

The People at the Cross

I. Introduction

1. Texts: Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19
2. We must study the Bible reverently and honestly not making it say what it has not said.

II. SOME WHO WERE ABSENT

1. The Apostles

1. Only John of the twelve are not seen at the cross.
2. The apostles simply fled (Zechariah 13:7; Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50).
3. Even though they didn't show up at the cross, Jesus forgave them. . . .and us!

2. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

1. Jesus loved them (John 11:5).
2. These three are not mentioned as being at the cross, at the tomb, or in the upper room (Acts 1:13, 14).
3. Had these three already been hurt too much (John 11:1–44)? Too risky to stay with Him?

3. Physical Brothers of Jesus

1. They were in the upper room in Acts 1, but they were not at their mother's side at the cross.
2. John stood there, but they didn't (John 19:25–27).

4. Barabbas

1. We would call him a terrorist (John 18:39, 40).
2. Pilate was shocked that the Jews chose to release Barabbas rather than Jesus (Matthew 27:15–22; Mark 15:6–13).
3. What do you think Barabbas should have done?

5. Others Healed by Jesus

1. Were they there?
2. Were the people of Nazareth there?
3. Were they too embarrassed or too ashamed to be present?

6. Malchus

1. God in His Bible gave nearly as much space to Malchus as to the initial creation of things (see John 18:1–11).
2. Jesus' "motley crew" had two swords (Luke 22:38) and Peter used one to lop off Malchus' right ear (John 18:3-8).
3. Caiaphas, the high priest and Malchus' master, had to see that ear every day.

7. Judas Iscariot

1. His **name** is synonymous with "traitor."

1. Jesus allowed Judas to approach Him, and even kiss Him (Luke 22:47, 48).
 2. Through all of the arrest, Jesus was saying in several different ways, “*Don’t do this—run, Judas, run.*”
 3. The only conclusion we can draw from this is that Judas was a successful hypocrite.
 4. The other apostles said, “*Is it I?*” not “*It is Judas*” (Matthew 26:21–25).
- 2. Judas had:**
1. Taken the “morsel” (John 13:21–26) but the other apostles didn't know.
 2. Jesus knew that Judas had allowed the devil to enter his heart, and He called him the “son of perdition” (John 17:12).
 3. John later said that Judas, the trusted treasurer, was a crook and had stolen from the apostles’ money bag (see John 12:1–6).
 4. Satan “entered” Judas (Luke 22:3; John 13:2).
 5. Jesus told Judas as he moved toward his terrible deed to “act quickly” (John 13:26–30).
- 3. Judas was blessed:**
1. He was with Jesus for three years & had special privileges, yet he failed to benefit from them.
 2. He could not learn; he could not admit error; he could not repent.
 3. *To be blunt, Judas could not accept Jesus’ grace.*
 4. Peter could! Judas had *regret* from *pride*, not *repentance* through *grace*.
- 4. Judas was warned**
1. Months before the betrayal, Jesus said, “*Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?*” (John 6:70).
 2. Judas feared life more than death.
 3. He committed suicide—a permanent solution to a temporary problem.
- 5. What is the lesson for us?**
1. If Jesus cannot save all, neither can we!
 2. Jesus summed it up tersely: “*It would have been good for that man if he had not been born*” (Matthew 26:24b).

III. SOME WHO WERE PRESENT

1. The Women.
 1. **Sympathetic, heartbroken women** (Luke 23:27–31) wept for Jesus; but, Jesus warned them to weep for themselves because Judgment was coming to Jerusalem (A.D. 67–70).
 2. **Mary, the mother of Jesus**
 3. **Mary Magdalene** (Mark 16:9)
 4. **Mary, the mother of James and Joses** (Mark 15:40).
 5. **Salome, the mother of James and John** (Luke 24:10; 8:3)
 6. **Joanna** (Luke 24:10; 8:3).
 7. **The women from Galilee** (John 19:25; Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40–47; Luke 23:49, 55, 56; 23:27–31)
2. Simon of Cyrene (Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26).
 1. When the humanity of Jesus failed, Simon was there.
 2. Mark said Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15:21).
 1. He may have been the father of the Rufus whom Paul mentioned in Romans 16:13.

2. Many identify him as a Christian prophet who is named as Simeon in Acts 13:1.
3. There were Cyrenians in Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2:10).
 1. There were preachers from Cyrene (Acts 11:20).
 2. Prophets from Cyrene called by God to start mission work (Acts 13:1–4).
 3. Did Simon later become a Christian and teach his sons to be Christians?
3. The Thief on the Cross (Luke 23:39–43).
 1. The thief was saved.
 2. Some cry, “*The thief was too bad, too fallen, too late, and too far gone.*”
 1. While on earth, Jesus had the power to forgive sin (Matthew 9:4–6; Mark 2:8–11; Luke 5:23, 24).
 3. “*But he did nothing,*” you say.
 1. He did what he could – confessed faith, rebuked sin, defended Jesus!
 4. “*He was saved without baptism,*” you say.
 1. No one knows whether or not the thief was baptized, since “all Judea” obeyed John the Baptist’s baptism (Matthew 3:4–6; Mark 1:4, 5).
 2. Religious folk rejected both John and his baptism (Luke 7:29, 30).
 3. Publicans and harlots accepted John’s baptism.
 4. Jesus and His apostles, later, were baptizing more people than John was (John 4:1, 2).
 5. John thundered out at the Pharisees and the Sadducees because of their rejection of his baptism (Matthew 3:7–12).
 6. The thief died under the law of Moses, but we live under the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).
 1. When the thief died, Jesus had not been raised from the dead; He had not given His Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15, 16).
 2. At this time, the Holy Spirit had not come; people had not been commanded to be baptized to become Christians.
 3. The church had not been established. (That happened on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:36, 37.)
4. The Crowds (Matthew 26:65–68; Mark 14:64, 65; 15:29–36).
 1. Gawkers walked by, watching and ridiculing those being crucified as a blood sport.
 2. Experiments were encouraged:
 1. “Come down. . . .”
 2. “Stay put. . . .”
 3. “Give Him some cheap vinegar. . . .”
 4. “Maybe Elijah will come!”
 5. What a show!
 3. Today, the world is filled with protesters but where were they when Jesus needed them?
 4. “*His blood shall be on us and on our children!*” the crowd had cried (Matthew 27:25).
5. The Enemies.
 1. With pride they said, “We took care of that!”
 2. They thought they had won their victory through Rome.
 3. Little did they realize that God would destroy them through Rome in AD 70.

6. **Roman Soldiers**. Barbaric events demand barbaric people.
 1. They mocked Jesus (Matthew 20:17–19; 27:27–31; Mark 10:32–34; 15:16–20; Luke 18:31–34; John 19:1–6).
 2. They beat Jesus.
 3. They crucified Jesus.
 4. They gambled for His clothes (Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; John 19:23, 24).
 5. However, one Roman centurion watched intently and spoke truly, “Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54; see Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the dictionary definition of “mystery.” What is the biblical meaning?
2. Explain why the gospel is called a “mystery.”
3. Who was noticeably absent from the cross when Jesus was crucified? Why?
4. According to the Scriptures, how should we view Judas' role in betraying Jesus?
5. Consider those who were at the cross. Why were they there? What relationships did they have with Jesus? How did the crucifixion impact them?
6. Discuss the thief on the cross who was saved. How are we like him? How was his situation different than ours concerning salvation?