

Jesus Was Crucified

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why the Jewish religious leaders, Pilate and the soldiers all showed their contempt for Jesus by the choices they made that day. In this topic, we will learn about some of the events that happened while Jesus was on the cross.

In Matthew 27:33-35, we read, “And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted *it*, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: ‘They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.’” We see that the place where Jesus was crucified is described. The place was called Golgotha, which means *Place of a Skull*. It may have been given that name because it was the side of the hill that looked like the skull of a person. The name “Calvary” also means *skull*. Luke 23:33 says, “And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.” As a result, both names that are used for the place mean *skull*.

We see that Jesus was given wine mixed with gall to drink. Mark 15:23 says, “Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take *it*.” In this verse, we see that the gall is called myrrh. The word “gall” means *something bitter*. Myrrh was a drug that would lessen the pain and dull the senses. As a result, when Jesus tasted the mixture, He refused to drink it. Here, we see that Jesus was focused on what He had come to do as He paid the penalty for our sins. He also had seven things that He would say from the cross as a part of His ministry on the cross. As a result, He did not want to drink anything that would hinder that ministry. This is a great example for our own ministry.

We see that the soldiers placed Jesus on the cross and then divided His clothes as they watched Him. John 19:23-24 says, “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,’ that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: ‘They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.’ Therefore the soldiers did these things.” The soldiers were allowed to have the clothes of those they crucified as a bonus for this particular kind of duty. The soldiers divided most of the clothing into four parts so that each soldier could have a part. However, the coat of Jesus was woven without a seam, so it was one complete piece of material. That gave the coat more value. As a result, the soldiers decided to cast lots to see which one of them would receive the coat. They did not realize that they were fulfilling the words of Psalm 22:18.

Matthew 27:36-40 says, “Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His

head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’” It was the responsibility of the soldiers to watch until the person being crucified died. They also had another responsibility. They were to put a sign over the head of a person being crucified listing the crimes for which he was being crucified. Jesus had committed no crime and so Pilate had the soldiers write the charge the religious leaders brought against Jesus.

We see that the religious leaders were not happy with the words Pilate had written. John 19:19-22 says, “Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, *and* Latin. Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, ‘Do not write, “The King of the Jews,” but, “He said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’”’ Pilate answered, ‘What I have written, I have written.’” Pilate had decided to please the Jews and put Jesus to death because of fear. However, Pilate wanted to try to show the Jews that he was still the one in control and refused to change the wording on the sign.

Meanwhile, there were also two robbers who were crucified with Jesus. We see that Jesus was placed between these two other men so that there was one cross on His right side and the other on His left. These two men heard what those who were mocking Jesus were saying to Jesus and later began to mock Jesus as well. We see that those who were walking by the place where Jesus was being crucified blasphemed Jesus. The word translated “blasphemed” means *to speak evil of, to revile or to blaspheme*. The word translated “wagging” means *to shake from side-to-side or to move*. One of the ways they blasphemed Jesus was by saying, “You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself!” Here, we see that they did not understand what Jesus had said. John 2:19 says, “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’” Then, John 2:21-22 adds, “But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.” Here, we see that those walking by the cross changed the words to accuse Jesus of destroying the temple. Then, they told Him to prove who He was by doing a miracle.

However, their greatest blasphemy was the second statement, “If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” Those who made this blasphemy just showed that they were imitating their leader, Satan. Matthew 4:3 says, “Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’” Satan first questioned the fact that Jesus is God and then followed that question by telling Jesus to prove it by performing a miracle. That is exactly what those who were passing by the cross did here. In John 6:38, Jesus said, “‘For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.’” In both cases, Jesus could have proved He was God by doing a miracle. However, He came to do the will of the Father and it was the will of the Father that Jesus die on the cross in our place and for our sins.

We see that the religious leaders also came to the cross to mock Jesus. Matthew 27:41-44 says, “Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, “I am the Son of God.”’” Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.” In this verse, we see that the chief priests, the scribes and the elders all came to watch Jesus die on the cross. Their hatred for Jesus caused them to want to come and see Him die.

However, they came to do more than just watch Jesus die. We see that they also came to mock and blaspheme Jesus. Even in their blasphemy, the religious leaders were forced to admit that Jesus was able to do miracles that were impossible for them to do. Their first statement was, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save.” The word translated “saved” means *to rescue from destruction, to save from suffering or to save from eternal judgment*. In Mark 5:34, we see that this word is used when Jesus healed a woman from an infirmity that had lasted for twelve years and no doctor was able to heal. Mark 5:34 says, “And He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.’” However, Jesus came to save people from eternal judgment. John 3:17 says, “‘For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.’” Luke 19:10 adds, “‘For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.’” Jesus did save others, both physically and spiritually. In addition, He had the power to save Himself, if He so chose.

Second, the religious leaders said, “If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.” This statement makes it clear that the religious leaders did not recognize Jesus as the King of Israel. However, the religious leaders showed, by their actions, just three days later that they would not have believed Christ if He would have come down from the cross. We see these same religious leaders in Matthew 28:11-13. “Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, “His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.’”” Here, we see that they did not believe when they heard that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Third, the religious leaders said, “He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” Just a few days earlier, John 12:28 tells us Jesus had said, “‘Father, glorify Your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, ‘I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.’” The religious leaders were unwilling to believe that Jesus is God. We see that the mocking of the religious leaders caused the two robbers to also mock Jesus. However, one of them later repented. Luke 23:42-43 says, “Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’” We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain how the religious leaders, and many others, showed their contempt for Jesus. At the same time, we want to help them learn to explain that those who repented, even at the last moment, such as

the one thief, received forgiveness of sins and eternal life. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.