

# **THE MOUNTAIN OF REDEMPTION: GOLGOTHA**

**Important Mountains in the Bible:  
Part 8**

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## **The Mountain of Redemption**

Two thousand years ago, Pilate, the Roman governor in Palestine and Jerusalem, agreed to demand of the chief priests and elders to put Jesus to death. Pilate himself didn't find Jesus guilty. He washed his hands in front of the people to show that he was not responsible for this judgment. Pilate feared the agitated people, especially the threats of the fanatical religious leaders. Pilate surrendered to their will and passed sentence on Jesus.

What had Jesus done to be sentenced to death?

He had cured the sick and weak, opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame walk, raised the dead and preached God's love to everybody. Jesus did all His work without money, but with the spiritual authority and love which He had received from His heavenly Father. He met general approval and was welcomed by the people, but the leaders in the country became angry and jealous of Him. Everybody was running behind Him! They wanted to bring Jesus to death as soon as possible, so they shouted, "Crucify him, crucify him!"



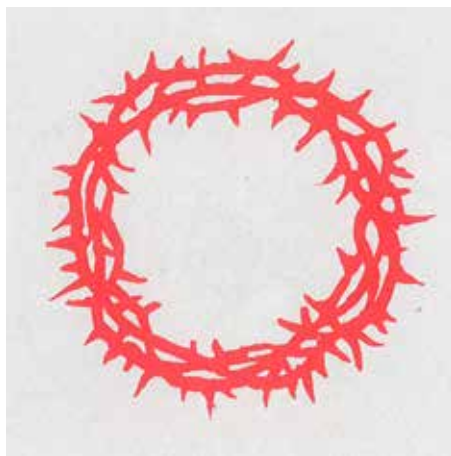
The chief priests got what they demanded. The Roman soldiers put a heavy cross on Jesus' bleeding back after they had flogged him. They forced Him to walk through the narrow paths of Jerusalem up the hill of Golgotha. A crowd of people followed Him all the way. This small hill was outside the wall surrounding Jerusalem where criminals were hanged or crucified.

Many women followed the procession, mourning and lamenting over this good man. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children."

These words were not only directed to the women, but to us all, because if we refuse Christ, the wrath of God will rest on us.



Carrying the heavy cross was a difficult burden for the exhausted Jesus. A man called Simon, from Cyrene, who was on his way home from the country, was forced by the Roman soldiers to help Jesus carry the cross.





After the procession reached the hill of Golgotha, which means, "the skull", the soldiers wanted to give Jesus wine mixed with gall to lessen His pain, but Jesus refused to take it. He wanted to complete His Father's will fully conscious and to offer His life to save many.

After that they nailed Jesus to the cross. Two thieves were crucified with Him, one on His right and the other on His left. So, the prophecy of the Old Testament was fulfilled: "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12).

The soldiers who crucified Jesus divided His clothes among themselves. But Jesus' garment was made from one piece woven from the top to the bottom, resembling the garment of the chief priest. The soldiers talked among themselves saying, "We should not tear this garment in pieces, let us cast lots to see who gets it."

So another prophecy of the Old Testament was fulfilled: "They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing" (Psalm 22:18).







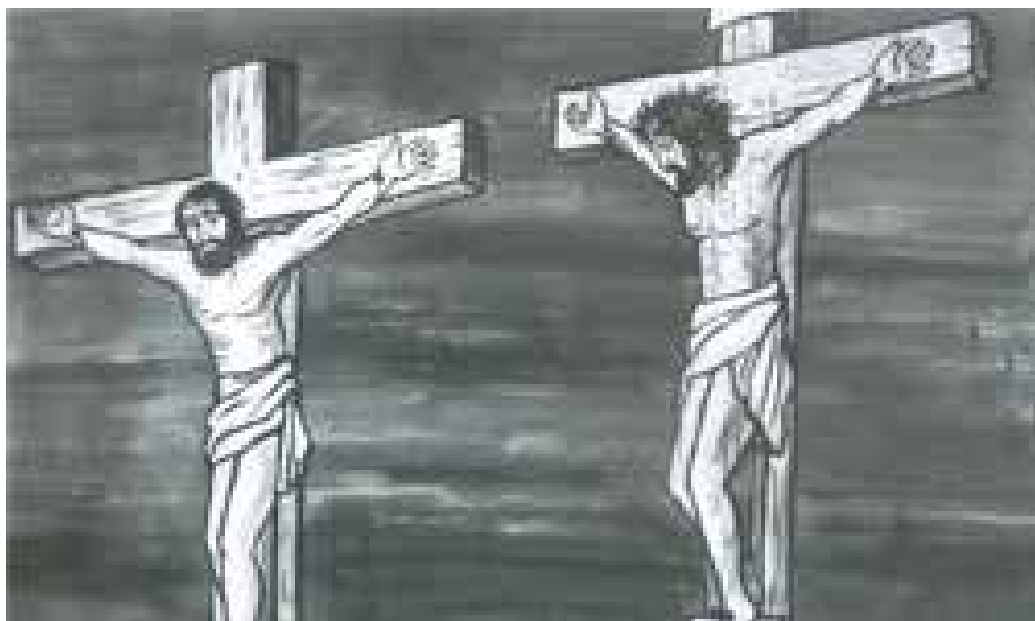


The people passing by hurled abuse at Him, wagging their heads saying, "If you are God's Son, come down from your cross." Also the chief priests and elders mocked Him saying: "He saved others, but cannot save Himself. Did He trust God? Let God rescue Him now."

It was possible for Jesus to step down from the cross and to prove to His enemies that He is truly the Son of God. But His great love for us kept Him on the cross. He suffered deeply from the piercing laughter and mockery of the people He loved. He suffered also from terrible physical pain willingly to save us and to build a bridge between God and all sinners. What He had declared previously to His disciples was now fulfilled. "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except by me." For this reason He did not step down from the cross to rescue Himself; instead of this He prayed to His heavenly Father for all His enemies: "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."

God's redeeming love speaks from these words. Actually Jesus is the chief priest who has reconciled the whole world with God through His atoning death.





One of the two crucified thieves also mocked Jesus uttering the same words as the others, "If you are God's son, save yourself, and us too!"

But the other thief rebuked him and said, "Don't you fear God while you are under the same sentence as He? For us this is a just punishment, we are only paying the price of our misdeeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Lord, remember me when you sit on your throne."

The crucified, repentant thief had understood from Jesus' words on the cross that we all went astray and sinned. No one is good, only God. And no one could save sinners except Jesus, because He accepted God's judgment on all sinners and died in our place.



The thief felt the outstanding power of Jesus, so his words can be considered as a confession of his offences. Therefore, Jesus justified him and said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."



Mary, the mother of Jesus, and some other women whom Jesus healed were standing near the cross. There was also John, the youngest of the disciples, whom Jesus loved dearly.

When Jesus saw His sad mother with John, His follower, He said, "Mother, there is your son", because He wanted to comfort and to care for her. To His disciple He said, "There is your mother." From that moment John took the mother of Jesus into his home and looked after her until her death.





Suddenly a thick darkness fell over the land. The sun didn't shine in the sky. All the people were terrified and felt there was something special going on. The power of darkness was taking hold of the world.

When Jesus was born, the night was illuminated like the day, but when He died, the day was dark as the night.

Then Jesus cried loud and said, "It is accomplished," and added, "Father into your hands I commit my spirit." After this He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.



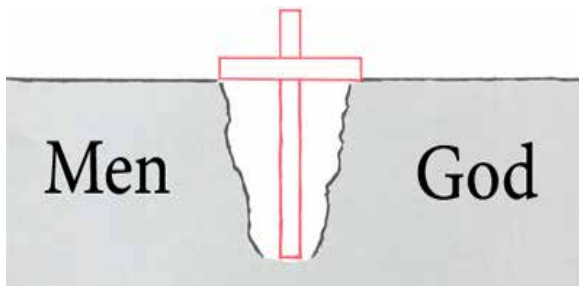
At that moment, the curtain of the temple which separated the unclean people from the holy of holies was torn in two pieces. The earth quaked and the rocks split. As the officer in charge who watched the crucifixion of Jesus, saw all that happened, he was shocked and said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." This officer realized who Jesus was. We too should understand and believe in order to experience our own salvation which Christ has completed for us on the cross.

Do you know that every sin separates us from God? There is a deep gap between us and the Holy One. We all deserve immediate eternal death. Not one of us is acceptable to God. People in all ages have tried to cross the abyss. They have offered many sacrifices, fasted for long times, and tried to build a tower that reached to heaven. They tried to fulfil God's commands exactly and prayed many prayers. But all these things were not enough to cross the deep abyss.

But where is the bridge that can overcome the gap between God and man?

The loving God decided from the beginning of the world to build a bridge over the deep abyss between Him and His creation. But to build an ordinary bridge over a river costs a lot of money. The cost increases proportionally with the length and height of the bridge, and also depends on the deepness of the abyss.

God's bridge is unique. It cost Him the most precious thing. It cost Him not silver nor gold, but He had to agree to the suffering and death of His only Son. But now, anyone who confesses his sins before Jesus, and asks for forgiveness, receives justification from the Crucified One, who is the only bridge for us by which we can reach the Father.



# Quiz



We ask you to do this quiz and to answer the questions. Send your answers to us and we will send you the next booklet.



1. Why did the chief priests and elders insist on crucifying Jesus?
2. Was Pilate convinced that Jesus was guilty when he sentenced him to death?
3. Why did Jesus allow others to mock Him and laugh at Him?
4. Did Jesus really die?
5. Who is the only mediator between God and man?

