

# CHAPTER 14

## The Crucifixion Of Christ

### Barabbas

#### The Man Who Should Have Been Crucified

The center cross was not originally intended for the Lord Jesus. There was another man who was supposed to be executed on that center cross, but Jesus took his place. There is a spiritual lesson in this because each of us deserves to die (Romans 6:23), but our Substitute took our place (2 Cor. 5:21). Let's learn about Barabbas, and in doing so, learn about ourselves:

The name "Barabbas" (Matt. 27:17) is an Aramaic term which means "Son of the Father" (**Bar** means "son"; compare Matthew 16:17; **Abbas** means "father"; compare Rom. 8:15). Though Barabbas did not go to the cross, the true **SON OF THE FATHER** did.

In Matthew 27:16 Barabbas is called a "\_\_\_\_\_ prisoner." This term means that he was notorious, infamous, widely known and talked about. He was a famous criminal who had quite a reputation. The people of Jerusalem were well aware of who he was and what he had done!

According to Matthew 27:20, who were the ones responsible for persuading the crowd to ask for Barabbas instead of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

In Mark 15:7 we gain some additional information about this man Barabbas. We are told that he was involved in an I \_\_\_\_\_ (rebellion, revolt, uprising, riot) which took place in the city of Jerusalem (compare Luke 23:19). Thus Barabbas was a rebel or a revolutionary, and he was involved with several others in this revolt. Since he was notorious and well known (Matt. 27:16), we might suppose that he was the leader of this revolt. It is possible that he was involved in a political revolt against the civil authority of Rome. He may have been a Zealot, a fierce and uncompromising Jewish patriot who was strongly opposed to Roman rule. This insurrection (which Luke calls a "S \_\_\_\_\_"; Luke 23:19) could well have been a politically motivated attempt to throw off the hated yoke of the Romans.

Many of the Jews expected their Messiah to deliver them from Roman rule. When it became evident that Christ was not a political Saviour who would save His people from the Romans (compare Matthew 1:21 where we learn that Jesus was a different kind of Saviour, a Saviour from sin), they condemned Him and released a man who had apparently fought for their cause.

Read Mark 15:7, Luke 23:19 and Acts 3:14. Not only was Barabbas guilty of playing an important role in the insurrection, but according to the passages cited above, of what other crime was he guilty? \_\_\_\_\_ What kind of penalty do such people deserve (Genesis 9:6 and compare Acts 28:4)? \_\_\_\_\_

In John 18:40 we learn that Barabbas was a \_\_\_\_\_. This word means, "a robber, one who plunders **openly** and by violence." It does **not** refer to the kind of robbery that is done by a thief who steals **secretly**. Thus Barabbas was a robber in the sense of a brigand or bandit, and this activity would have most likely occurred during the insurrection in which Barabbas played such a key role.

Without being told the details, we know that Barabbas was captured by the Romans, tried and found guilty of insurrection and murder, and sentenced to die on a Roman cross as a condemned criminal. Finally the morning of his death arrived. As the soldiers approached the place of his confinement, he must have thought they were going to lead him away to be crucified. What a surprise it must have been to discover that they had really come to release him and that another would die in his place! Let us put ourselves in this man's place. What must have been going through his mind?

1. Barabbas knew that he was guilty and that he had done crimes worthy of death. He knew that he deserved to go to that cross and to suffer the DEATH PENALTY. He knew he was justly condemned.
2. Jesus Christ was perfectly innocent and guiltless. Pilate knew this (Matt. 27:23-24); Pilate's wife knew this (Matt. 27:19); the thief on the cross knew this (Luke 23:41); even Judas knew this (Matt. 27:3-4). Barabbas probably knew this as well. He probably wondered, "Why is this good man dying on that cross instead of me?" Christ once suffered for sins, the Just One for the unjust ones that He might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18).
3. Barabbas knew that Jesus was his SUBSTITUTE. "Jesus, Son of the Father" took his place. Jesus went to the cross instead of Barabbas. During the past 2000 years many unbelievers have denied the doctrine of the substitutionary death of Christ and have said, "I do not believe that Christ died for me!" But this was a truth that Barabbas could never deny! No one can ever question the fact that Christ died for Barabbas!
4. Barabbas knew that he had done nothing whatever to merit or to deserve this substitutionary death. He deserved death, but he was given freedom. Christ was condemned so that he could be released!
5. Barabbas knew that his Substitute died so that he would not have to die. The only question before Pilate was whether Christ should die or Barabbas. When it was decided that Christ should die, Barabbas was set free (Matt. 27:26). The demands of the law had been met and Roman justice had been satisfied. He never needed to fear death by crucifixion (unless he should commit additional crimes at some later time). Christ died so that Barabbas could live.

**TO BE SAVED, EVERYONE OF US MUST REALIZE THESE SAME FIVE FACTS!  
BARABBAS IS CLEARLY A TYPE OF THE GUILTY SINNER FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED!!**

**Interesting thought question:** Was Barabbas ever saved? The Bible gives no answer. Only God knows.

## The Men Who Were Crucified With Christ

"And with Him they crucified two **thieves** (robbers); the one on His right hand, and the other on His left." (Mark 15:27; see John 19:18).

### "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12; Mark 15:27-28).

On the day that Christ died, there were three men who were crucified: "Where they crucified Him, and \_\_\_\_\_ with Him, on \_\_\_\_\_ one, and Jesus in the \_\_\_\_\_" (John 19:18). Who were these two other men and why were they being crucified?

Matthew (27:38) and Mark (15:27) both describe these two men as \_\_\_\_\_. Actually the word means "a robber, a bandit, someone who robs and plunders openly and by violence." It does **not** mean a person who secretly and quietly enters into a home to steal. This word "robber" was also used to describe B \_\_\_\_\_ (John 18:40). It is very possible that the two robbers crucified on either side of Jesus both belonged to the band of Barabbas, because the Scripture says that there were **others** who were put in prison with Barabbas who were also involved in the same insurrection or revolt against Rome (see Mark 15:7). Barabbas was released but these two robbers had to suffer the death penalty!

Luke describes these two condemned men as \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 23:32,39). This word means "**an evil-doer**, a criminal, a lawbreaker, one who commits serious crimes." Did these men feel that they had been unjustly condemned, or did they know that their deeds were evil (Luke 23:41)?

The One who did no \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Peter 2:22) occupied the center cross, with a guilty criminal on each side (Luke 23:33).

### Christ Reviled By The Robbers

Read the following passages carefully: Matthew 27:38-44 and Mark 15:27-32. Who reviled Jesus and abused the Saviour with insulting and mocking words? Did one of the robbers or did both of the robbers engage in this degrading activity? \_\_\_\_\_ Not only were they guilty of serious crimes, they were also guilty of blaspheming and speaking against the Holy Son of God. Thus they added sin upon sin.

### The Criminal Whose Eyes Were Opened And Whose Mouth Was Shut

As we study Luke 23:39, we discover that something amazing happened! Something was drastically different than it had been just moments earlier! A great change had taken place. Instead of two robbers reviling Christ, there is only one who is hurling mocking insults at the Saviour! Only one is hurling abusive words, asking Christ to save him from crucifixion but caring nothing for the salvation of his soul. But the other is strangely silent. Finally, he breaks the silence and speaks out, not against Christ as previously, but against his robber companion (Luke 23:40)!

What caused such a remarkable change? Was he impressed by the prayer of Jesus (Luke 23:34)? Did he observe the manner in which Jesus endured the suffering of the cross? Did he marvel at the way Jesus reacted to the mocking and reviling of the Jews, including himself? Did he read and somehow believe the superscription over the center cross (Luke 23:38)? Can you think of other things he may have noticed or observed about Jesus that may have helped to produce such a change? Are there things that people can see and observe in the way we live and act and speak that may help them to change their minds about Christ?

### "We're Guilty!"

Read Luke 23:40-41. This changed criminal was saying the following (circle the correct answer):

- Our crimes have been great, but our punishment is far greater than we deserve.
- We deserve to be punished, but death by crucifixion is a "cruel and unusual" form of punishment.
- We are guilty and justly condemned, but our punishment should be life-imprisonment in some comfortable Roman prison with three good meals served daily.
- We are condemned to a Roman cross, and we are getting exactly what we deserve. We are being justly rewarded for our evil deeds.

This robber recognized that he was guilty before Rome and before God, and he knew that he deserved nothing less than the DEATH PENALTY. Guilty criminals deserve to die. This robber realized this. The uneducated barbarians on the island of Melita understood this (Acts 28:4). The Bible clearly teaches that guilty criminals deserve to die (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:12,15,16,17,etc.). But for some reason, many lawmakers and judges of our land are opposed to this--that is, they are opposed to CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. Murderers are encouraged to continue in their crimes because, although they may be caught and punished, they know they will not receive the punishment they fear the most. What punishment is this (Hebrews 2:15)?

\_\_\_\_\_ See our study entitled **Capital Punishment**.

Are you guilty before a holy God? Have you broken God's holy law (consider the Ten Commandments for example) or have you kept it perfectly? Do you deserve DEATH for the crimes which YOU have committed (Roman 1:32; 6:23)? \_\_\_\_\_ If God were to send you to a burning lake of fire to be punished and tortured forever and ever (which is infinitely worse than any Roman cross), would that be exactly what you deserve (compare Revelation 20:11; 21:8)? \_\_\_\_\_ (If your answer is NO, then you are not ready for the salvation that is found in Christ Jesus). A sin against an infinite, holy God is of far greater consequence than a sin against Rome, and it is worthy of a far greater punishment. The sinner seeking salvation must realize first of all that he **deserves** such punishment, as terrible as it may be. Sin is so terrible that it demands a terrible punishment! If you are not sure that you are saved, see our paper entitled, **Am I a True Believer?**

### "He's Innocent!"

Though there were many "dogs and wicked men" (Psalm 22:16) surrounding the center cross, there was one man whom God raised up to bear a clear witness to the absolute sinlessness of the suffering Saviour. With few words, the penitent (repentant) robber expressed his firm belief in the innocence of Jesus: "This man hath done \_\_\_\_\_" (Luke 23:41). Jesus was guilty of NOT ONE THING – ABSOLUTELY NOTHING! He had done no wrong and committed no crime!

Peter wrote about the guiltless and sinless Saviour in 1 Peter 3:18: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the \_\_\_\_\_ (the Righteous, Innocent One!) for the \_\_\_\_\_ (the unrighteous, guilty ones – that's us!), that He might \_\_\_\_\_ us to \_\_\_\_\_." In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul tells us that the Saviour who died on the cross was the One who \_\_\_\_\_ (He was sinless).

Have you seen yourself as guilty and unrighteous and deserving of death? Have you seen the righteous and sinless Christ dying on the cross as your Substitute? Not only did Christ die in Barabbas' place, He also died IN YOUR PLACE, **the Just** (the Righteous One) **for the unjust** (for the unrighteous ones)!

### Fantastic Faith

A condemned criminal is soon to pass into eternity. Death is at the door. Time is running out. As he hangs on a cross between earth and heaven, he knows that it won't be long before he is dead. Is there any hope for this man who has just about reached the end of a sin-filled life?

If salvation depended on something that man must do (as many people believe and teach), then there is absolutely no hope for this guilty robber. Consider the following suggested ways of salvation and explain how hopeless (and how absurd!) each of these would be in the case of this dying criminal:

- 1) To be saved you must live a good life.
- 2) To be saved you must try your very best.
- 3) To be saved the good you have done must outweigh the evil.
- 4) To be saved you must serve God faithfully.
- 5) To be saved you must keep the Ten Commandments.
- 6) To be saved you must perform good works.
- 7) To be saved you must read your Bible and go to church.
- 8) To be saved you must be baptized in water.
- 9) To be saved you must become a member of a church or synagogue.
- 10) To be saved you must go to all those you have sinned against and ask their forgiveness.

This man could do none of these things, but there was one thing he could do (read Acts 16:30-31): B \_\_\_\_\_. Praise God, that's the one thing he did!

After rebuking the other robber, he looked at the dying Saviour and said, "Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ me when Thou comest into Thy \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 23:42). What a remarkable statement! Over the head of Jesus was written an accusation: THIS IS THE \_\_\_\_\_ OF THE \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 23:38), but the King was dying on the cross! How can a dead King come into His kingdom? How can someone who is crucified ever hope to be a King and have a Kingdom? Though this robber knew Jesus was dying, he somehow believed that this same Jesus would someday reign and rule on the earth! With the eyes of faith, he looked beyond the cross and saw the crown! Although he too was dying, he wanted to have a part in that future kingdom! Perhaps he somehow believed that God would raise Christ from the dead (compare Romans 10:9 and John 12:32-34).

## Faith's Reward

The Bible tells us that God is \_\_\_\_\_ to do exceedingly abundantly \_\_\_\_\_ all that we ask or think (Eph. 3:20). So it was in the case of the dying robber. He asked to be remembered in the future kingdom of the Messiah. After nearly 2000 years this promised kingdom has yet to be established on the earth (though we believe this kingdom is coming soon). But Jesus promised this man that he would not have to wait hundreds of years for the Kingdom: " \_\_\_\_\_ shalt thou be with Me in \_\_\_\_\_ " (Luke 23:43). Instead of being part of the kingdom later, **you will be with the King today!** [Note: "Paradise" is that place of comfort and blessing where the spirits of the righteous go at death, also known as "Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22-25). Today "paradise" is in heaven (2 Cor. 12:2,4).]

Do you have assurance that if you were to die today, you would be WITH CHRIST? Did Paul have this assurance (Philippians 1:21,23)? \_\_\_\_\_ The saved robber had full assurance because Jesus said to him, "Verily (truly) I say unto thee..." (Luke 23:43). Has Jesus given **to you** a "Verily I say unto you..." by which you can claim full assurance of your salvation (compare John 5:24; 6:47; 8:51; **10:7,9**)? \_\_\_\_\_ What promise given by Jesus would well apply to the other condemned criminal who did not repent (John 8:24)?

\_\_\_\_\_ What's wrong with this statement, "I'll wait until I'm close to death and then I'll trust Christ, just like the **thief** (robber) on the cross"? \_\_\_\_\_ Remember, there were **two** robbers! One robber was saved that none should despair; but only one that none should presume!

## A Suffering Saint

When a person is saved, his problems do not suddenly disappear. The repentant robber still had to face the torture of crucifixion, though he now had God's Presence and Promise to sustain him. He had a very painful and difficult road ahead, but he knew that at the end of the road he would be with his Saviour in paradise!

After several terrible hours of agony, the saved robber hears Jesus cry with a loud victory cry (see John 19:30), after which Jesus gave up the Spirit and died (Luke 23:46). Soon thereafter the Roman soldiers came and \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of the two criminals (John 19:32). This was a procedure used to hasten death. Without the legs to give support, the body would sink down, the tension in the chest muscles would be too great, and rapid suffocation would occur. Apart from the smashing of the leg bones, these men probably could have lived on at least another day or two. But the converted criminal had to die "TODAY" (because of Christ's Paradise Promise), and the momentary suffering that he endured in the crucifixion and leg-smashing and suffocation was not worthy to be compared with the glorious ETERNITY he would spend with his Saviour (read carefully Romans 8:18 and 2 Corinthians 4:17).

## The Uniqueness of the Center Cross

Crucifixion is a terrible form of death. Death by the electric chair or a firing squad or a guillotine is relatively fast and painless. It is over almost before you know it. But the sufferings of the cross seem endless. Victims did not usually die for two or three days or even longer. This is why Pilate was so surprised to learn that Jesus was dead after being on the cross for only about six hours (Mark 15:44). This is why the legs of the robbers had to be broken, in order to hasten death (John 19:31-32). Criminals have been known to survive on a cross for more than a week!

It is interesting that the gospel writers give us very few details about the crucifixion of Christ. We might have expected them to describe all the gory and grim details of what Christ had to endure during those hours of torture. For example, a modern writer has given the following detailed description of the passion of Christ from a medical point of view:

The crucifixion begins. Jesus is offered wine mixed with myrrh, a mild analgesic mixture. He refuses to drink. Simon is ordered to place the patibulum on the ground and Jesus is quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The patibulum is then lifted in place at the top of the stipes and the titulus reading, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" is nailed in place.

The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The victim is now crucified. As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain – the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As He pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet.

At this point, another phenomenon occurs. As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically He is able to push himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen.

Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber; then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

It is now almost over – the loss of tissue fluid has reached a critical level – the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick sluggish blood into the tissues – the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain.

With one last surge of strength, He once again presses His torn feet against the nail, straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His seventh and last cry, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit."

("The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View", by C. Truman David, M.D., M. S., *Arizona Medicine*, Vol. 22, no. 3, March 1965)

As we search the gospel accounts, we do not find any such description of the death of Christ. Even Luke the physician gives only a brief and simple statement, "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there \_\_\_\_\_ Him" (LUKE 23:33; compare Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; John 19:18). Indeed, there are probably more details of the crucifixion found in PSALM 22 (written by David about 1000 years before the crucifixion of Christ), than in all four of the gospel accounts combined!

God the Holy Spirit (the Divine Author of Scripture) had a reason for not over-emphasizing the physical sufferings of Christ. The physical sufferings were not what made the death of Christ so terrible. The death Christ died involved far more agony and suffering than the deaths that other men have died. No man will ever be able to say, "Christ's death was nothing compared to what I had to go through." No, Christ's death was unique. No one can really understand what the suffering Saviour had to face.

And yet, many men were crucified, just, as Christ was, and most of these remained on the cross much longer than Christ did. Also there have been people who were tortured and put to death by means and methods even worse than crucifixion. Some of the Christian martyrs had to undergo such terrible forms of death that crucifixion would have seemed mild by comparison (see *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*). Other individuals have greatly suffered for years as a result of injury or illness or disease before death finally came. Why then was the death of Christ so unique?

If we see only the physical aspect of the crucifixion, then we have really missed the whole point. Prior to the cross, what was it that Christ dreaded the most (Mark 14:36 and John 18:11)?

- a. The nails that would pierce His hands and feet
- b. The spear that would pierce His side
- c. The agony of being suspended on a cross for about six hours
- d. The awful thirst and danger of suffocation
- e. The cup which the Father would give Him to drink (see **Chapter 11-the Agony of Christ**)

According to Christ's own words, what was the most terrible part of the crucifixion experience (Matthew 27:46)?

- a. Being nailed to the cross by the Romans
- b. Being mocked and reviled by the unbelieving Jews
- c. Being tortured by the weight of His own body coming down upon the nails
- d. Being forsaken and abandoned by Almighty God

According to Psalm 22:1-3 and 2 Corinthians 5:21, why did God forsake His beloved Son?

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Christ suffered for S\_\_\_\_\_ (1 Peter 3:18) and since He was perfectly Righteous ("Just"), the sins He suffered for were not His own!

Christ was not overly concerned about what the Roman soldiers would do to Him, but He was greatly concerned about what God the Father would do to Him BECAUSE OF YOUR SINS

AND MINE! Read **ISAIAH 53**, the chapter which describes the **SPIRITUAL SUFFERINGS** of Christ, and write down some of the things that **GOD** did to the **LORD JESUS**:

Verse 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 6: \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 10: \_\_\_\_\_

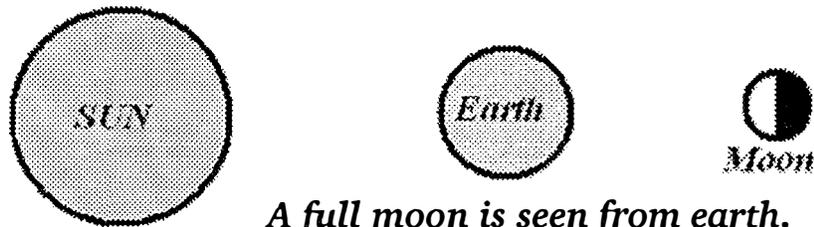
God's judgment came down upon Christ so that it would never need to come down upon us (Romans 8:1,3). Christ was forsaken by God so that we would never be forsaken by God (Hebrews 13:5)! **DO YOU BELIEVE THAT CHRIST DID ALL OF THAT FOR YOU?** If so, when was the last time you bowed your head and really thanked Christ for the cross He endured and for the sins which He bore (1 Peter 2:24)?

## Calvary's Miracles

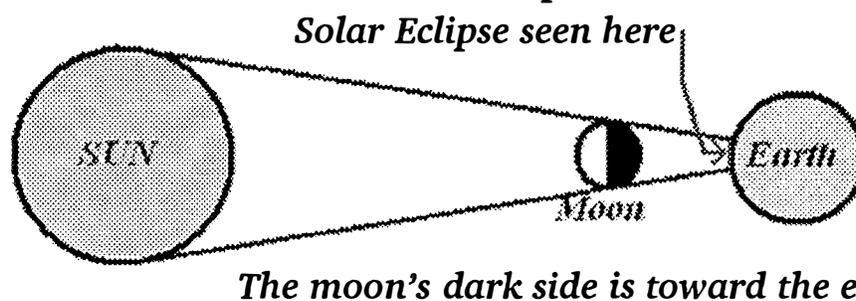
### The Mysterious Darkness

From the \_\_\_\_\_ hour (about 12 noon) to the \_\_\_\_\_ hour (about 3 p.m. in the afternoon) there was \_\_\_\_\_ over all the \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 27:45). What caused such darkness? Certainly it could not have been a solar eclipse because the Passover was celebrated at the time of the full moon, and a solar eclipse can only take place when there is a new moon, as illustrated below:

#### *Full Moon—Passover Time*



#### *New Moon—Solar Eclipse*



Even if the sun, moon and earth were in the right position, a solar eclipse would never have lasted three hours! A solar eclipse lasts only for a matter of minutes, not hours.

No, the darkness which fell upon the earth on the day Christ died (when the sun should have been at its peak) was **SUPERNATURALLY CAUSED BY GOD**.

Darkness in the Bible is often a symbol of the JUDGMENT OF GOD. Please MATCH the following:

1. _____	Plague of darkness upon the land of Egypt	A. Matthew 24:29-30
2. _____	Darkness before and during the day of the LORD (the Great Tribulation)	B. Exodus 10:21-22
3. _____	Darkness when Christ the Judge returns to earth at the second coming	C. Joel 2:30-31 Amos 5:18 Zephaniah 1:14-15

Darkness and judgment go together. Christ was being "stricken, smitten of (by) \_\_\_\_\_ and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4) – **"sufferings so unspeakable that they were screened from profane and curious human inquisitiveness"** (J. Oswald Sanders). God would not permit the eyes of sinful men to witness His suffering Son, during those hours when He took upon Himself the wrath and judgment we deserved!

**WELL MIGHT THE SUN IN DARKNESS HIDE,  
AND SHUT HIS GLORIES IN,  
WHEN CHRIST, THE MIGHTY MAKER DIED  
FOR MAN THE CREATURE'S SIN  
– Isaac Watts**

### The Rending of the Veil

"And, behold, the veil of the temple was \_\_\_\_\_ in two (divided, torn apart) from the \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ " (Matt. 27:51).

J. Oswald Sanders describes this mighty miracle as follows:

The Holy Place in the temple was divided from the Holiest of All by a great and beautiful veil. It was suspended by hooks from four pillars of gold. It measured sixty feet long by thirty feet wide, worked in seventy-two squares, and was reputed to be as thick as the palm of the hand. So heavy was it that the priests claimed it took three hundred men to handle it.

The purpose of the veil needed no explanation. It was not a gateway, but a barrier. It effectively excluded the ministering priests from entering the Holiest of All. Only once a year was it drawn aside to admit the High Priest--on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus chapter 16; and compare Hebrews 9:1-8). He entered the sacred Presence-chamber to sprinkle the mercy-seat with blood, making atonement for his own sins and those of his people.

For centuries the veil had hung gracefully in its place, but suddenly, at the very moment the Crucified uttered His loud, expiring cry, the ministering priests heard a tearing sound, and as if an unseen hand severed it by starting at the top, the veil fell apart before their awe-stricken gaze.

Who could express the solemnity of the moment when they found themselves gazing into the sanctuary where for centuries God had deigned to dwell, and into which none had dared enter under pain of death. Tradition has it that the priests, unwilling to accept the implications of this divine act, sewed up the curtain and resumed their ritual, as though no world-shaking event had taken place. (*The Incomparable Christ*, pp. 216-217)

Yes, no human hand could have done this. Because of the death of Christ, God was able to remove the barrier that stood between sinful men and a holy God. In Old Testament times, only one man (the High Priest) could come before God's Presence; and this privilege he enjoyed only once a year (Heb. 9:7). Today God invites every believer to COME before Him! The way has been opened by a mighty act of God (Heb. 4:16; 10:19-20,22)! How often do you take advantage of this FREE and OPEN ACCESS (Eph. 2:18)?

### A Mighty Earthquake

"And the earth did \_\_\_\_\_, and the rocks \_\_\_\_\_ (were split)"--(Matt. 27:51).

Not only was there an earthquake on Mt. Calvary, but hundreds of years earlier there was an earthquake on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:18; Hebrews 12:26). On both mountains GOD SPOKE and the earth shook. At Mt. Sinai God said, "THIS SHALT THOU DO...." and He gave the Ten Commandments. As a result men were condemned because it is impossible for sinful men to keep God's holy law. At Mt. Calvary God said, "IT IS \_\_\_\_\_" (John 19:30). As a result, God is able to justify guilty lawbreakers!

The message of Mt. Sinai:

**LAWBREAKERS DESERVE TO DIE!**

The message of Mt. Calvary:

**I HAVE DIED FOR THEM. THE PENALTY HAS BEEN PAID IN FULL! IT IS FINISHED!**

### The Appearance of Dead Saints

Only Matthew records this remarkable miracle: "And the \_\_\_\_\_ were \_\_\_\_\_; and many \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ which slept \_\_\_\_\_" (Matthew 27:52). When did these saints come out of their graves (Matthew 27:53)? \_\_\_\_\_ What did they do after they arose (Matthew 27:53)? \_\_\_\_\_

Here was a wonderful and vivid sign that Jesus had conquered death. Forever, Christ has robbed the grave of its terror and victory (1 Corinthians 15:55,57; Hebrews 2:14-15)! This resurrection was also a foretaste of a future resurrection which will be enjoyed by all believers (compare John 6:40). Because He lives, we shall live also!

## The Significance Of The Crucifixion

Christ died, that's history! Christ died for me, that's salvation! The four gospels are essentially history books, given by inspiration of God. They tell us what happened. They tell us that Christ was crucified and that He died. They do not go into great detail as to the significance of the death of Christ. The epistles (the New Testament letters) are doctrinal books. They teach us the meaning and significance of the death of Christ.

Look up the following chapters in the epistles and in each chapter find the verse which discusses the death of Christ and then write down the answer to this question: "**Why** did Christ die?"

1. 1 Peter 3, verse \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. 2 Corinthians 5, verse \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. 1 Corinthians 15, verse \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Galatians 1, verse \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Titus 2, verse \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Romans 14, verse \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. 2 Corinthians 5, verse \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Ephesians 5, verse \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. 1 Thessalonians 5, verse \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Hebrews 10, verse \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WHAT DOES THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST MEAN TO YOU?

CAN YOU SAY WHAT PAUL SAID IN GALATIANS 2:20 AND 6:14?

For a similar study, with special emphasis on the significance of Christ's sufferings, see **The Passion of Christ**.

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).