

Sacrificed

Luke 23:33-46

May 16, 2021



In the leadup to today's lesson, Jesus has been sentenced by Pilate to death by crucifixion. The Chief Priests, Scribes, the Sanhedrin, and the common people who made up the crowd, all cried with loud voices for the release of Barabbas and the crucifixion of Jesus.

Our lesson today is a study of Luke's account of the Crucifixion of our Lord.

Occasionally, details from other Gospel accounts along with selected portions of **Psalm 22** will be woven into today's lesson. Bible commentator *David Tiede* says that Luke's account of the crucifixion is, "a brief 'snippet' or periscope, best grasped as the conclusion of Jesus' determined journey to Jerusalem and in the context of Luke's magisterial passion narrative." When studying each of the four Gospel accounts along with detailed prophecies in the Old Testament, such as found in **Psalms** and **Isaiah**, what comes into view is a composite picture of the sufferings of our Lord. The writers of the Epistles were also inspired by God to illuminate yet other facets of Jesus' sufferings and the victory He won on the cross.

• **Verse 33** — "And when they were come to the place, which is called *Calvary*, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left." Jesus was led to a dismal executioner's hill called The Skull. The word *Calvary* is a derivative of the word used in the Latin form, *calvaria*, which means *bare skull*. Crucifixion was designed to humiliate and degrade the person who was sentenced to death by that means. It strips the individual of honor and allows people to abuse him. It was used for the worst offenders and served as a deterrent for those who would be "enemies" of the Roman order. There are many details of the crucifixion found in **Psalm 22**, written approximately 1000 years BC. **Psalm 22:16** states, "they pierced my hands and my feet." The next detail given by *Luke* is that Jesus was crucified between two malefactors, which means criminals. In *Matthew's* account, the word *thieves* is used in the **KJV**. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself and died with criminals!



• **Verse 34** — *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.* Jesus had taught His disciples to love their enemies and to pray for those who abuse them (**Lk 6:27-28**). Here, He is practicing what He preached. **Who do you think Jesus was referring to when He said, "Father, forgive them?"** Roman soldiers routinely parted the raiment's of those being crucified and casted lots for them as they endured the often long process of watching them die. Sometimes it would take up to 24 hours. **Psalm 22:18** says, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."

• **Verse 35** — *And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.* Amazingly, some of the people referred to here were quite possibly among those who praised Him as He rode into Jerusalem not even a week before. How fast people can turn with respect to love, hate, allegiances, and devotion! They had certainly turned against Him, perhaps seeing Him as powerless and completely vulnerable to Rome's authority. They knew what was attributed to Jesus, and perhaps had even witnessed miracles done by Him. Now they had the insolence to taunt Him, so as to add fuel to His sorrow and anguish. Jesus' enemies were completely blind. If He did save Himself, He wouldn't have been able to save others. He proved He was the Son of God by staying true to His mission.



• **Verses 36 and 37** — ³⁶*And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,* ³⁷*And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.* The Roman soldiers assigned to this duty found a way to add insult to injury. There is a difference of opinion among Bible scholars concerning the offering of this drink to our Lord. Some believe it was offered to Him out of mercy, hoping it would lessen His pain. Others hold that it was offered as part of the cruel soldier's mockery. Luke's account here seems to bear out the latter. The soldiers continue in their merciless verbal jabs, telling Jesus to save Himself if He were the King of the Jews. As stated earlier, if He had saved Himself and come off the cross, there would be

no salvation for anyone else.

• **Verse 38** — *And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, This Is The King Of The Jews.* In the Roman practice of crucifixion, a written notice was placed above the head of the one being crucified. On the written notice was inscribed the charge(s) the individual was sentenced for. These written notices were intended to be a deterrent for the onlookers should they entertain thoughts of committing the same crimes. Pilate ordered Jesus' inscription to read, "This is the King of the Jews." Jesus was indeed the King of the Jews, but Pilate didn't

really mean to affirm that. Nevertheless, he wrote it anyway. It is such a testimony that our sovereign God was in charge of everything that happened on that day.

• **Verse 39** — *And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.* This particular malefactor was suffering in great agony and yet showed no remorse for his sins before God and man, so he chooses to blaspheme Jesus. Painful and desperate situations can either bring out the best in individuals or they can bring out the worst. In the desperate state he was in, if his heart had been so inclined, so able to sense the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he could have looked to Jesus by faith and called on Him to pardon him from his sins. Instead, he ridicules his only hope to escape eternity in Hell. Jesus knew this man's heart, which was hardened. Our Lord didn't respond to him.

• **Verse 40** — *But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?* The other thief recognized the scornful derision and unbelief coming from his counterpart. His response was in the form of a rebuke, questioning and chastising him for not fearing God. He may also have said it in hopes that it would jar the angry, bitter thief from the grip of his unbelief.

• **Verse 41** — *And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.* Here, the penitent thief furthers the reasoning behind his rebuke. He said that he and the other thief were getting what they deserved. Before committing their crimes, they knew they would pay this horrible price if they were caught. They knew the law. The believing thief attests to the innocence of Christ. It is not known for certain what he knew or had heard about Jesus before this day, but his heart was drawn to Him now as his physical life was nearing its end.

• **Verse 42** — *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* The repentant thief believed that Jesus could pardon him even in His weakened state before His physical death. He calls Jesus, Lord. In a request marked by humble faith, he asks Jesus to remember him when He comes into His Kingdom. We're not sure what the former thief knew about the kingdom of God and Jesus prior to this moment. It may have been the revelation of the Spirit of God that gave faith to this man and illuminated his view of the spiritual, eternal Kingdom of God awaiting those who call on the Name of the Lord. We can only speculate because the Scripture doesn't say.

• **Verse 43** — *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.* Jesus is as gracious on the cross as He is upon His throne. He not only offers hope for something beautiful to be obtained in the distant future, but He makes a promise to this now humble sufferer that will take place that very day. Oh, the matchless grace of Jesus!

• **Verse 44-45a** — ⁴⁴*And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.* ^{45a}*And the sun was darkened,* — The sixth hour is the same as 12:00 noon and the ninth hour equates to 3:00 pm. It is not likely that God used a natural phenomenon to cause the darkness, since the Paschal (Passover) Moon was full. We may recall the darkness that came over the Egyptians as one of the ten plagues recorded in the Book of Exodus. The Scripture says of that darkness, that it was a *darkness that could be felt (Ex. 10:21)*. The *Cambridge Commentary* says, “During the three hours' darkness no incident is recorded, but we trace a deepening sense of remorse and horror in the crowd. The fact that the sun was thus “turned into darkness” was, at last, that ‘sign from heaven’ for which the Pharisees had mockingly asked.” (Matthew 16-1)



• **Verse 45b** — *and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.* This was no doubt the work of God. The veil represented the separation between God and man because of man's sinfulness. The writer of our quarterly favors the view that the veil spoken of was “the one leading into the holy place (where the lampstand, incense alter, and the table of showbread were)” (page 119). The other veil separated the holy place from the holy of holies where the ark of the covenant was located.

• **Verse 46** — *And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.* Nearing His entrance into the realm of physical death, Jesus cries out with a loud voice. In **John 10:17-18** Jesus says, ¹⁷*Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.* ¹⁸*No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*” Now Jesus releases, or breathes out his spirit into the hands of His Father. This was a divine signature that His agony and death on the cross was the sovereign purpose of God, not an unfortunate miscarriage of justice.

1. **O how He loves you and me. O how He loves you and me; He gave His life, what more could He give?
O how He loves you; O how He loves me; O how He loves you and me!**
2. **Jesus to Calvary did go, His love for mankind did show; what He did there brought hope from despair:
O how He loves you; O how He loves me; O how He loves you and me!**