

## CHRIST DIED FOR YOU

We hear much about many of the great surgical procedures that have been developed and put into practice over the past decade. Just thinking about a heart transplant is rather mind boggling. To have an organ transplant work it is necessary to have a donor that is compatible with the person that needs the transplant. Many people have designated that their organs can be used for such purposes if they meet an untimely death. To pass along part of yourself that you can no longer use to someone that you don't even know is a pretty unselfish thing to do. If you were in need of a heart transplant and a heart became available, you would likely be very grateful to the person that provided the heart. We can understand how a person could do such a thing even though we ourselves might not be so inclined. However, can you imagine needing a heart transplant and someone learns of it and they come forward to donate their heart to you even though they have prospects of living 30 or 40 more years. Now that's hard to imagine. But is this not, in essence, what Jesus did for you and me?

Jesus Paid it All. We sing that song and if we really think about what it says, we can be very thankful for what He did for you and me. The price that Jesus paid started before He was nailed to the cross. It starts with having to witness the bickering among the disciples over who would be the greatest in the Kingdom that Jesus came to establish for the humble. It continued into the night as He watched Judas leave the supper to carry out the betrayal. It was intensified as Jesus prayed in the garden for the possibility of another way to accomplish our salvation. The suffering was not helped when He witnessed the most faithful of His disciples fall asleep when they should have been praying. The action of the mob and the twisting of justice by the Romans and the Jews added to the sting of the rejection and made the flogging and the physical abuse harder to endure. The crowd of common people who had flocked to Him for healing and food was fickle in that on that fateful Friday they chose a robber man named Jesus rather than the righteous man named Jesus, thus adding to his grief. It didn't stop there.

MARK 15:22-23 Jesus had been up all night and had been severely beaten and mistreated. He was then required to carry the heavy cross beam to the place of the crucifixion. He was so exhausted that the soldiers got a black man from the crowd along the street to help. He was brought to a place outside the city walls where criminals were executed a place called Golgotha. It was common practice to give those that were to be executed a drink of wine and myrrh to dull their sense, but Jesus refused to drink it.

MARK 15:24-28 The soldiers that had execution duty were allowed to divide among themselves the clothes of the people that were executed. To us that seems like a dubious reward. However, cloth was made by hand operated equipment that was very labor intensive and was therefore worth more to them in terms of the amount of work required to buy cloth or clothing. The robe that Jesus had was seamless and the soldiers realized that it would be worth more in one large piece rather than being torn up, so they carried out a common game of chance (casting lots) to see who would be the lucky person. That, in and of itself, is not of much significance; however, the fact that David had prophesied that this would happen 1500 years before the actual occurrence is significant.

The crucifixion began about 9 o'clock in the morning and it lasted about six hours before Jesus died. Pilate had someone place a placard above Jesus with the crime for which He was being crucified. It read KING OF THE JEWS. This was, after all, the primary reason the Jews used to justify their actions. Jesus had done nothing according to Roman law to be sentenced to death, the Roman carried out this execution to appease the Jews. John tells us in his gospel account that the

Jewish leaders wanted the sign changed to read "He said he was king of the Jews." Pilate refused and probably did so to send a message to the Jewish population that such punishment could be dealt to any of them also.

The fact that He was crucified between two thieves was in direct fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah (53:12).

MARK 15:29-32 Even the action of the crowds showed no sign of mercy as they shouted insults at Jesus and challenged Him to come down from the cross. Their actions were predicted in Psalm 22:7 by David as he noted much of the suffering that Jesus endured. Sometimes I tend to think that the people of that day just didn't listen to Jesus or pay attention to what He said; however, that is not the case. They were listening and they even remembered that He said that if they destroyed the temple that He would rebuild it in three days. Of course, He was referring to His body and they thought He meant the building in Jerusalem. Even the chief priest came out to see the spectacle and to jeer at Jesus. The thieves that were being crucified along side were also shouting insults at Jesus. From the highest to the lowest, all in that world's society had rejected Jesus. Their challenge to come down was just more of the same temptation that the devil used some three years earlier when Jesus first began His ministry. The ironic thing is that Jesus had the power to actually come down from the cross and could have saved Himself. However, if that had happened then you and I would have had no means of salvation for ourselves.

MARK 15:33-39 Around noon it became very dark. This was not an eclipse of the sun since the Passover occurred at the time of the full moon. It appeared that creation itself reacted to what was happening to the Creator. It stayed dark until mid-afternoon. At that time Jesus cried out the opening word of Psalm 22: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" In the ordeal of the cross, He Who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might become the righteous of God in Him. At the point where He had heaped upon Him the sin of the whole world, He represented all of fallen humanity and in so doing died for each of us thus paying the penalty of sin. Many commentators interpret this element of the overall event as God the Father looking away from the sin that His Son had taken on. Regardless of what was going on, I can believe that Jesus felt the same abandonment that many of us feel when we experience difficulties and suffering.

The people thought that Jesus was calling for Elijah and thought perhaps that He had become delusional in all the pain. Someone offered Him a drink of vinegar on a sponge--which doesn't seem to me to be a kindness. Yet even this act was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Jesus then uttered His last words "It is finished" or "Father into Your hands I commit My spirit" and He died. At that moment the veil of the temple was torn into two part from the top to the bottom. This signaled the end to the old sacrificial system as an approach to God, the way now having been made open by the One Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

When we learn of what Jesus did, can we, along with the Roman centurion, declare "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"?