

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JAN 2ND-3RD, 2021 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

CRUCIFIED (MATTHEW 27:32-44)

"TO A PLACE CALLED GOLGOTHA"

The rough translation is Place of the Skull. This hill was beside a well-travelled road for the purpose of travelers seeing crucified criminals.

- When people were crucified, it was customary to offer wine to help dull pain, but the soldiers mixed Jesus' wine with a bitter herb making it unfit to drink. Others think that the gall was a drug that dulled pain and Jesus refused it.

WHY DID MATTHEW MOVE SO FAST?

Matt's account of the crucifixion is not as detailed as Jn 19. Matt's main objective was to solidify Jesus' identity to a mostly Jewish audience, so the details he focuses on fit his goal.

- **There is a very biased attempt to point out contradictions in the gospels, but with some research, one can easily see the congruency of the Bible.**

WHILE JESUS DIES, THE SOLDIERS PLAY

The soldiers that helped crucify Jesus gambled for His clothes. This fulfilled prophecy from Psalm 22:18. They also stood by and made sure no one tried to rescue Jesus.

- Above His head a sign read "This is Jesus King of the Jews." Crucified people had their crimes written above them. Jesus' was that He "claimed" to be King and Messiah.

MATTHEW WANTED US TO SEE THE IRONY

Matt records the script of Jesus' crime to show the reader just how absurd Jesus' treatment was.

To claim to be King of the Jews was to claim to be the Savior, a blasphemous act to the Jews and treason against Rome. **The selfish crowd saw Christ as a threat, but Jesus wasn't a tyrant king, He was a loving Savior coming to help humanity.**

MOCKED BETWEEN TWO CRIMINALS

The irony continues as we see that Jesus is placed between two thieves. Many people came out to see the spectacle or were passing by and they insulted Jesus.

- "Come down from the cross!" emphasizes **just how powerful and disciplined Jesus was in this moment. Love and supreme control won our salvation.**

THE TWO CRIMINALS

Luke 23:32-43 gives a much more detailed account of the 2 thieves. The fact that one sinner humbles himself when encountering God and one continues in rebellion and pride shows the dynamic of humanity as a whole. **What will it take to humble us? In hard times will we relent or double down on our pride and anger?**

THE DEATH OF CHRIST (MATTHEW 27:45-56)

FROM BAD TO WORSE

From 9am to noon, Jesus endured physical and emotional torture from people, but from noon to 3pm "darkness came over the whole land" and God started to turn His back on His Son.

- God had to essentially say, "I do not know You" because **Jesus was to take on the sins of the world and bear the punishment of separation from God that we deserve.**

"AT ABOUT THREE IN THE AFTERNOON"

As God turned away because Jesus became the sin of the world, He cried out "My God, My God, why have You abandoned Me?" At this point, Jesus was completely alone. Though He was absorbing all evil, He remained on the Cross.

- When some people heard this, they thought Jesus was crying out for a prophet to help Him.

JESUS GIVES UP HIS SPIRIT

As some people were feeling sorry for Him and others were still mocking, Jesus "cried out again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit."

- Some of the crowd saw Jesus' demeanor while being tortured and started to feel sorry for Him. Others loved seeing the violence and wanted to see what happened next.

3 MIRACULOUS SIGNS AT JESUS' DEATH

At the moment of Jesus' death, God provided 3 miraculous signs: 1. The veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple tore. This veil represented the barrier between God's Spirit and His people. 2. An earthquake. 3. The bodies of certain saints were resurrected to bear witness to Christ's resurrection.

SOME SOLDIERS BECAME BELIEVERS?

A centurion was a high level leader. When this particular leader along with his men who were close to the cross and probably participants in it, felt the quake "they were terrified" and said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" They knew what a god was and that the Jews believed in only One.

THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF A TURNING POINT

The soldiers realizing the true identity of Jesus was the beginning of people all around the world accepting Christ.

- **We truly see the grace of God here. The same soldiers that crucified and mocked Him are invited into the kingdom because they humbled themselves and realized His identity.**

"MANY WOMEN WHO HAD FOLLOWED..."

Many of the female disciples of Jesus remained humbly in the background mourning Jesus' crucifixion. Matt's mention of these women shows how progressive Christianity is when it comes to equality. Ironically, 10 of the 11 remaining disciples were absent, probably because of fear of being identified.

THE BURIAL (MATTHEW 27:57-61)

"WHEN IT WAS EVENING..."

Near sunset, the beginning of Sabbath, and the end of Passover, a "rich man from Arimathea named Joseph" who became a disciple approached Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

- Joseph was a rich, influential member of the Pharisees that became an integral part of the faith. **This shows us that the rich and powerful can be devoted followers as well.**

HOW WE WIELD INFLUENCE

Joseph must have been very prominent to have access to Pilate and for Pilate to have granted his request for a proper burial. **The problem isn't success, money, or influence, the problem is what people choose to do with these resources. God shows us favor in order for us to use our gifts for His Kingdom.**

THE TOMB

Jesus was placed in a tomb that was "new," meaning no one else had been buried there. After preparing Jesus' body, He was placed in the tomb and it was covered by a "great stone."

- Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph sat near the tomb and grieved the death of their Savior and friend.

SEALED AND GUARDED (MATTHEW 27:62-66)

TRYING TO KEEP JESUS IN THE TOMB

On the Sabbath (between sunset Friday and sunset Saturday) the chief priests and elders gathered before Pilate to convince him to seal up the tomb in fear of someone stealing Jesus' body because His followers believed He would "rise again" after 3 days.

- Pilate granted the request and instructed soldiers to "make it as secure as you know how."

THERE WAS NO GETTING HIM OUT NOW

Not only was the tomb sealed, but it was guarded as well, making it **virtually impossible for anyone to get in...or out.** If a prisoner escaped or a law was broken because of the negligence of a Roman soldier, that soldier would be executed. This shows us just how diligently the soldiers would guard the tomb (Mt. 28:12-14).

JUST UNTIL THE 4TH DAY

If the Jewish leaders could just make sure nothing happens until day 4, it would prove the prophecies were inaccurate. The problem will come when on day 3 His body comes up missing.

- **Even though the world still tries to suppress it, to those wanting to see and learn the truth, Jesus is active and very much alive.**

RESTRAINT & GRACE

- The crucifixion shows the power of restraint in the face of adversity. **An all-powerful Christ restrained Himself in order to fulfill His mission and offer salvation to everyone.**
- If we are full of the Holy Spirit, **we too can restrain ourselves in times of anger.** In this humble restraint, we can open the door for the gospel to work.

AN OPEN DOOR FOR ALL PEOPLE

- In the account of the crucifixion we witness soldiers, criminals, different nationalities and colors, and women all being touched by Christ. It is another biblical reminder that **God loves and welcomes all people.**
- The Cross is truly the great equalizer of humanity.

REALIZING OUR VALUE

- **If the value of an object is set by the price one is willing to pay, what does it say that God would give His only Son for us?**
- Because of the Cross we have open access to our Creator and His Spirit that can transform our lives and liberate us. As Christians, **we must live in a manner that understands our worth in Christ.** The love God has shown us we should also have a sincere love of others.
- We must share this good news with others! **So many people are struggling and trying to find hope in all of the wrong avenues, and they need to hear that they are of true value, not from their works, but from His!** Maybe we need reminding too?