



## NG Study Guide: Matt. 27:32-56 "The King Crucified" [9.24.17]

### Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. **Leader note:** Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.

### The Study

**Thesis:** Imagine the disciples in the midst of Jesus' arrest, trials, and crucifixion. All of Jesus' promises, all the prophecies, all the anticipation related to the Coming Messiah is forgotten or obscured. They were frightened, confused, grieved, and hopeless. Similarly, we face difficult circumstances that seem hopeless. Where can we find hope before the resurrection? As we contemplate Jesus' crucifixion we will discover five reasons to have hope in Christ.

#### 1. Jesus is King [32-37]

Prisoners would generally carry the cross beam to the place of execution, and the prisoner was paraded on as long a route as possible to warn others. Jesus was too weak from the scourging, so Simon from Cyrene was compelled to carry the cross [32]. Even though this was the lowest point in Jesus' life, Simon came to faith and led his family to the Lord [Mk. 15:21, Rom. 16:13]. Golgatha [33] or the place of the skull in Hebrew is *calvaria* in Latin, and where we get the English "Calvary." They offered Jesus wine mixed with gall as a sedative, but He refused it [34] [Pr. 31:6]. Then they crucified Him [35]. Matthew does not dwell on the details, but crucifixion was so horrendous that the term excruciating (lit. out of the cross) was created to describe the pain. The soldier guards cast lots, like tossing dice, to gamble for Jesus' outer robe [35, Jn.19: 23-24, Pr.22:18]. On the cross beam was placed an inscription: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS [37]. John tells us that it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin as a message to all. Jesus is not merely the king of the Jews, but has all authority in heaven and on earth. "And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" [Rev. 19:16]. Jesus is truly Sovereign and we know that He is good, because He gave His life so that we could live. We have hope because He's got everything under control.

## **2. Jesus identifies with the least, last, and lost [38]**

Jesus was crucified with criminals on both sides. He was numbered with the rebel transgressors to make intercession for rebel transgressors [Is. 53:12]. Jesus' life, ministry, and death displays His compassion for the lost and marginalized. That reality provides such a wonderful comfort and hope. There are presumably times that many of us were or are the lost, last, and least; and it is good to know that Jesus identifies with and intercedes for us.

And the fact that Jesus identifies and cares for the marginalized thus creates a responsibility for us to also care for the marginalized. There are countless needs, including but not limited to: orphans and foster, widows and the elderly, the homeless, refugees, the poor, single parent homes, disaster victims, sex-trafficking, the hopeless and lonely, and the persecuted church. There are local and global needs that are certainly too great for any one of us to resolve, but each of us should be able to identify with some need that moves us to do something for some.

## **3. Jesus doesn't save himself so He can save you [39-44]**

The road where Christ was crucified was just outside the city walls, and those who passed by mocked Jesus [39]. They told Jesus if He is really the Son of God to come off the cross to save Himself [40]. Similarly, the religious leaders say if Jesus is really the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross and we'll believe Him. The irony is revealed in the truth they unwittingly declared, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." If Jesus saved Himself, He would not provide the way for mankind to be saved [Jn. 10:18]. Even as they mock Him noting that Jesus said, "I am the Son of God" He lovingly denies Himself to save us. Knowing that Jesus voluntarily died so I could live gives me hope, because I can look to the cross and know that God is good and that He loves me as proven by the ultimate sacrifice. [Gen. 22, Jn. 3:16, 15:13]. It is vitally important to have the perspective that our eternal salvation and, present spiritual life with God is greater than being delivered from our difficult circumstances.

## **4. Jesus is victorious (45-50)**

From the sixth to ninth hours, or noon till three there was darkness [45]. It cannot be an eclipse, because Jewish Feasts occur on the full moon. This was the darkness foretold by the prophet Amos referring to the judgment of sin [Amos 8:9]. At 3:00 Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" [46]. That is likely when the sin of the world was placed upon Jesus [Ps. 22:1, 2Cor. 5:21]. Some thought he was calling for Elijah (the expected forerunner of the Messiah [47] [Mal. 4:5]. Some offered sour wine, an anesthetic, as a merciful act [48] others were less sympathetic [49]. Finally, Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit [50]. John tells us that it was a single word in Greek, *tetelestai* which means "It is finished" [Jn. 19:30]. It was a victory shout for all to hear. The work of redemption had been accomplished. Then He yielded His spirit, a reference to His death. Jesus' suffering and death may appear to be a defeat, but they are the victorious completion of redemption. He is the sacrificial lamb who suffered to take away the sin of the world [Is. 53, Jn. 1:29].

## **5. Jesus gives access to God (51-56)**

The temple veil was sixty feet high, thirty feet wide, and ten inches thick. The Jewish historian Josephus, observed that two teams of horses pulling in opposite directions wouldn't tear it apart. The veil separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and only one day per year on Yom Kippur. The tearing of the veil from top to bottom reveals that it was God giving access to the Holy of Holies through Jesus' death [51]. After Jesus' death and resurrection many were raised from the dead and appeared to many in Jerusalem to authenticate Jesus is Messiah [53]. When the Roman Centurion and soldiers witnessed Jesus' demeanor, the earthquake and rocks split, they also affirmed that, "Truly this was the Son of God!" [54]. All of the disciples had fled, except John, and many of the women who followed Jesus remained, but at a distance.

Perhaps the most underappreciated and under-utilized spiritual blessing that we have in Christ is access to God. To Jews, there was an understanding of the reverent respect of the holiness of God that kept man at a distance. At Sinai, as the First Covenant was given the Jews could not approach. In the tabernacle and later the temple the

Holy of Holies separated God and man, because of our sin. But because of Christ's sacrifice, His followers can approach God's throne with boldness to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need [Heb. 4:16]. Through prayer, we have access to God, and can have confident hope that He is merciful, gracious, good, and His will is perfect and best.

### Study Guide Qs

***Q1 What are some of the circumstances in your life that you find difficult?***

***Q2 What are some of the needs that move you? What are you doing, or what might you do to care for the people who have that need?***

***Q3 How does Jesus' agony on the cross produce a greater good? How has God allowed hardship and suffering to produce greater good in your life [Rom. 8:28]?***

***Q4 How does knowing that Jesus is victorious and that you have access to God provide hope for you in difficult times?***

### **"Digging Deeper" (optional or alternative study)**

- 1. Do some research about the history and nature of crucifixion. Why might God the Father allow His only beloved Son to suffer so greatly the agony of crucifixion? What might that say about God's love for humanity?**
- 2. Spend time in prayer this week contemplating the incredible blessings of access to God. Reflect about the experience and how it can provide hope [Heb. 4:16].**
- 3. Question #2 above asks you to consider *some of the needs that move you, and what are you doing, or might you do to care for the people who have that need.* Do some extra research about that need and consider whether your group could care for that need together. Talk with your NG leader about presenting your ideas to the group.**

**Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:**

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?
3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

**Invite a neighbor where you live, work, study or play to visit your Neighborhood Group. Let them know that you're learning the Bible to learn love God and neighbors better.**

**Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:**

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?
2. What might we do about that need to help?

**Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:**

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

**Leader Notes:**

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
- 3. The "Digging Deeper" section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the "Digging Deeper" section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.
- 4. Every time you meet consider asking:**
  - a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.