



STORY

7/17/03

The Crucifixion of Jesus (Part 1) - Matthew 27:32-44; Mark 15:21-32; Luke 23:26-43; John 19:17-27

TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, may the love that You demonstrated for me on the cross fill my heart with love and appreciation. Truly You have rescued my soul from hell through Your innocent sufferings and death. I desire now to show my love to You by teaching the blessed truths of Your crucifixion to my students. As Your Holy Spirit has already worked faith in my heart, so also I pray that He might now work through me to strengthen the faith of these little ones. Give success to my humble effort for Your name's sake. Amen.

VOCABULARY

Cyrene – an important city in Libya, North Africa.

Gall – a poison which when used in small portions and diluted with wine or vinegar became a mind-numbing narcotic. Jewish women often gave this drug to the condemned.

Cast lots – an ancient form of gambling.

OUTER AIM

The Crucifixion of Jesus, the Son of God.

INNER AIM

Jesus allowed Himself to be crucified to pay for the sins of the world.

BACKGROUND

(Rupprecht Bible History References Vol. 2, pp. 395 - 403)

It was about 9:00 a.m. when Jesus and the two criminals were nailed to their crosses. Crucifixion was most often reserved for the very worst criminals, and then only for slaves and non-Roman citizens. The hatred of the Jews is demonstrated in that they not only wanted Jesus executed, they delighted in His suffering and asked for crucifixion.

V. 32 (On the way to Calvary, Simon of Cyrene, the women who mourned)

- ▶ It was customary for the condemned criminal to carry his own cross to the place of crucifixion.
- ▶ Jesus, however, was exhausted. Not only was He sleep deprived and in anguish of soul, He had also been whipped by the Romans – a particularly brutal form of punishment.
- ▶ When Jesus collapsed under the load of the cross, the Romans conscripted Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross.
- ▶ Simon, a Jew from northern Africa, was just entering Jerusalem, probably on his way to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- ▶ Mark further explains that he is the father of Alexander and Rufus. Most believe that this is the same Rufus mentioned later by Paul in Romans 16:13 – one who had obviously been converted to Christianity.
- ▶ Jesus was followed by a great multitude, including women who mourned for Him.
- ▶ We can not be sure of the makeup of this group of women but we are told that the women took pity on Jesus being a condemned man.
- ▶ Thinking not of Himself but of these women, Jesus turned to them and warned them of the disaster about to befall Jerusalem.
- ▶ This prophesy was fulfilled forty years later (70 AD) when the Romans under Titus laid siege to Jerusalem and destroyed the temple.
- ▶ Indeed the eyewitness accounts from the historian Josephus tell us that the suffering in Jerusalem was

unparalleled.

- ▶ Cannibalism was rampant, proving Jesus' words that the women would wish they had never given birth.
- V. 33-36 (The nailing to the cross, the wine and gall, the dividing of his garments)
- ▶ They crucified Jesus on the hill outside of Jerusalem called Golgotha, meaning "The Place of the Skull." The place today is also known in the Christian Church as Calvary, taken from the Latin Calvaria, meaning "the Skull."
 - ▶ Heavy iron nails were used to fasten the condemned to the cross. These nails were most often driven through the wrists and heels. In Jesus' case we know that the nails did not break a bone (cf. John 19:33-36 and Psalm 34:20).
 - ▶ This helps also to complete the picture of Jesus as our Passover Lamb. No bone of the Passover lambs in the Old Testament could be broken. (Ex. 12:46 & Num. 9:12)
 - ▶ Nails could have been driven between the radius and ulna in the wrist or between the metacarpal palm bones of the hand without breaking a bone. Likewise a nail could be driven between the metatarsal foot bones or between the Achilles tendon and the tibia without breaking a bone.
 - ▶ Several types of crosses were used by the Romans in crucifixion.
 - ▶ Since Pilate attached a sign to the cross above Jesus' head, we can be fairly confident that the common Latin cross design was probably used.
 - ▶ Jesus refused to drink the wine or vinegar mixed with gall since it was a mind-numbing narcotic. He wanted to drink the cup of suffering to the last drop, in full possession of all His faculties.
 - ▶ It was the privilege of the Roman soldiers to divide the meager possessions of the one crucified. Gambling was a favorite pastime among them. This too was in fulfillment of a prophecy in Psalm 22:18.

V. 37 (The sign on the cross above Jesus)

- ▶ Pilate wrote the sign in three languages to ensure that everyone passing by could read what it said.
- ▶ This was meant as an insult to the Jews, whom Pilate blamed for the death of this innocent man.
- ▶ The Jews wanted the sign changed to "He said, I am the King of the Jews." In a rare show of resolve, Pilate refused to change what he had written.

V. 38-44 (Jesus' first words, "Father forgive them," the mocking and blasphemy)

- ▶ Only Luke records Jesus' first words from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."
- ▶ In the midst of such great agony Jesus' thoughts and prayers are for His tormenters.
- ▶ What perfect love! Jesus recognized what the soldiers and the Jews did not – the enormity of the sin of crucifying the very Son of God. In great love Jesus wanted even this great sin to be charged to His own account.
- ▶ The soldiers, the Jews watching, the people passing by, even the two criminals crucified with Him began to mock and blaspheme Jesus as He hung on the cross.
- ▶ The cruelty directed against the perfect, meek, loving Savior of all mankind is beyond our comprehension.
- ▶ Truly the evil hatred of man and devil was being meted out upon the sinless Son of God.

Luke 23:39-43 (Jesus' words to the repentant criminal)

- ▶ The words and actions of Jesus have the desired effect upon one of those crucified with him.
- ▶ In faith the man defends Jesus from the blasphemy of the other malefactor and asks Jesus to remember him.
- ▶ In telling the man that he would be with him "today in paradise" Jesus signifies the transition at death from time to eternity. Jesus said "today" because time stopped for the man at death. This was to be his last day, for he was about to enter eternity. It is difficult for our human minds to comprehend timelessness, and how there is no passage of time for those who through death are carried into eternity.

John 19:25-27 (Jesus' words to His mother Mary and John)

- ▶ Several believers were also present in the crowd near the cross, among them were Jesus' mother and the Apostle John.
- ▶ Even at this point in His suffering Jesus' thoughts center on the needs of others.
- ▶ In tender love He considers the sorrow of his dear mother.
- ▶ Mary loved Jesus as no other mother could love her child, for she loved Him both as her own son and as her Savior.
- ▶ Jesus offers to His mother the Apostle John as her son.
- ▶ To John (the disciple Jesus loved) Jesus offered Mary as his mother. Jesus knew that John would not be martyred but would live to be an old man.
- ▶ He was the perfect choice to care for Mary as she grew old.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Jesus, when I hear again all of the misery You had to suffer because of what I have done wrong, it makes me feel very sorry and ashamed. Please forgive me for causing You such agony by my sins. Though You suffered greatly for me, now I also know that You rose again from the dead and now live glorified in heaven! Help me always to repent of my sins, and to look only to You for forgiveness and eternal life. How I look forward to seeing You as You are now in heaven! Please hold me in Your hand until that day. Amen.

PRESENTATION

Present the story in all its various points using the harmony prepared for that purpose.

APPLICATIONS

1. Whom would we probably be thinking about if we had to suffer like Jesus? (Ourselves.) Whom did Jesus think about? (Everyone else.)
2. The example of Jesus on the cross teaches us that even when we are punished unjustly we are still never to seek revenge. Think of all that was done to Jesus. What caused His suffering? (My sins.) Has anyone ever done anything to us as bad as what we caused Jesus to suffer? What then should we do to people who hurt us, no matter what they do? (Forgive them, as Jesus did.)
3. There is nothing to indicate that the repentant thief was baptized, yet Jesus said that he would go to heaven. What does this tell us about baptism?

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

Mark 16:16 - He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

John 1:29- Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Ephesians 1:7 - We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Middle any of the above and...

1 John 2:2 - And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Matthew 20:28 - The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Upper any of the above and...

2 Corinthians 5:19 - God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

1 Peter 1:18-19 - ...Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, ...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

HYMN CHOICES

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (TLH #175)

"On My Heart Imprint Thine Image" (TLH #179)

"Lord Jesus, We Give Thanks to Thee" (TLH #173)