

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY: "Crucifixion of the Son of God" Luke 23

Scripture of Lesson: Luke's Gospel 23: 26-56

Isaiah 53: 1-12

1. The Lord's walk to Calvary (Golgotha)

- a. Having been sentenced to death by crucifixion by Pilate, Lord Jesus was led to Calvary, the site of crucifixion outside of Jerusalem. Because He had been severely beaten during the trial process, His walk to Calvary was very arduous and He fell several times (according to the tradition). He was led to the site of His death meekly as the Passover Lamb, thus fulfilling the prophesy by Isaiah:

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. [Isaiah 53: 7]

- b. As His Son was taking the steps toward His death on the cross, God the Father was watching from above. The walk to Calvary was one of determined obedience and of the holy resolve to fulfill His mission from the Father above. His obedience persisted all the way to the death of the cross. And God was pleased to raise Him from death and make Him the High Priest for God's people and the Life that sustains all living and gives eternal life to all who are brought into the grace and love of God. Jesus Christ is fully justified to be our High Priest for this reason:

But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name [Phil. 2: 7-9]

- c. Simon of Cyrene of North Africa was ordered by the Roman soldiers to carry the cross for the Lord along the road as they saw Him crumbling under the weight of the cross. Mark's gospel indicates Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus and thus well known among the Christians [Mark 15: 21]. Rufus may be the same believer mentioned by Paul [Rom. 16:13]. Simon, perhaps unwittingly, helped the Lord carry the burden of the cross, indicating that we humans can share in God's burden in carrying out His will and plan.

2. Seven last sayings of the Lord

- a. *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* [Luke 23: 34]
 - Even as He was dying on the cross, Lord Jesus showed the quality of ultimate compassion and mercy, which are required attributes of the High Priest.
- b. *"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."* [Luke 23: 43]
 - The repentant and confessing thief was assured of his salvation in the last moments of his life. This shows the beautiful picture of God making His salvation available in grace, but not in our works, so that there is no excuse for not coming to His grace and forgiveness.
- c. *He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!"* [John 19: 26-27]
 - The human Jesus made the provision for His mother, Mary, in the care of His beloved disciple, John. Why did He not leave her in the care of His siblings? We do not know the circumstances, but Lord Jesus must have thought it as the best arrangement for Mary, His siblings and John.
- d. *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* [Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34]
 - Son of Man had to experience the desertion by not only His disciples but also by God the Father while He was hanging on the cross all alone by Himself, without the presence of God the Father and the Holy Spirit. He alone had to face the cruel death so that He could overcome death and become Life to all living.

... grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel [2 Timothy 1: 9-10]

e. *"I thirst."* [John 19:28]

- This was a natural response from His bodily condition. He had not eaten or drunk any water for many hours, had gone through scourging, beating, losing blood because of the thorny crown, sweating all the time while carrying the cross and His weary body through the ordeals. In the extreme condition of lacking bodily water and severe loss of blood, His body cried out, "I thirst." Christ suffered so much for our sins. What are we thirsting for?

f. *When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished;" and he bowed his head and handed over the spirit.* [John 19:30]

- Lord Jesus died about the same hour when the Jews killed a Passover lamb for the feast. The innocent Lamb was killed so that we can be forgiven and brought into God's fold. His mission having been wholly completed, Son of God declared, "*It is finished.*" Even at death God the Son was in full charge. He Himself gave over the Spirit to God the Father now that His mission was over.

g. *Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."* [Luke 23:46]

- Many times, Lord Jesus taught His disciples that He and the Father are one [John 10:30], and that the Father who dwells in Him was doing His works [John 14: 10]. Now that the mission is complete, He can return to His Father:

I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father. [John 16: 28]

Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. [Psalm 31:5]

- Upon His death, the curtain of the temple was split in two from top to bottom, thus allowing the free entry into the Holiest room of the temple of God's presence for all justified persons:

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh [Hebrews 10: 19-20]

3. The King's burial

a. Joseph of Arimathea, a believer, asked Pilate to have the body of the Lord for burial [23:50-53]. Nicodemus, a believing Pharisee, brought 100 lbs of mixture of myrrh and aloes. They embalmed the Lord's body with the spices and wrapped it in linen. Joseph bought the never-used grave in the garden next to Calvary and laid the body of their Lord in it.

b. Thus, they fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah about His burial.

And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. [Isaiah 53:9]

Discussion topics:

1. *What is the meaning of the crucifixion of Lord Jesus to your life and salvation? Was there an occasion in your life that caused you to see the meaning clearly?*
2. *What honor and glory did God bestow on His Son after His death and resurrection? What does it tell us about the rewards after our faithful life?*
3. *The details of the Lord's crucifixion death by OT writers, who had prophesied these details when crucifixion mode of death did not exist, were all fulfilled over hundreds of years later. What does this tell us about the Bible's prophesies for the end times?*