

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

All Ages

Easter Sunday

Who is Jesus?

Who is Jesus?

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will present the Gospel and the importance of our response by looking at the responses people had to Jesus when He was on the cross.

Key Verses

Mark 15:15-39; 16:1-14—Main Teaching Passage

Mark 14:43-15:14 (Background)

Matthew 26-28; Luke 22-24; John 18-20 (Parallel Passages)

Mark 8:27-29

Romans 10:9

Memory Verse - John 20:31

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

Hook

Read Mark 8:27-29. In the story, Jesus asks Peter, "Who do you say that I am?" Ask the students who they think Jesus is.

We are going to see today that the question, "Who is Jesus?" is the most important question we will ever answer. In today's story, several people will show what they think by the way they act. Let's see if we can figure out if they really know who Jesus is.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

For today's study, our focus will be on the different reactions that those who watched the crucifixion had. As there will be some who are at church for the first time, inform them that a long time ago, God sent His Son Jesus to live on the earth. Jesus lived a perfect life, but the Jewish religious leaders were jealous of Him. They captured Him and took Him to Pilate the governor who sentenced Him to death.

During the crucifixion sequence, Mark shows us how those around Jesus reacted to Him. Mark 15:16-20 says that the Roman soldiers made fun of Jesus. They clearly did not realize who He was. Since the Jews said He claimed to be king, they treated Him like a defeated king, giving Him a crown of thorns. After the taunting, they brought Jesus to the place He would be crucified and hung Him on the cross. Verses 29-32 tell us that while on the cross, those who watched also mocked Him. They challenged Him to come down from the cross and pointed out that He saved others but could not save Himself. Even the two men who were crucified on either side of Him made fun of Him (though Luke tells us that one of them ended up getting saved). Just like the soldiers, the religious leaders did not see Jesus for who He truly was. After Jesus cried out and died, the Roman centurion (soldier) standing beside Him said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." On the third day, we see in Mark 16 that Mary Magdalene and some others went to the tomb where He was buried, only to discover that the tomb was empty. Because He had no sin, Jesus had risen from the dead, proving that the centurion was right: Jesus is the Son of God!

LOOK

In Mark 8:27-29, Peter responded to an important question: who is Jesus? Peter answered that Jesus was the Christ, which means that He was the King God promised who would save mankind. In the story of the cross, we see many of the characters answering this question too. The soldiers did not think He was a true King. In fact, they made fun of Him and treated Him like a false king. Likewise the crowds and the Jewish religious leaders thought He was a false savior. They challenged Him to prove that He was the Savior by coming off of the cross. Neither the soldiers nor the crowds believed that Jesus was the Christ. However, one character saw Jesus for who He truly was. When the centurion saw Jesus' death, he declared that Jesus was the Son of God. On the third day, what the centurion said was proven true. Jesus rose from the dead, showing that He was no ordinary man, but that He was the Savior, the Son of God.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

So what does it mean that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior? Jesus came down from heaven to earth to save us from sin and death. Sin and death are the two great enemies that man had never been able to overcome. Every person has sinned against God by disobeying His law. We have all lied, cheated, stolen, and loved other people and things more than God. All disobedience deserves a punishment, and the punishment for sin is death—not just physical death, but eternal separation from God. However, God did not want to be separated from us, so He sent His Son to earth to provide a way, the only way, for us to be with Him.

Jesus lived a perfect life but was crucified as a criminal. On the cross, He took the punishment of sin for us (in our place), defeating sin. Yet because He had no sin of His own, death had no hold on Him and He rose from the dead, defeating death. He now offers us victory over sin and death if we trust in Him as Savior and Lord of our lives.

The most important question we will ever answer is the one the people in our story today answered: who is Jesus? Will we disbelieve, like the soldiers and crowds, or will we trust that He is who He said He is, like the centurion? To receive His promise of victory over sin and death, all we have to do is confess that He is the Lord (Master) of our lives and believe that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9).

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Offer the students and opportunity to ask Jesus to be their Lord and Savior.

As a class, memorize John 20:31.

Review the lesson by going through each of the characters and asking if they were right about who Jesus was.

Pray: Praise Jesus for His sacrifice on the cross and worship Him for rising again from the dead.

Family Question: What does it mean that Jesus is the Christ?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Mark 15:16-41 by David Guzik

B. The humiliation and death of Jesus.

1. ([Mark 15:16-20](#)) Jesus is beaten and mocked.

Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His head, and began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

a. **Clothed Him with purple... twisted a crown of thorns:** A king of that day often wore a purple robe and a gilded wreath of leaves. The rag of purple and crown of thorns mocked this common practice.

i. "It was probably a scarlet military cloak, 'a cast-off and faded rag, but with color enough left in it to suggest the royal purple.'" (Wessel)

b. **And began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"** It was common to greet the Roman emperor with the cry, "Hail, Caesar!" (*Ave Caesar!*) These mockers twisted this into **Hail, King of the Jews!**

c. **Then they struck Him:** From [Matthew 27:29](#), it seems that the soldiers first gave Jesus the **reed** — a stick — to hold as if it were a royal scepter. Then they grabbed it from His hand and hit Him in the head with it, adding great insult to all their injury against Jesus.

i. We should expect that the Roman soldiers were tense during the Passover season, because it was a time of messianic expectation among the Jews and riots were likely. Mocking and beating a bruised, bleeding, exhausted man provided a few moments of stress-relieving entertainment.

ii. **Bowing the knee** was a standard act of respect to any king. Instead of giving the normal kiss of warm respect, they **spat on Him. Spat on Him** is better translated *kept spitting on Him*.

iii. "See that scarlet robe; it is a contemptuous imitation of the imperial purple that a king wears... See, above all, that crown upon his head. It has rubies in it, but the rubies are composed of his own blood, forced from his blessed temples by the cruel thorns. See, they pay him homage; but the homage is their own filthy spittle which runs down his cheeks. They bow the knee before him, but it is only in mockery. They salute him with the cry, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' but it is done in scorn. Was there ever grief like his?" (Spurgeon)

d. **Led Him out to crucify Him:** After a scourging, a man to be crucified was forced to march in a parade, led by a centurion on horseback and a herald who shouted the crime of the condemned. This was Rome's way of advertising a crucifixion, and to make the people afraid of offending Rome.

i. This procession is the very thing Jesus was referring to when He asked people to *take up your cross and follow Me* ([Mark 8:34](#)).

2. ([Mark 15:21-23](#)) Jesus is led to Golgotha (in Latin, *Calvary*).

Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross. And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it.

a. **To bear His cross:** As Jesus was led away for crucifixion, He was — like every victim of crucifixion — forced to carry the beam of wood He would hang upon.

i. The weight of the entire cross was typically 300 pounds. Typically, the victim carried only the crossbar, which weighed anywhere from 75 to 125 pounds. When the victim carried the crossbar, he was usually stripped naked and his hands were often tied to the wood.

ii. The upright beams were often permanently fixed in a visible place outside the city walls, next to a major road. Many times, before this day Jesus probably passed by the very upright He would hang upon.

b. **They compelled a certain man:** It was the custom of the Romans to make the condemned criminal bear the cross, but in this case, Jesus was simply too weak to carry it. They preferred to keep the victim alive until he was crucified, because a public crucifixion was good advertisement for Rome. When Jesus fell under the weight of the cross, no Roman would help Him carry it. The centurion had the right to compel a local Jew to help carry it, but such an outrage might lead to uproar or riot. The best solution was to make a stranger carry the cross, so they found a foreigner (**Simon** from Cyrene in North Africa) to help Him.

i. Simon probably visited Jerusalem as a Passover pilgrim from his native land (some 800 miles away, on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea). He knew little if anything of Jesus and had no desire to be associated with this Man who was condemned to die as a criminal.

ii. Yet the Romans were the law and Simon did not have a choice — **they compelled him to bear His cross.** We are often blessed by the things we are **compelled** to do. Simon did not want to carry this cross and probably resented it terribly when he was asked. Nevertheless, it probably became the most special and memorable moment of his life.

iii. **Father of Rufus:** Apparently Rufus was known in the early church and was himself a Christian. If this **Rufus** is the same one mentioned in [Romans 16:13](#), we can surmise that Simon came to know what it really meant to take up one's cross and follow Jesus. Perhaps his sons became leaders among the early Christians.

iv. "His name was Simon: and where was that other Simon? What a silent, but strong rebuke this would be to him. Simon Peter, Simon son of Jonas, where wast thou? Another Simon has taken thy place. Sometimes the Lord's servants are backward where they are expected to be forward, and he finds other servitors for the time. If this has ever happened to us it ought gently to rebuke us as long as we live. Brothers and sisters, keep your places, and let not another Simon occupy your room." (Spurgeon)

c. **They brought Him:** [Mark 15:20](#) says they *led Him out to crucify Him*. By [Mark 15:22](#) the situation changed: **they brought Him to the place Golgotha**. Jesus could walk when He left His trial before Pilate, but before He reached Golgotha He could hardly walk — they had to *bring* Him.

i. "It would appear that Jesus was so weak through the strain of the last few days, and the scourging, that he was unable to walk, not to speak of carrying His cross. He had to be borne and the sick were borne to Him ([Mark 1:32](#))." (Bruce)

ii. "These two words are just a little window on the supreme physical exhaustion of the Saviour in this the greatest hour of His agony. You see, when He left the Praetorium they were leading Him; when they came to Golgotha they were bearing Him." (Morrison)

d. **To the place Golgotha:** There was a specific place right outside the city walls of Jerusalem where people were crucified — and where Jesus died for our sins, where our salvation was accomplished. It was the **Place of a Skull**; it was the place where criminals were crucified.

i. There is some controversy about the exact historical location of **Golgotha**. We know that it was outside the city walls and that it was associated with a place of the skull. The present Church of the Holy Sepulcher was built upon the place believed to be Calvary in the fourth century, but some researchers favor the site known as Gordon's Calvary, which sits atop a hill that looks remarkably like a skull, and is near ancient garden tombs.

Most scholars consider the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as more accurate, but many people say that Gordon's Calvary feels more like the real spot.

ii. **Place of a Skull:** Some people think it was called Golgotha because it was littered with the skulls of men previously executed. Some think it was called Golgotha because it was on a hill that looked like a skull, with the shadows of a skull's face in the hillside. Some think it was called Golgotha because the hill was barren, smooth and round like the top of a skull.

e. **He did not take it:** Jesus refused any drug to numb His pain. He chose to face the agony of the cross with a clear mind and without medication.

i. "According to an old tradition, respected women of Jerusalem provided a narcotic drink to those condemned to death in order to decrease their sensitivity to the excruciating pain... This humane practice was begun in response to the biblical injunction of [Proverbs 31:6-7](#): 'Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more.'" (Lane)

ii. "The local sour wine was 'laced' with myrrh; this would give it a bitter taste, but a soporific effect. Thus is explained the reference to 'gall'... He would not take any anaesthetic; all His faculties must be unclouded for what lay before Him." (Cole)

iii. "Was it out of any love to suffering that he thus refused the wine-cup? Ah, no; Christ had no love of suffering. He had a love of souls, but like us he turned away from suffering, he never loved it... Why, then, did he suffer? For two reasons: because this suffering to the utmost was necessary to the completion of the atonement, which saves to the utmost; and because this suffering to the utmost was necessary to perfect his character as 'a merciful High Priest' who has to compassionate souls that have gone to the utmost of miseries themselves; that he might know how to succor them that are tempted." (Spurgeon)

3. ([Mark 15:24-26](#)) The crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take. Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

a. **They divided His garments:** This was in fulfillment of the prophecy in [Psalm 22](#): *They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots* ([Psalm 22:18](#)).

i. "Men were ordinarily crucified naked (Artemidorus II. 61). Jewish sensitivities, however, dictated that men ought not to be publicly executed completely naked, and men condemned to stoning were permitted a loin-cloth (M. *Sanhedrin* VI. 3). Whether the Romans were considerate of Jewish feelings in this matter is unknown." (Lane)

b. **And they crucified Him:** In the days the New Testament was first written, the practice of crucifixion needed no explanation. Centuries later, we do well to appreciate just what happened when someone was **crucified**.

i. "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." (Edwards)

ii. 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 the victim. When he was thrown to the ground to fix his hands to the crossbeam, the wounds were torn open again and contaminated with dirt. Then, as he hung on the cross each breath made the painful wounds on the back scrape against the rough wood of the upright beam.

iii. When the nail was driven through the wrists, it severed the large median nerve going to the hand. This stimulated nerve produced excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms, and could result in a claw-like grip in the victim's hands.

iv. Beyond the excruciating pain, the posture of crucifixion made it painful to simply breathe. The weight of

the body pulling down on the arms and shoulders made it feel like you could breathe in but not out. The lack of oxygen led to severe muscle cramps, which made it even harder to breathe. To get a good breath, one had to push against the feet and flex the elbows, pulling from the shoulders. Putting the weight of the body on the nail-pierced feet produced searing pain, and flexing the elbows twisted the hands hanging on the nails. Lifting the body for a breath also scraped the open wounds on the back against the rough wooden post. Each effort to get a proper breath was agonizing, exhausting, and led to a quicker death.

v. “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)

vi. Death from crucifixion could come many different ways:

- Acute shock from blood loss.
- Suffocation from being too exhausted to breathe.
- Dehydration.
- Heart attack, induced by stress.
- Heart rupture from congestive heart failure.

However, if the victim did not die quickly enough, his legs were broken, and he was soon unable to breathe.

vii. 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)

c. **They crucified Him:** In Jesus’ own day, crucifixion was known to be a horrible practice, yet the Romans used to execute many criminals who were not Roman citizens. No Roman citizen could be crucified except by direct order of Caesar; it was reserved for the worst criminals and lowest classes.

i. The Roman statesman Cicero said: “It is a crime to bind a Roman citizen; to scourge him is an act of wickedness; to execute him is almost murder: What shall I say of crucifying him? An act so abominable it is impossible to find any word adequately to express.” The Roman historian Tacitus described crucifixion as “a torture fit only for slaves.”

d. **Now it was the third hour:** This is a problem, because [John 19:14](#) says that it was at the *sixth hour* (about noon) that Pilate pronounced his verdict. Some think John and Mark counted time differently; some think the difference is due to copyist error; others think it is a *gloss* (a well-intentioned addition by an early copyist).

e. **And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS:** “The wording was designed to convey a subtle insult to Jewish pretensions and to mock all attempts to assert the sovereignty of a subject territory.” (Lane)

i. “It may be that the message of this sign first aroused the hopes of the repentant thief. He may have reasoned: ‘If His name is Jesus, then He is a Saviour. If He is from Nazareth, then He would identify with rejected people. If He has a kingdom, then perhaps there is room for me!’” (Wiersbe)

4. ([Mark 15:27-32](#)) **Jesus is mocked on the cross.**

With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And He was numbered with the transgressors.” And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross!” Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.” Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.

- a. **Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him:** Jesus was mocked by those crucified with Him, yet one of the mocking criminals came to a saving faith in Jesus ([Luke 23:39-43](#)).
- b. **Those who passed by blasphemed Him:** Jesus not only endured mocking and humiliation at the hands of the pagan Roman soldiers, but also from the religious leaders. They **blasphemed Him, wagging their heads... they mocked and said among themselves, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save."**
- i. Greek scholar A.T. Robertson says **mocking** in [Mark 15:31](#) describes "Acting like silly children who love to mock one another." It was bad enough that the Son of God came to earth and man murdered Him in the most tortured way possible. Worst of all, sinful men *enjoyed* doing it.
- ii. **Let the Christ... descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe:** It is precisely because He would *not* come down that we believe in Him. Jesus did something greater than come down from the cross — He rose from the dead. Yet they did not believe even then. But many of the priests *did* eventually believe: *A great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.* ([Acts 6:7](#))
- c. **He saved others:** "That was a fact which even they could not deny. Everywhere, in Jerusalem, in all the towns and villages and hamlets through the countryside, were those whom He had saved." (Morgan)

5. ([Mark 15:33-37](#)) The last words of Jesus from the cross.

Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Some of those who stood by, when they heard that, said, "Look, He is calling for Elijah!" Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink, saying, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down." And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.

- a. **There was darkness over the whole land:** The remarkable darkness showed the agony of creation itself in the Creator's suffering. "Origen (*Contra Celsus*, ii, 33) and Eusebius (*Chron.*) quote the writing of 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)
- i. Luke tells us that *the sun was darkened* ([Luke 23:45](#)), but Mark makes it clear that it stayed dark for three hours (**there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour**).
- ii. Phlegon, Roman historian: "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)
- iii. This is especially remarkable because during a full moon — which Passover was always held at — a natural eclipse of the sun is impossible. This was an extraordinary miracle in the heavens.
- b. **My God, My God:** By quoting [Psalm 22](#), Jesus declared that He fulfilled that passage, in both its agony and its victory.
- c. **My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?** Jesus knew great pain and suffering (both physical and emotional) in His life but never knew separation from His Father. Now He knew it. There was a significant sense in which Jesus rightly felt **forsaken** by God the Father at this moment.
- i. This happened in the sense that *God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him* ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). Jesus not only endured the *withdrawal* of the Father's fellowship, but also the actual outpouring of the Father's *wrath* upon Him as a substitute for sinful humanity.
- ii. Horrible as this was, it fulfilled God's good and loving plan of redemption. Therefore, Isaiah could say *Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him* ([Isaiah 53:10](#)).
- iii. At the same time, we cannot say that the separation between the Father and the Son at the cross was complete, because as [2 Corinthians 5:19](#) says, *God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself* at the cross.

iv. From *Throned Upon the Awful Tree* (John Ellerton, 1875)

Throned upon the awful tree,
King of grief, I watch with Thee.
Darkness veils Thine anguished face:
None its lines of woe can trace:
None can tell what pangs unknown
Hold Thee silent and alone

Silent through those three dread hours,
Wrestling with the evil powers,
Left alone with human sin,
Gloom around Thee and within,
Till the appointed time is nigh,
Till the Lamb of God may die.

d. **A sponge full of sour wine:** “The *vinegar* was the sour wine not only of the soldier’s ration, but of everyday use... This is apparently quite a different occasion from the official offering of the drugged wine in [verse 23](#).” (Cole)

i. “A sour wine vinegar is mentioned in the OT as a refreshing drink ([Numbers 6:3](#); [Ruth 2:14](#)), and in Greek and Roman literature as well it is a common beverage appreciated by laborers and soldiers because it relieved thirst more effectively than water and was inexpensive.” (Lane)

e. **Let us see if Elijah will come:** Sadly, Jesus was misunderstood and mocked until the bitter end. These spectators at the cross knew just enough of the Bible to get it really wrong, and they speculated wildly, thinking that **Elijah** might come and rescue Jesus.

i. As Jesus hung on the cross, His listeners misunderstood Him by taking the part for the whole. He said, “**Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?**” Not only did they get wrong what they heard (Jesus said, “**Eloi**” not “**Elijah**”), but they also only heard *one word* of what He said. This will not do for the true follower of Jesus; we hear not only *one word* from Jesus, but every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

ii. One of the first things we know about Jesus was that He was misunderstood. When Joseph and Mary left Him behind at Jerusalem, they didn’t understand that He had to be about His Father’s business. Now at the end of His earthly ministry, He was also misunderstood on the cross.

f. **Jesus cried with a loud voice and breathed His last:** Most victims of crucifixion spent their last hours in complete exhaustion or unconsciousness before death. Jesus was not like this; though tremendously tortured and weakened, He was conscious and able to speak right up to the moment of His death.

i. [John 19:30](#) tells us what He said when He **cried with a loud voice**: *it is finished*, which is one word in the ancient Greek language, the word *tetelestai*. This ancient word *tetelestai* means, “Paid in Full.” This is the cry of a winner because Jesus *paid in full* the debt of sin we owed and had finished the eternal purpose of the cross.

ii. At some point before He died, before the veil was torn in two, before He cried out *it is finished*, an awesome spiritual transaction took place. God the Father set upon Jesus all the guilt and wrath our sin deserved, and Jesus bore it in Himself perfectly, totally satisfying the wrath of God toward us.

iii. As horrible as the physical suffering of Jesus was, this spiritual suffering, this act of being judged for sin in our place, was what Jesus really dreaded about the cross. This was the *cup* — the cup of God’s righteous wrath — that Jesus trembled at drinking ([Luke 22:39-46](#), [Psalm 75:8](#), [Isaiah 51:17](#), and [Jeremiah 25:15](#)). On the cross Jesus became, as it were, an *enemy* of God who was judged and forced to drink the cup of the Father’s fury. He did it so that we would *not* have to drink that cup.

iv. “Reader! *one drop* of this cup would bear down thy soul to endless ruin; and these agonies would annihilate

the universe. He suffered *alone*: for the people there was none with him; because his sufferings were to make an atonement for the sins of the world: and in the work of redemption he had no helper.” (Clarke)

v. The death of Jesus on the cross was and is the ultimate demonstration of God’s love towards all mankind ([Romans 5:8](#)). It is the power of God unto salvation, though it seems foolish to those who reject it ([1 Corinthians 1:18](#)). At the cross, Jesus wiped out our record of sin and rebellion against God, nailing it to the cross ([Colossians 2:14](#)). If Jesus had not endured the cross, it might be said that there is a limit to God’s love, that there was something God could have done but was unwilling to do in order to demonstrate His love for man.

6. ([Mark 15:38-41](#)) The visible, immediate results of the death of Jesus.

Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!” There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

a. **The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom:** The tearing of the temple veil signified that now man had free access to the throne of grace by the cross and that no one should ever think again that God dwells in temples made with hands.

i. Significantly, as the wall of separation between God and man was removed, the veil was torn **from top to bottom**. God tore it from heaven instead of man tearing it from earth.

b. **Truly this man was the Son of God!** The centurion saw Jesus for who He was and is a picture of all who come to Jesus through the cross. At the cross, people saw that Jesus **was the Son of God** and this fulfilled Jesus’ promise *if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all peoples to Myself* ([John 12:32](#)).

i. This centurion saw many people crucified before, yet there was something so remarkable about Jesus that he said something he could not say about anyone else.

c. **There were also women looking on from afar:** Finally, the most faithful disciples of Jesus are revealed. They were His female followers: **Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome** and **many other women**.

7. ([Mark 15:42-47](#)) The burial of Jesus.

Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid.

a. **Joseph of Arimathea was a prominent council member:** This Joseph was apparently silent when the council sentenced Jesus to death ([Mark 15:1](#)). He shrunk back then but was not ashamed to identify with Jesus in His death.

i. “In the hours of crisis it is often the Peters who have sworn loyalty to Jesus with big gestures and fullness of self-confidence, that disappoint, and it is the secret and quiet followers of the Master (like Joseph, Nicodemus and the women) that do not hesitate to serve Him in love — at whatever the cost.” (Geldenhuys)

ii. Joseph did *not* serve Jesus in many ways, but he did serve Him in ways no one else did or could. It was not possible for Peter, James, John, or even the many women who served Jesus to provide a tomb, but Joseph could and did. We must serve God in whatever way we can.

b. **Went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus:** Customarily, the bodies of crucified criminals were left on their crosses to rot or be eaten by wild animals. However, the Jews wanted no such horror displayed at the Passover season, and Romans were known to grant friends or relatives a corpse for proper burial.

i. “In antiquity the execution of a condemned man did not mark the final moment of his humiliation. Roman law dictated the loss of all honors in death, and even the right of burial was determined by magisterial decree... It was not at all uncommon for a body to be left upon a cross either to rot or to be eaten by predatory birds or animals.” (Lane) It wasn’t unusual to grant the body to a friend or relative for burial, but the point is that they had to *request* this of the Roman magistrate. The fate of even the executed corpse was in his hands.

ii. Of course, Joseph took a risk with this request. He risked Pilate’s animosity or scorn, but it mattered little to Joseph. “Is there no holy chivalry in you? Can it be so, that, because God has dealt so well with you, and trusted you so generously, you will repay him by denying his Son, violating your conscience, and turning your back on truth; and all for the sake of being in the fashion? I know it may seem hard to receive the cold shoulder in society, or to have the finger of scorn pointed at you; but to bow before this selfish dread is scarcely worthy of a man, and utterly disgraceful to a Christian man.” (Spurgeon)

c. **Pilate marveled that He was already dead:** Typically, crucifixion was a long, agonizing death — yet Jesus died in a matter of hours. However, we can be sure that He was dead because the death was confirmed by careful examination of eyewitnesses ([John 19:31-36](#)).

i. **When he found out from the centurion:** Pilate personally investigated the matter of Jesus’ death and found reliable eyewitness testimony from **the centurion**, who had witnessed perhaps hundreds of crucifixions and knew if a man was dead or not. “A Roman sergeant had seen too many deaths to be in any uncertainty about such a fact.” (Cole)

d. **Wrapped Him in the linen:** Because of the coming Sabbath, they were unable to properly prepare the body of Jesus for burial. So, with hurried preparation, Jesus’ body was placed in a borrowed tomb.

e. **Laid Him in a tomb:** Tombs such as this were very expensive, and it was quite a sacrifice for Joseph of Arimathea to give his up. But Jesus needed the tomb for only a few days.