, Jesus Christ, died so that he would not have to die. To be saved, every one of us must realize these same five facts. Barabbas is clearly a type of the guilty sinner for whom Christ died.

Well, notice with me if you would, the men who were crucified with Christ. Mark 15:27 and John 19:18 talk about this. Mark 15:27 says, *And with him they crucified two thieves...or robbers; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.* John 19:18 says, *Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.*

Christ was crucified with transgressors, according to the book of Mark, chapter 15, verses 27-28. On the day that Christ died, these two other men were identified as thieves, according to Matthew 27:38.

The two condemned men were also called malefactors, according to Luke 23:32, 39. Now, the word "malefactor" means an evil doer, a criminal, a lawbreaker, one who commits serious crimes. Christ who occupied the center cross had done no sin. He was not a malefactor. He was not an evil doer. He was not a criminal. He was not a lawbreaker.

First Peter 2:22 says, *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth...* but yet we find Him hanging on the center cross.

Now Christ was reviled by these robbers. Both of these robbers reviled Christ, according to Matthew 27:38-44, but one of the criminals, as

we read in Luke 23:39-40, had his eyes opened.

And finally, this criminal, one of the criminals, breaks the silence and speaks out, not against Christ as previously, but against his robber companion. In Luke 23:39-40, it says, ³⁹*And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.* ⁴⁰*But the other answering rebuked him... now this would be the other robber... saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?*

Now, the one who had a change of heart realized he was guilty before Rome, but more importantly, he was guilty before God, according to Luke 23:41. And we need to learn this. We are all guilty. Romans 3:23 says, *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* Romans 6:23 in the first part of that verse says, *For the wages of sin is death.*

One of the robbers learned what we all need to know and accept. God's free gift of eternal life comes through Jesus Christ, and the rest of Romans 6:23 says, *The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Now, the penitent robber could do nothing to save himself from eternal death, but he recognized One who could give him eternal life, according to Luke 23:42. It says there, *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

Instead of being part of the kingdom later, this robber is told, "You won't have to wait, because today you're going to be with the King." Luke 23:43 says, *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.***

And Jesus is not asking this. He's not putting forth a question like, "Are you going to be with me today in paradise?" No, He's making a

statement: "Today you are going to be with Me in paradise."

Well, the uniqueness of the center cross is this. Matthew 27:38 says, *Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.*

Prior to the cross, Christ dreaded the cup. Mark 14:36 says, *And he said, **Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.***

You can read in connection with this John 18:11, and we see that being mocked was blasphemy. Being spit upon was morally offensive. Being nailed to and hanging on the cross was torturous, causing great physical and mental anguish to our Savior. Being abandoned by almighty God was the great cup of agony we read about in Matthew 27:46 and Psalm 22:1-3.

Matthew 27:46 says, *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?** that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

I believe that's the cup.

Psalm 22:1-3 says, ¹*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?* ²*O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.* ³*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*

Our Savior was forsaken, the One on the center cross. Why was He forsaken? Christ was forsaken by God because of sin. Second Corinthians 5:21 in the first part of that verse says, *For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

He was made sin for us. Christ was forsaken by God because of our sin. Hebrews 12:2 says, *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

First Peter 2:24 says, *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Christ was forsaken by God for the sins of the whole world, according to I John 2:2. It says there, *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

Christ came into the world to seek and to save those who were lost. Before a person can come to a saving knowledge of Jesus, they must realize they need to be saved. And once again, the Bible says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Hebrews 9:28 says, *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

First Peter 3:18 says, *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:*

Yes, Christ was forsaken by God because God cannot look upon sin, Habakkuk 1:13, the first part of that verse says, *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.*

Well, let's look at some strange happenings on that day. There was mysterious darkness. From the sixth hour, about twelve noon, to the

ninth hour, about 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon, there was darkness over all the earth, Matthew 27:45.

Well, what caused such darkness? Certainly, it could not have been a solar eclipse, because the Passover was celebrated at the time of the full moon and a solar eclipse can only take place when there is a new moon. Even if the sun, moon, and earth were in the right position, a solar eclipse would never have lasted three hours. A solar eclipse lasts only for a matter of minutes, not hours. I believe this was the time that God turned His back and Jesus said, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Darkness in the Bible is often a symbol of the judgment of God. We read about that in Exodus 10:21-22. Genesis 1:4 says, *And God saw the light that it was good and God divided the light from the darkness.* Light is good.

We see another mysterious thing that took place and that is the rending of the veil. The veil was torn, divided in two. It was torn apart from the top to the bottom, according to Matthew 27:51. No human hand could have torn the veil. This veil was in the temple, and because of the death of Christ, God was able to remove the barrier that stood between sinful men and a holy God. Now, the tearing of the veil did not do that, but it was a symbol, saying, now, the holy of holies is open for all. All who will call upon the name of the Lord may be saved. Why? Because of His death.

Christ became our High Priest by the sacrifice of Himself on the cross, according to Hebrews 8:1. And today, God invites every believer to come before Him. The way has been opened by a mighty act of God.

Hebrews 4:16 says, *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may*

obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Now, if you've never trusted Christ as your Savior, you can't come before Him and accept Him today as your High Priest. You must first accept Him as your Savior. "Lord, come into my heart. I know I'm lost. I know I need you as my Savior. I believe You died on the cross for me, and You rose from the grave that I can have eternal life. Lord, come into my heart."

If you'll ask Him to save you today, He can become your High Priest, too. Ask Him to come into your heart. Make sure of Heaven today by trusting Jesus Christ.

Next week, we'll pick up where we've left off today, and we'll continue our study about the crucifixion of our Lord.

It's been good being with you today, and let me remind you to look at our Website, www.LRWM.org. Or write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731.

May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.