

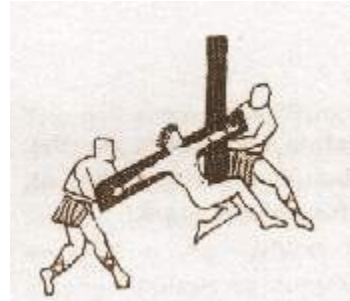
## The Crucifixion of Jesus

Luke 23:33-34 And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. 34 But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.

- Arriving at the location of the crucifixion at about 9:00 AM (Mark 15:25), the Roman guards stripped off His bloodied garments and nailed Him to the cross.
- All four gospel accounts virtually say the same thing, "***They crucified Him***". This was a cruel world that Jesus existed in, for crucifixion extremely common to that land and people. The average person of the day would have seen multiple crucifixions a year. For the apostles to state this with brevity is not difficult to understand for it was simply a "matter of fact". With this in mind, it would be appropriate to address the topic of crucifixion. Though there were many varying types of crucifixion, the likely applied to Jesus.

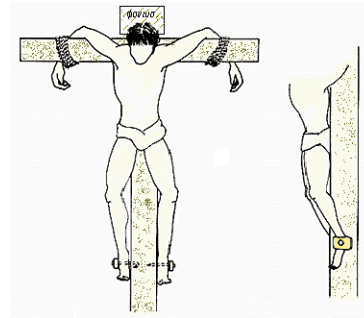
### **The Actual Crucifixion:**

- He would have had His wrists nailed to the *patibulum* (the cross beam) and possibly His arms tied as well. The entire forearm was considered part of the hand and would have been the stronger area to hammer into and fasten to the cross. We know that He was nailed through the hands because Thomas mentions this in John 20. After the victim was fastened to the crossbeam, they would have been lifted up about 6 feet and placed on the vertical pole called the *stipes*.
- But what about the feet? The NT knows nothing of this! Though the NT is silent about this, it was prophesied in the OT concerning the crucifixion of Jesus. *Ps 22:16 "...they pierced my hands and my feet."* Often this is depicted in the movies as one nail through two feet on the front of the *stipes*. This goes contrary to the practices of that era. The typical crucifixion placed a small board over the ankle and then nailed each foot through the heel to each side of the cross. This allowed for the maximum pain to radiate through the body as well as keeping them from pulling out.
- In 1968, building contractors working in a suburb north of Jerusalem accidentally uncovered a Jewish tomb dated to the first-century after the death of Christ. Lying in a Jewish ossuary bearing the Hebrew name "Jehohanan" were the skeletal remains of a man in his twenties, who had been crucified. The evidence for this was based on the right heel bone of the individual, pierced by an iron nail 11.5 centimeters in length. The nail penetrated the lateral surface of the bone emerging on the middle of the surface in which the tip of the nail had become bent. The bending of the tip of the nail upon itself suggests that after the nail penetrated the tree or the upright it may have struck a knot in



the wood thereby making it difficult to remove from the heel when the victim was taken from the cross.

- Another thought concerning the suffering on the cross was the dislocation of the elbows and shoulders because of the pull of gravity on the body. Once that occurred, it was the asphyxiation because it would have been difficult to bring air in to the lungs.
- When the nails to the foot were fastened in such a way, it painfully allowed the victim to be able to push up and momentarily gasp for air. Eventually over the course of hours and days, the victim would die of heart failure. There have been documented instances where victims actually hung on the cross for more than a week. This is what made the Romans experts at torture and public example.



### **Casting Lots:**

- John states in *19:23-24* *The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and {also} the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. They said therefore to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, {to decide} whose it shall be"; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.* This is quoted from *Psalms 22:18* *They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.*
- As prophesied many centuries prior, God knew that His Son would have to hang naked on that cruel cross. More than thirty –three years prior, angels sang and shepherds rejoiced as He was born into this world, naked and in need of clothing (Lk 2:12). This day He would be stripped of His clothing and hung naked before mockers, blasphemers, the ignorant and those that loved Him dearly. As usual, the soldiers of the crucifixion could keep the clothing of the victims. When they came to the tunic of Jesus, since it was a one-piece, they decided to “cast lots” for it. The lots were typically ancient dice made from the ankle bones of sheep.
- It was also in this text that we read the first of seven statements from Jesus while on the cross of crucifixion. These are seven great bits of wisdom that can guide us in our Christian lives.

## **Part One from the Sermon on the Cross**

### **Statement #1**

**"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."**

- I am amazed of the mind of our Savior. He was beaten, mocked, spit upon, lied about, nailed through His hand and feet, yet still never lost His focus. He was dying for the sinners of the world, not dying to them. It would have been easy to look around and speak some condemning words for these people, for they certainly deserved it. Luke 23:35-37 stated *And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One."* 36 *And the*

*soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!"* He could have condemned and cursed them, but did not, for His business on the cross was out of love, not hate. It was out of trying to help men out of their sin, not to die in it. Yes, they would be accountable to God on that Day of Judgment, but we know where Jesus' heart is.

- He was demonstrating and modeling something that we need to have in the church today and everyday. We often cannot look past the sin of the sinner and see the value that Jesus sees in their lives and ours. It was His intention not to go to the grave with a personal grudge. We would do well to pay attention to His words.

### Conclusion from Statement #1:

- Are you holding a grudge against another? Did someone put a hurt on you that agonizes your heart? Is there anything, any grudge, any sorrow, any hurt, any pain, any revenge, any complaint, any bitterness, any regret, any burden against another that is worth carrying around in this life? Turn it over to God today. Don't pass up this opportunity. **Luke 23:34** **"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."**

Luke 23:39-43 And one of the criminals who were hanged {there} was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" 40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 "And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." 42 And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" 43 And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

- There were two criminals for the crime of being in rebellion to Rome that were crucified on the same hill and the same day of our Lord. One of them begins to rail on Jesus, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" In essence this criminal was operating under the assumption that Jesus was setting up an earthly kingdom and would destroy the Roman rule. He could not have been more wrong, for Jesus was not that kind of King and His kingdom was not of this world. He was blaspheming Jesus even though he is in no better position. If there was ever a time to humble, now would be that time.
- You have to love the nameless criminal from the other side of cross. He rebuked the first, reminding the other of two important facts. 1) The two of them are sinners and deserve to die. They were truly rebellious against the Roman rule and actually did something worthy of death. 2) Jesus is righteous and does not deserve to die. Jesus did not plot an overthrow. With that as the backdrop, he made a request of Jesus: "Remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"

- What a remarkable statement of faith from a nameless man that was sentenced to death for his crimes. Somewhere between his death sentence and this moment on the cross, he realized that the kingdom that he had been fighting for was not a kingdom in this life, but the afterlife. He understood that they will die on those crosses that day, that there will be some sort of resurrection and a spiritual kingdom established. The other criminal could not come to that conclusion because he was not thinking spiritually. The second criminal had trust in Jesus as the king and His kingdom a spiritual kingdom. This is exactly what Jesus affirmed to Pilate in *John 18:36* *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."*
- This is what we like about the second criminal, for he understood Jesus to be a King of a spiritual kingdom that held the hope a salvation! He wanted to be on the right side of Jesus when this thing was over, to which Jesus said *"Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."*

## Statement #2

### "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

- Jesus affirmed to that trusting criminal that he would be with Jesus in paradise, not tomorrow, not ten years from then, but TODAY. To appreciate what Jesus said, it is important to understand the realm of *hades*. This is the place of disembodied souls, being the place we all depart when leaving our body on this earth.
- There are two sides to the Hadean world, the location for the saved and the other for the condemned. The saved side is referred to as paradise and the lost as tartarus. Hades is mentioned many times in the scriptures.
  - It was the place that the Rich man and Lazarus entered upon their deaths (Lk 16).
  - It is the place that all people will enter upon death and be resurrected from on the Day of Judgment (1 Thes 4 and 1 Cor 15)
  - It was the place that Jesus went following death and until the resurrection (Acts 2) and now holds the keys of (Rev 1).
- When the thief desired to enter into the kingdom, Jesus entered him into the saved side of hade called *paradise*. He could not simply take him into heaven, for that was not where He was headed.
- There were three crosses on the hill that day. On one side a criminal that reviled at the thought of Jesus as being some sort of King. One the other side a criminal that recognized Jesus as the King named and a spiritual kingdom to be ushered in. In the middle of the two was the Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omni benevolent, King of kings and Lord of lords ready to take the throne of His kingdom! On the left was a man who would die in his sins; on the right a man that would die from his sins; and in the middle the One that would die for the sins of mankind, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world.

- It did not matter that Jesus did not yet die on the cross at the time of this promise, for He had power to forgive men their sins before and after His death, burial and resurrection. (Luke 5:24)
- It did not matter that the criminal had not been a follower of Jesus for very long, having been a recent recognizer of the King.
- It did not matter that the church had not yet begun, for the Day of Pentecost was yet fifty days away.
- It did not matter that Jesus had not yet commanded baptism as part of salvation in the New Covenant, for that time had not yet arrived.
- The point of the passage is not when and whom, but how and why! He was able to be spared from condemnation, just like Adam, just like Abraham, just like Moses, just like David, just like John the Baptist, just like Peter, James, John, Paul and the rest of the saved, because he saw Jesus as a King and heaven as His kingdom! For THIS calculation the criminal would go to paradise rather than the condemned side of *tartarus*.
- 1 Tim 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, {be} honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

### Conclusion from Statement #2:

Don't you ever forget that Jesus has the power on earth to be your King and to put you into His kingdom! *"Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."* Is that a statement of history or a condition of your soul with Jesus? *John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."* Are you willing to trust Him only? Are you willing to commit your life to Him fully? He cannot be your King if you are not willing to be His servant.

### Part Two from the Sermon on the Cross

John 19:25-27 Therefore the soldiers did these things. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the {wife} of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own {household.}

- There seems to be an absence of the men of Jesus at the cross, except John. That would seem to go along with the way that Jesus would die for Ps 38:11 states *"My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague; and my kinsmen stand afar off."* There are a number of women that stay with Jesus until the end.
- One of these women was Mary, the mother of Jesus. Naturally she would be devastated at the sight of her Son hanging on for dear life. Jesus, being the oldest of at least seven offspring (Mark 6:3), would have the responsibility of taking care of a "widowed" mother. Since His half-brothers did not believe in Him until after the resurrection (John 7:5), it would be

necessary to pass the care of His mother to the nearest believing male relative.

- It is believed that Salome is the sister of Mary (the mother of Jesus) and the wife of Zebedee (the mother of James and John the apostle). If this is true, then the closest believing male relative is John the apostle, the writer of this gospel. This is basis of the third speaking incident from the cross. Jesus made eye contact with His mother saying, "Woman, behold your Son!" Then looking at John He transferred His earthly responsibility, "Behold your mother!" With that declaration, John took Mary in as his own.

### Statement # 3

"Behold, your mother!"

- Jesus had always tried His best to carry out love for parents. He was a good Son and followed the guidelines of respect as spelled out in the Law. It appears in the absence of the mentioning of Joseph that Mary was a widow. If Jesus followed the Law perfectly, then He would have had to oversee the care of His mother, being the eldest. It appears from Acts 1:14 that in less than fifty days, his brothers would be on board in the faith. *These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with {the} women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.*
- This sends the reminder to us that Jesus expects those of the faith to assist those in the faith who are in need. Yes He wants us to help all men, but especially the household of the faith.
  - Gal 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.
  - 1 Tim 6:18 {Instruct them} to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,
  - Eph 4:28 "...let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have {something} to share with him who has need."

### Conclusion from Statement #3

- Jesus knows that we have a responsibility to watch out for the needs of those in the faith. This is not referring to the WANTS, but the NEEDS. James 2:15-16 tells us that if a *brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for {their} body, what use is that?*
  - We cannot expect the government to come to the rescue of the church family because it will not happen!
  - The politicians are not here to help a sister that has lost their job!
  - The bureaucrats of the world are not the ones that Jesus has charges to assist your hurting brother.

- BEHOLD your mother! BEHOLD your Brother! BEHOLD your sister! We must help when need comes into the lives of the saints! We must take care of those in need that Jesus has transferred to our care.

Mark 15:33-36 And when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" 35 And when some of the bystanders heard it, they {began} saying, "Behold, He is calling for Elijah." 36 And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down."

- This is the first of three phenomena that occurred during the crucifixion. From noon to 3 PM, the sun grew dark as Jesus hung on the cross. There are some in the scientific world that sought to explain away this event as a sandstorm and others have said it was an eclipse. Neither of these follows the text, for there no mention of the wind and an eclipse would not last three hours, especially during the Passover.
- Just as predicted well in advanced, it went dark. *Amos 8:9 "And it will come about in that day," declares the Lord GOD, "That I shall make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark in broad daylight."*
- This was the highest moment for the devil and the darkest moment in the history of mankind. This was the moment that the sins of the world were being placed on the perfect Son of God. *Isa 53:6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.* He was the perfect One with imperfection dumped upon Him. *2 Cor 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin {to be} sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
  - He could not look upon His Son for darkness cannot have fellowship with light (2 Cor 6:14). God would have to turn His back on Jesus. *1 Jn 1:5 "...God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." The Father could not look upon His Son in this state.*
  - All the "unfruitful deeds of darkness" (Eph 5:11), the "powers of darkness" (Luke 22:53) and the "rulers of darkness" (Eph 6:12) of the "domain of darkness" (Col 1:13) had reached their darkest moment.
  - Simply put, this was a miracle that communicates God turning His back on His only begotten Son as the sins of the world are place upon Him. This was a dark day for man, for Jesus and for God. *Isa 53:4 Surely our griefs He himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*
- It was near the end of this dark period that Jesus expresses the pain of God turning His back on Him. *"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"* This is from

Psalm 22, the Psalm of prophecy of the crucifixion of Jesus. A brief look at some of the verses of this Psalm will allow us to share in His suffering:

- Ps 22:1-7 My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. 2 O my God, I cry by day, but Thou dost not answer; and by night, but I have no rest. 3 Yet Thou art holy, O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel. 4 In Thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them. 5 To Thee they cried out, and were delivered; in Thee they trusted, and were not disappointed. 6 But I am a worm, and not a man, a reproach of men, and despised by the people. 7 All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, {saying,}
- Ps 22:14-19 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and Thou dost lay me in the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; 18 They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. 19 But Thou, O LORD, be not far off; O Thou my help, hasten to my assistance.
- The most difficult part of the crucifixion was not the beatings, not the cross, not the nails or the ridicule, but the separation from God. He had always been with God and at this point was experiencing something that was entirely alien to Him.

#### Statement #4

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

- The cross was the loneliest place on earth, but He would have to do it alone!
- It was a dark day in history, but it would soon lead to a ray of hope!
- It hurt in the worst way to be separated from God, but it had to be done!

#### Chorus "Ten Thousand Angels"

He could have called ten thousand angels  
To destroy the world and set Him free.  
He could have called ten thousand angels,  
But He died alone, for you and me.

#### Conclusion from Statement #4

- Jesus was banished from God so that we might avoid banishment in the future. *II Th 1:9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; (KJV)*
- He died alone on that cross so that we could die to our sins. *Rom 6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*



- He was forsaken by God on that day so that we might not be forsaken for eternity. Heb 13:5-6 "...for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," 6 so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?"

## Blood Transfusion



In his book *Written in Blood*, Robert Coleman tells the story of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. The doctor explained that she had the same disease the boy had recovered from two years earlier. Her only chance for recovery was a transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the disease. Since the two children had the same rare blood type, the boy was the ideal donor.

"Would you give your blood to Mary?" the doctor asked. Johnny hesitated. His lower lip started to tremble. Then he smiled and said, "Sure, for my sister." Soon the two children were wheeled into the hospital room—Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and healthy. Neither spoke, but when their eyes met, Johnny grinned. As the nurse inserted the needle into his arm, Johnny's smile faded. He watched the blood flow through the tube.

With the ordeal almost over, his voice, slightly shaky, broke the silence. "Doctor, when do I die?" Only then did the doctor realize why Johnny had hesitated, why his lip had trembled when he'd agreed to donate his blood. He thought giving his blood to his sister meant giving up his life. In that brief moment, he'd made his great decision.