

Tuesdays

in Classroom 5 Taught by Don Hooton

#### **Overview**

- Jesus' Crucifixion is the greatest paradox of all time.
  - It is the picture of the justice of God in the cloud of human in injustice.
  - While humanity condemns and kills an innocent Jesus, God makes the innocent victim the innocent Lamb of Offering.
  - While humanity acts in self-interest, God acts in the interest of others.
  - While humanity seeks to end the threat of His word, God uses it to spread the word of His Son.
  - The brutal and fearful symbol of the cross became a beacon of hope for the world
  - God's most holy purposes were worked out through the cruel hands that whipped and nailed Him to the cross. The plot to murder the Son of God became the way by which the world was delivered from Satan's control.
  - Everything was wrong with Jesus' crucifixion. There were manifestations of the worst snapshots of human hatred, jealousy, and greed. But out of all these human wrongs came the everything that God would supply in it to make humans right and bring eternal life to them.
  - As Jesus enters the Valley of the Shadow of Death, God will raise Him to Walk in Newness of Life.

- (26) Simon carries Jesus' cross.
  - It is reasonable to assume that Jesus was in good physical condition up until the night of His arrest.
    - "The rigors of Jesus' ministry (that is, travelling by foot throughout Palestine) would have precluded any major physical illness or a weak general constitution." (Dr. William Edwards in the article "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ" from the Journal of the American Medical Association, 3/21/86).
  - Before Jesus was even to be scourged, His physical condition was weak.
    - Yet, between 9 p.m. Thursday and 9 a.m. Friday, Jesus suffered many things.
      - He suffered great emotional stress in Gethsemane, indicated by His sweat becoming like great drops of blood (Luke 22:44).
      - "Although this is a very rare phenomenon, bloody sweat (hematidrosis or hemohidrosis) may occur in highly emotional states or in persons with bleeding disorders. As a result of hemorrhage into the sweat glands, the skin becomes fragile and tender." (Edwards).
      - From the abandonment by His disciples, the physical beating at the home of the high priest, the sleeplessness and not being forced to carry the beam of the cross some two or more miles, these made Jesus especially vulnerable to the effects of scourging.
    - The goal of scourging was to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse and death.
      - "Scourging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution, and only women and Roman senators or soldiers (except in cases of desertion) were exempt." (Edwards).
      - "As the Roman soldiers repeatedly struck the victim's back with full force, the iron balls would cause deep contusions, and the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and subcutaneous tissues. Then, as the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh. Pain and blood loss generally set the stage for circulatory shock. The extent of blood loss may well have determined how long the victim would survive the cross." (Edwards).
      - "The severe scourging, with its intense pain and appreciable blood loss, most probably left Jesus in a pre-shock state. Moreover, hematidrosis had rendered his skin particularly tender. The physical and mental abuse meted out by the Jews and the Romans, as well as the lack of food, water, and sleep, also contributed to his generally weakened state. Therefore, even before the actual crucifixion, Jesus' physical condition was at least serious and possibly critical." (Edwards).

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- As they led Him away: Before Jesus was led away, His clothes were stripped off. This was painful and opened wounds that had just begun to heal.
  - "When the soldiers tore the robe from Jesus' back, they probably reopened the scourging wounds." (Edwards)
- As He was led to crucifixion, Jesus was like all victims forced to carry the wood He would hang upon.
  - The victim would carry the horizontal crossbeam known as the patibulum to the site of death (weighing some say between 75-125 pounds). He was usually stripped naked, and his hands were often tied to the wood. At the site of the execution, the crossbeam would be connected to the upright beam, and the victim would be nailed to the structure prior to the crucifix being hoisted upward.
  - The upright beams of a cross were usually fixed in a visible place outside of the city walls by a major road. It is likely that on many occasions, Jesus passed by the very upright He would later be crucified upon.
  - Because crucifixions were public events, the large crowd (particularly after the trial events) is not surprising.
  - According to custom, a Roman guard led the victim with a sign that carried his name and crime, calling oth out along the way of humiliation. They usually didn't take the shortest way so as many people as possible could see how the Roman Empire treated its enemies and to perpetuate the suffering of the victim.
- The soldiers "compelled" Simon, from Cyrene in North Africa (modern day Libya), to carry the cross.
  - There is no contradiction between Matthew (27:32) and John (19:17). Matthew says that as they came out of the city, the Romans elected someone else to carry the patibulum. This implies that Jesus had been carrying the crossbeam Himself from the location of His conviction to the gates of the city. In John's account, the so-called "inconsistency" dissipates. John records that as Jesus journeyed out of the city, He bore His own cross. This is the very same observation made by Matthew. He recorded that Simon the Cyrene was ordered to carry the crossbeam from outside the gate to Golgotha. Matthew simply provides an extra detail to the same observation made by John.
  - Simon would have likely been visiting Jerusalem as a Passover pilgrim from his native land (some 800 miles or 1300 kilometers away).
  - Because the Romans were the rule of law, Simon was not given an option. Perhaps he was chosen because he was an obvious foreigner and more conspicuous in the crowd.
  - Still, there is reason to believe that the event transformed him and that Simon became a follower of Jesus or at least, his sons did (Mark 15:21 and Romans 16:13).

- (27-31) Jesus speaks to the Daughters of Jerusalem.
  - Jesus essentially told them, "Don't weep for Me, weep for those who reject Me."
    - "As for the words themselves, they are especially noteworthy, because they constitute the last connected discourse of the Savior before he died. All that he said afterwards was fragmentary and mainly of the nature of prayer." (Spurgeon)
    - Blessed are the barren: "Normally, Jewish custom did just the opposite, praised motherhood and stigmatized the barren. But the days of the fall of Jerusalem would be so severe that women would far prefer not to have children, rather than have them go through the ordeal that awaited the city." (Pate)
- For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?
  - The idea is "If this is the fate of the innocent (Jesus referring to Himself), what will happen to the guilty (nation)?"
    - Jesus spoke this in a more immediate sense, knowing the fate to come upon Jerusalem.
      - "With his calm, prophetic eye he looks beyond the intervening years and sees Jerusalem besieged and captured. He speaks as though he heard the awful shrieks which betokened the entrance of the Romans into the city, and the smiting down of young and old, and women and children." (Spurgeon).
  - Of course, Jesus' words of judgment on the city was God's judgment on the entire nation. And if it would be a widening application on peoples who were then scattered across the Empire, it is possible to apply this in an even wider sense of any who would reject Him.
    - "Ye need not weep because Christ died one-tenth so much as because your sins rendered it necessary that he should die. You need not weep over the crucifixion, but weep over your transgression, for your sins nailed the Redeemer to the accursed tree. To weep over a dying Savior is to lament the remedy; it were wiser to bewail the disease." (Spurgeon)

- Jesus is crucified (32-38).
  - When they had come to the place called the Skull (i.e. Calvary). Calvary means, "place of a skull," and it was the place where criminals were crucified.
    - "It is a telling criticism that Fitzmeyer, a Jesuit theologian, observes in an aside comment on v. 32 that the account of Jesus' road to the cross says nothing about the fourteen stations of the cross, such as the falls of Jesus, the meeting with His mother or with Veronica ('true image'). Such later traditions, though certainly sentimental in appeal, seem to have no historical basis."
  - The simple, "There they crucified Him" needed no explanation for an event in the time so public.
    - "Although the Romans did not invent crucifixion, they perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment that was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering.
    - "The combination of scourging and crucifixion made death on the cross especially brutal. The victim's back was first torn open by the scourging, then the clotting blood was ripped open again when the clothes were torn off before crucifixion. The victim was thrown on the ground to fix his hands to the crossbeam, and the wounds on the back were again torn open and contaminated with dirt. Then, as the victim hung on the cross each breath caused the painful wounds on the back to scrape against the rough wood of the upright beam.
    - "When the nail was driven through the wrists, it severed the large median nerve. This stimulated nerve produced excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms, and often gave the victim a claw-like grip in the hands.
    - "Beyond the extreme pain, the major effect of crucifixion was to restrict normal breathing. The weight of the body, pulling down on the arms and shoulders, tended to fix the respiratory muscles in an inhalation state and hinder exhalation. The lack of adequate respiration resulted in severe muscle cramps, which further hindered breathing. To get a good breath, the victim had to push against the feet, and flex the elbows, pulling from the shoulders. Putting the weight of the body on the feet produced searing pain, and flexing of the elbows twisted the hands hanging on the nails. Lifting the body for a breath also painfully scraped the back against the rough wooden post. Each effort to get a proper breath was agonizing, exhausting, and led to a sooner death.
    - "Not uncommonly, insects would light upon or burrow into the open wounds or the eyes, ears, and nose of the dying and helpless victim, and birds of prey would tear at these sites. Moreover, it was customary to leave the corpse on the cross to be devoured by predatory animals." (Edwards).

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- Jesus is crucified (32-38).
  - Death from crucifixion could come from many sources: acute shock from blood loss; being too exhausted to breathe any longer; dehydration; stress-induced heart attack, or congestive heart failure leading to a cardiac rupture. If the victim did not die quickly enough, the legs were broken, and the victim was soon unable to breathe because of the posture of the crucified person.
    - How bad was crucifixion? We get our English word excruciating from the Roman word "out of the cross." "Consider how heinous sin must be in the sight of God, when it requires such a sacrifice!" (Clarke)
  - This event is historical. The existing mentions of Jesus in ancient extrabiblical literature each highlight His death on the cross.
    - A letter written by Mara bar Serapion to his son (ca. A.D. 73).
    - Josephus, the Jewish historian (ca. A.D. 90).
    - Tacitus, the Roman historian (ca. A.D. 110-120).
    - The Babylonian Talmud (ca. A.D. 200).
- Jesus on the Cross.
  - Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." He prayed not only for monotheists but also for the pagan Romans who were His executioners, asking God the Father to not hold this sin against them (c.f. Matthew 5:44).
  - In this, Jesus recognized the blindness of His enemies in His prayer. This did not excuse their guilt, but He saw they did not know what they were doing.
  - "In the prayer..., prophecy was fulfilled, He made intercession for the transgressors, Isaiah 53:12." (Clarke)
- Around the Cross of Jesus.
  - And they divided His garments and cast lot that John says (19:24) was to fulfill prophecy (another quote from Psalm 22, v.18).
  - Even rulers sneered and soldiers mocked. Offering him sour wine (Strong's, Vinegar, sour wine mixed with water, a common drink of Roman soldiers. From oxus; vinegar, i.e. Sour wine.
  - Jesus was not honored or encouraged as He hung on the cross. Instead He was scorned and mocked.
- The Inscription
  - In John 19:21, Jewish religious leaders objected to this title. They felt it was false, because they did not believe that Jesus was their King. They also believed it was demeaning, because it showed Rome's power to humiliate and torture even the "King of the Jews." Yet Pilate would not alter this, and when asked to take down the inscription he answered, What I have written, I have written (John 19:22)

- Jesus and the Criminals (39-43).
  - One of the criminals crucified with Jesus joined in the mockery and scorn.
    - He reasoned that if Jesus were the Messiah, He should save those who are being crucified with Him (save Yourself and us).
  - The other criminal, answering, rebuked him:
    - Both Matthew (Matthew 27:44) and Mark (Mark 15:32) indicate that both criminals mocked Jesus. Therefore, someone in the time he spent next to Jesus, he came to see things differently and understand Jesus.
      - He respected God (Do you not even fear God).
      - He knew his own sin (under the same condemnation... we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds).
      - He must have realized who Jesus was (this Man has done nothing wrong). Perhaps, he had even witnessed events before that day.
  - Then, he asked to be remembered when Jesus came in His kingdom (remember, the King Jesus writing above Jesus' head would have been the talk of the crowd at the base of the Cross)..
    - In verse 42, "... The KJV, NKJV, says He called Jesus LORD!
      - Was he a disciple of John who baptized with the baptism for the remission of his sins (Mark 1:4)? John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.
    - It is especially important to notice that there is nothing in the text to indicate that this is the point in time at which the thief asked **the forgiveness of his sins**. He only asked to be remembered in Jesus' Kingdom.
    - And it is important to note that Jesus responded that way:
      - Today you will be with Me in Paradise.
      - we note that every major Bible translation inserts the comma before the word today so that "truly I say to you" (used some 60 times by Jesus to introduce something important) is separate and thus, the KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV, ESV, and RSV all agree that Jesus was speaking of the time that the thief would enter paradise.
      - In Paradise: Paradise was a Persian word meaning 'garden, park,' and used in the Septuagint for the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8) and used again in Isaiah 51:3. Here it is the state of bliss which Jesus promised to the criminal directly after death.

- Jesus dies (44-46).
  - There was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour:
    - The remarkable darkness all over the earth showed the agony of creation itself in the Creator's suffering. "Origen (Contra Celsus, ii,33) and Eusebius (Chron.) quote words from Phlegon (a Roman historian) in which he makes mention of an extraordinary solar eclipse as well as of an earthquake about the time of the crucifixion." (Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Eerdmans, 1988).
    - A Roman historian named Phlegon wrote: "In the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad, there was an extraordinary eclipse of the sun: at the sixth hour, the day turned into dark night, so that the stars in heaven were seen; and there was an earthquake." (Cited in Clarke)
  - The veil of the temple was torn in two:
    - The tearing of the temple veil signified at least two things. First, now man has free access to the throne of grace by the cross. Second, no one should ever think again that God dwells in temples made with hands. And third, Matthew says it was from "top to bottom" meaning it started from heaven to earth.
  - Then Jesus had cried out with a loud voice:
    - Jesus cried out something with a loud voice, then He spoke to God the Father in the lines that follow. John 19:30 tells us what He said: it is finished, which is one word in the Greek (tetelestai – "paid in full").
      - See Romans 3:20-26.
      - This was the cup the cup of God's righteous wrath that He trembled at drinking (Luke 22:39-46, Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15). On the cross, Jesus bore the sins of many (c.f. Isaiah 53).
      - "The fact that He could raise His voice, when normally a crucified person could barely gasp for breath, indicates that Jesus was still in control of His destiny."
    - Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: His work on the cross accomplished, with prayer Jesus yielded His living spirit to God the Father as He yielded His body to death on the cross.
    - I commend My spirit: "Or, I will commit my spirit-I deposit my soul in thy hands. Another proof of the immateriality of the soul, and of its separate existence when the body is dead." (Clarke)
  - Having said this, He breathed His last can be seen to echo Genesis 2:7. There, God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and here, the second Adam, breathed out His last to give life.

- (47-49) The reaction of bystanders at Jesus' death.
  - When the centurion saw what had happened, he praised God and declared the innocence of Jesus.
    - There was something so remarkable about Jesus that he said something about Him that he could say about no one else.
  - The whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned:
    - John Gill's commentary says, "they smote their breasts; as conscious of guilt, and as fearing some dreadful judgment would fall upon them, and their nation, for this sin of crucifying Christ. The Persiac version reads, "they went back, and kneeled down, and prostrated themselves to the ground"; as being in the utmost astonishment, confusion, fear, and dread:
    - Others went home sadly; they were too close to Jesus to see how remarkable His death was, and they forgot His promise to rise again.
- (50-56) Jesus is buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.
  - Bodies of crucified victims were usually left on their crosses to rot or be eaten by wild animals. But the Jews wanted no such horror displayed during the Passover season, and Romans were known to grant the corpses to friends or relatives for proper burial. And a council member, Joseph of Arimathea, asked for this privilege and it was granted him by Pilate.
  - According to the third-century C.E. Jewish writing, men could only prepare the corpse of a man but women could prepare both men and women. In other sources, it is said that perfumes or ointments were used for this washing. The body was wrapped and bound in strips of cloth. John 11 has such preparations in view: Lazarus's "hands and feet [were] bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth" (John 11:44). Thus prepared, male relatives and friends would carry the corpse in a procession toward the place of interment, accompanied by friends, neighbors, and relatives. Such processions are described in the New Testament (Luke 7:12, for example) and in Josephus, who emphasizes the splendor of Herod's funerary cortege (War I.671-3).
  - But because this was the even of Sabbath (23:54), they hurriedly began the process but were returning after Sabbath to complete the preparation (24:1).

# The Reading Schedule:

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1/7 | The Revelation of the Cross (9:18-50)
1/14 | Public Challenge and Mission of the 70 (9:51-10:24)
1/21 | Teaching the Kingdom (10:25-11:13)
1/28 | Teaching the Kingdom (11:14-11:54)
2/4 & 11 | Teaching the Kingdom (12:1-12:59)
2/18 | Teaching the Kingdom (13:1-35)
2/25 | Conflict and Crises (14:1-32)
3/3 | Parables of the Lost (15:1-32)
3/10 | Challenges to the King (16:1-31)
3/17 | Teaching Discipleship in the Kingdom (17:1-37)
3/24 | More Teaching of the Kingdom (18:1-43)
3/31 | The March to Jerusalem (18:31-19:27)
4/7 | The Passion Begins (19:28-44)
4/14 | Conflict in Jerusalem (19:45-21:4)
4/21 | Predictions about Jerusalem (21:5-38)
4/28 | The Last Supper and Betrayal (22:1-53)
5/5 | The Arrest and Trial (22:54-23:25)
5/12 | The Crucifixion (23:26-56)
5/19 | The Resurrection (24:1-53)
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