

Hell-Bound Men Around The Cross

No. 58

Introduction.

- I. In Matthew the 27th chapter, Matthew tells us of the trial of Jesus before governor Pilate. He tells us how Pilate reluctantly condemned Jesus to die and washed his hands before the multitude and said "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man." And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." Pilate then released Barabbas and scourged Jesus and delivered Him to be crucified. The apostle records these words in his gospel. (Matt. 27:27-56).

27. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium, and gathered unto him the whole band. 28. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. 29. And they platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! 30. And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. 31. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him.

32. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to go with them, that he might bear his cross. 33. And they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull, 34. they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink. 35. And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots; 36. and they sat and watched him there. 37. And they set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 38. Then are there crucified with him two robbers, one on the right hand and one on the left. 39. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, 40. and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. 41. In like manner also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, 42. He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. 43. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God. 44. And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach.

45. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

46. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 47. And some of them stood there, when they heard it, said, This man calleth Elijah. 48. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49. And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him. 50. And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit.

51. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; 52. and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; 53. and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many. 54. Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. 55. And many women were there beholding from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: 56. among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. ASV

A. In this passage Matthew gives us some of the details of the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus after His scourging.

B. Mark, Luke, and John also add other significant details in their gospels.

II. As Jesus suffered intensely on the cross there was a heterogenous group that surrounded Him. Most of those who were around the cross were hell-bound, doomed for eternal punishment. Some were loyal followers of Christ.

A. **Let us briefly look at those who were around the cross.**

B. Those around the cross were typical of people in the 20th century. Each of us was there representatively.

I. **Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, Priests, And Levites** - The Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, priests and Levites were near the cross.

A. These men who were the religious leaders of the Jews had condemned the innocent Jesus because He had condemned them for their sinful, hypocritical lives and because they were envious of His popularity with the multitudes.

- B. They were happy that at last Jesus was suffering horribly on the cross.
 - 1. They were present that they might **see Him suffer**.
 - 2. They were present that they might **criticize and mock Him**.
 - 3. Matthew says that they **railed Him saying**. (Matt. 27:39-43).
- C. **The unmerciful mocking of these wicked men is appalling to those who have come to know love the Savior and so is the mocking of our wicked contemporaries.**
 - 1. Some call Jesus a **weakling** who could not save His own life.
 - 2. Others call Him a **trickster** who pretended to work miracles.
 - 3. Others call Him a **liar** and **imposter** because He claimed to be the Son of God.
 - 4. Others falsely call Him an **enemy of God**, a **false prophet**, a **sinner**, a **drunkard**, a **wicked revolutionary**.
- D. Those who reject and denounce and falsely accuse Him today stand condemned just as those pernicious, wicked men who blasphemed Him on the cross.
 - 1. They are hell-bound, bound for the eternal flames of hell.
 - 2. There is no worse sin than to blasphemy Christ and the Holy Spirit who bore witness to His ministry.

II. **Blood-Thirsty Mob** - The blood-thirsty mob was near the cross.

- A. On the Sunday before Christ's crucifixion Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The multitudes were excited and spread branches in His path, and shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." (Matt. 21:1-9).
- B. A few days later these same people became an insane mob, shouting, "Let him be crucified...let him be crucified..his blood be upon us, and on our children." (Matt. 27:20-25).
- C. **How shall we account for this abrupt and sudden change of attitude?**
 - 1. The answer is their religious leaders.
 - 2. Their religious leaders, by shrewd application of mob psychology and by untruths and deception had turned the people against him. They convinced many that Jesus was an imposter to be destroyed rather than the Son of God to be obeyed.
- D. **There are multiplied thousands today who will never be saved.**
 - 1. They may not even ever **hear a gospel sermon** because their religious guides have instilled prejudice in their hearts against the truth.
 - 2. The mob is, therefore, representative of the masses today who are ever ready to follow in blindness the leadership and direction of others. They will not think or investigate for themselves. They allow others to establish their opinions and form their prejudices.

3. It is sad that millions are hell-bound because they let men control them rather than the truth of God.

III. **Four Roman Soldiers** - Four Roman soldiers were near the cross.

- A. These men had nailed Jesus to the cross. They divided His garments into four parts that each soldier might have a part. (Jn. 19:23a). They also cast lots for His tunic, His seamless under garment. (Jn. 19:23b, 24).
- B. These men were the **cynics and agnostics** of our Savior's day.
 - 1. They rejected God, the Sonship of Jesus, and religion.
 - 2. These men were hell-bound and are typical of millions today who reject God, Christ, and Christianity.
 - 3. It is sad that the masses never study the evidences for God and the Deity of Christ and the inspiration of the scriptures. They are anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-religious due to ignorance.
 - 4. Their ignorance is inexcusable and will lead them to hell. (2 Thess. 1:8, 9).

IV. **The Centurion** - The Centurion was near the cross.

- A. This man, who had about one hundred soldiers at his command, was officially in charge of the crucifixion.
- B. The events of that fateful day on which Jesus died exercised a tremendous influence upon him.
 - 1. When our Lord died, the veil of the temple had torn in two from the top to the bottom. (Matt. 27:51). The earth violently shook from an earthquake, the rocks were split, and the graves of many saints were opened. (Matt. 27:51, 52).
 - a. These miraculous phenomena caused the Centurion to exclaim. (Matt. 27:54). "Certainly this was a righteous man." Lk. 23:47).
 - b. But despite the fact he confessed these truths, he did not do anything about it. There is no evidence that he ever accepted Christ. As far as we know he died in his sins. He died spurning Jesus.
 - 2. There are those today who say, "**I believe in God. I believe in Christ.** I believe in the Bible and the church. I believe a person should live the Christian life."
 - 3. But many of these people, like the Roman Centurion, do nothing about it. They never obey the truth. They do not give their hearts to Jesus, but continue to live in sin. Despite their knowledge they are hell-bound unless they repent.

V. **Simon Of Cyrene** - Simon of Cyrene was near the cross.

- A. **Jesus was made to carry His own cross to Golgotha.** Weak and exhausted from the cruel scourging Jesus sank under its weigh. Simon, a man of Cyrene who chanced to be passing was "compelled" to help bear the cross. (Matt. 27:32; Mk. 15:21; Lk. 23:46). Simon was near the cross because he was forced to be there.
- B. **Simon of Cyrene** was not the last to offer unwilling service to the Lord.
 - 1. Sadly he is typical of many today. They serve Him out of fear or pressure rather than out of love

for the One who died for us.

2. This kind of service is loathsome, repulsive to God.
3. Love ought to motivate us to willingly and zealously serve Jesus.
4. Love should motivate us to shout. (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:20, 21).

VI. **Peter** - Peter was likely some distance from the cross.

A. He denied Him three times and the Bible says Peter followed Him “afar off.” (Matt. 26:56-75). He did not want to be close to Jesus out of fear that he too might lose his life.

B. **Many today follow Jesus from afar.**

1. They have only enough religion to be evermore miserable.
2. They do not enjoy themselves in the church, because their hearts yearn for the world.
3. Like the Laodiceans, they are neither hot nor cold, but are lukewarm and disgusting and nauseating to the Lord. (Rev. 3:15, 16).

VII. **Godly Women And John** - Some godly women and John the apostle surrounded the cross.

A. These women had followed Him from Galilee that they might minister to Him. Broken-hearted they beheld the suffering of Jesus from afar.

B. **John**, the disciple whom Jesus loved, dared to stay near the cross.

1. He love Jesus more than life.
2. Jesus on the cross entrusted the care of His mother to this loyal disciple. (Jn. 19:26, 27).

C. These women and John represent those who in the church put the kingdom of God first in their lives.

1. They represent those who are willing to serve Jesus and even die for Him.
2. Oh, how we need more such servants in the army of the Lord.

Conclusion.

I. Yes, you and I were there when they crucified Jesus. Some represented you. Some represented me.

A. I pray that this group of godly women and John represent our lives, and if not, will represent our future lives.

B. Let us serve Jesus and be subservient to His will in all circumstances even if it means persecution and death.

II. **Draw nigh to Christ** who died on the cruel, torturous cross for our sins. Make Him your Savior. Let Him save you and be the Ruler of your life. Come as we sing.