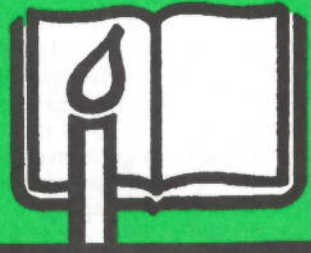


STUDIES IN THE BIBLE



The Crucifixion Of Christ

Lesson 13

The most important event in the world's history was the crucifixion (and the resurrection) of Christ. Approximately one-third of the four gospels deals with the last week of the life of Jesus and His death, burial, and resurrection. In this lesson we shall study His crucifixion.

The Last Week

For some time Jesus had warned the twelve that He would soon be leaving them. Seemingly, however, they did not understand this as they had not yet fully comprehended the spiritual nature of His kingdom. They still expected Him to reign over a temporal domain. It was probably this same belief that caused many of the people to go before Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem on the colt of an ass. They spread branches in His way as they went and cried, "Hosanna in the highest." This was on Sunday, just five days before the one whom they triumphantly proclaimed was to be crucified.



The next day Jesus entered the temple as He had three years before and overturned the tables of the money-changers who were trying to make excessive profits from the people who came to worship. This intensified the determination of His enemies to kill Him. When Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, came the following day to the chief priests offering to betray Christ, he found them eager to take advantage of his treachery. A bargain was struck and for thirty pieces of silver or about twenty dollars in our money, Judas agreed to betray Jesus.

The Passover Supper

On the night of His betrayal Jesus met with His disciples in an upper room to eat the Feast of the Passover. At this time He gave the disciples His last words of exhortation, showed them a wonderful example of service by washing their feet, and offered to God that prayer for unity of all His disciples recorded in John 17. During the Passover Jesus instituted in the presence of the disciples the beautiful memorial known as the Lord's supper. He first took the unleavened bread of the Passover and then the fruit of the vine (grape) and gave them to His disciples saying, "This is my body" and "This is my blood." (Matt. 26:26, 28.)

Some have understood the words of Jesus to imply that the bread and fruit of the vine were His literal body and blood. The fallacy of this argument is easily seen when we consider that as He spoke both His body and His blood were before them in their entirety. Jesus was simply employing a figure of speech known as a metaphor in which a word suggesting one kind of object or idea is substituted for another by way of implying an analogy between them. Thus in saying, "This is my body" Jesus was declaring, "This represents my body."

Gethsemane

After the supper Jesus left Jerusalem with His disciples and crossed the brook Kedron to reach the Garden of Gethsemane. There He earnestly entreated the Father to let His cup of suffering pass from Him if it were God's will. But it was not the will of God that He escape the suffering of the cross, even as it is not His will today to grant everything that His children ask. In His agony Jesus sweat as it were great drops of blood. He returned to where He had left the disciples and found them sleeping, at the very time He needed them most. Three times Jesus prayed in this way and then, with His disciples, prepared to leave the garden. But at that moment they were met by a multitude who had come to take the Prince of Peace with swords and staves. They were led by Judas who went straight to Christ and kissed Him to show his accomplices which man they sought. In a brief flash of courage Peter drew his sword and struck off the ear of the high priest's servant, but a moment later all of the disciples, including Peter, fled, leaving Jesus alone in His last hours before His death.

The Trail

The trial of Christ was both irregular and illegal by judicial standards. In the dead of night He was first taken to Annas, father-in-law of the Jewish high priest Caiaphas. From Annas He was sent to Caiaphas who pronounced Him worthy of death. During these dark hours of the night Peter, afraid of the scorn of the Jews, denied that he even knew Jesus. First Judas had betrayed Him and now Peter denied Him. But while Judas went and hanged himself, Peter repented with bitter tears and thereafter remained faithful to the Lord.

After sunrise Christ was taken before the Jewish council where the decision of Caiaphas was formally approved. Under Roman law, however, the Jews did not have authority to condemn a man to death. They sent Jesus, therefore, to the Roman governor Pilate who could find no fault in Him. Pilate sent Him to Herod who had jurisdiction over Galilee where Jesus had done most of His preaching. Herod then sent Him back to Pilate. Pilate tried to find a way to release Him and still please the people, but failing in his effort he gave his consent to crucify Him although he knew He was innocent. He was turned over to the Roman soldiers who brutally mocked Him and whipped Him and then led Him away to be crucified.

The Crucifixion

Jesus was crucified at about 9:00 o'clock Friday morning (some say Thursday) at a place outside Jerusalem called Golgotha or Calvary. In English it means "skull". Over His head on the cross was the inscription, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS". On each side they crucified a common thief to show their contempt for Him. This was the darkest hour in the world's history, yet out of this darkness would soon come light as Jesus conquered death and the grave.

The seven recorded sayings of Christ upon the cross tell the story of His death. (1) "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Below the soldiers were parting His garments. (2) To His mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" To John, commending her to his care, "Behold thy mother!" (3) To the thief who asked the Lord to remember him, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." It was now noon. For the next three hours the whole earth was darkened. (4) "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (5) "I thirst." They gave Him vinegar to drink. (6) At about 3:00 o'clock He cried out, "It is finished." (7) "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." At His death the earth trembled with an earthquake and the veil of the temple was rent in two, signifying the end of the law of Moses. Observing the events of this hour, the centurion who had crucified Him said, "Truly this was the Son of God." (Matt. 27:54.)

Nicodemus, who had once come to Christ by night, and a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, buried Jesus in Joseph's tomb with the help of several women.

Night was now on them, so they decided to wait until after the sabbath (Saturday) to finish their work. Pilate placed a guard at the grave to prevent the disciples of Jesus from stealing the body. But when the women returned on the first day of the week, the stone before the sepulchre was moved and the grave was empty! Jesus had arisen! This will be our next lesson.

One Solitary Life

Here is a young man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

While he was still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, and that was his coat. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has that One Solitary Life.

Author Unknown

“Seek and Ye Shall Find”

In each blank write the correct name:

- 1. Who betrayed Jesus with a kiss?
- 2. To whom did Jesus commit the care of His mother?
- 3. Who was the father-in-law of the high priest?
- 4. Who was the high priest?
- 5. Who denied that he knew Jesus?
- 6. Who knew that Jesus was innocent but gave his consent to crucify Him?
- 7. Who had jurisdiction over Galilee?
- 8. In whose tomb was Jesus buried?

Read the trial of Jesus recorded in Luke 23:1-26. Write true or false:

- 1. Pilate asked Jesus if He were king of the Jews.
- 2. Pilate then said, "There is no doubt the man is guilty."
- 3. Pilate sent Jesus to Herod because He was from Galilee over which Herod had jurisdiction.
- 4. Herod was glad to see Jesus.
- 5. Herod told the soldiers not to mock Jesus.
- 6. Pilate's sending Jesus to Herod made them enemies.
- 7. After Jesus was sent back to Pilate, Pilate said that he would chastise Jesus and release Him.
- 8. Since it was the custom to release a man at the feast, the people asked that Barabbas be released to them.
- 9. Against Christ they cried out, "Shoot Him, shoot Him."
- 10. Pilate finally gave in and agreed to let them do to Jesus as they wanted.

Match the scripture locations with the statements made by Jesus on the cross by writing scripture references in the blanks.

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| 1. "I thirst." | Luke 23:46 |
| 2. "Father, forgive them." | John 19:26 |
| 3. "It is finished." | Luke 23:34 |
| 4. "Woman, behold thy son." | John 19:28 |
| 5. "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." | Mark 15:34 |
| 6. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." | John 19:30 |
| 7. "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" | Luke 23:43 |

Name..... Grade.....
Address..... Date.....
City..... By.....
