



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### John 19: 17-27: The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

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*"And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, 18 where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.*

*19 Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

*20 Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.*

*21 Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews.'""*

*22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."*

*23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. 24 They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things.*

*25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"*

*27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home."*

### Background Notes

In verse 17 we read that Jesus, "*bearing His cross, went out to a place called The Place of the Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.*" Most likely it was the Lord carried the heavy crossbeam of His cross. We know from Mark's gospel that later Simon of Cyrene was asked to carry that crossbeam the rest of the way. They went out -- that is, out of the city -- to the Place of the Skull, or Golgotha. "Calvary" is the Latin translation of this word.

We can't be sure what the "place of the skull" means -- whether it was called the place of the skull because that's where the crucifixions took place, or because the hill was shaped like a skull. Unlike we assume from many songs and pictures, the Bible doesn't indicate that Jesus was crucified on top of a hill -- that comes to us from two traditional sites of Calvary, where there are small hills. One site for the crucifixion is in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the old city of Jerusalem. The other site, known as Gordon's Calvary, is near the Damascus Gate of the Old City. It's interesting that "Gordon's Calvary" is located at a small hillside, and the cliff face of the hillside is shaped like a skull. However, we can't be sure which is the actual site. Both sites have tombs nearby.

But remember -- it's not the actual site of Christ's death that really matters, it is the fact that He died there for our sins!

In verse 18 we read that two other men were crucified with Him, one on each side, and Jesus in the center. This was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 53:12 - *"Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."*

If Barabbas had not been released, the central cross would have been his -- but the Lord took the place of Barabbas on that central cross. What a great picture of substitution! The Lord died instead of the one who should have died.

In verses 19 and 20, we read that the inscription on Christ's cross was written in three languages: Hebrew (the native language of the Jewish people), Latin (the official language of Rome), and Greek (the common language of written communication at that time -- you remember that the New Testament books were written in Greek). The inscription on a Roman cross was an indication of the crime for which the person was being crucified. That's why the Jews said to Pilate, *"Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, 'I am the King of the Jews'"*(v21). In other words, they wanted Pilate to write that Jesus had **claimed** to be King of the Jews -- they didn't want it written as a **fact!** But Pilate said, "What I have written, I have written" -- probably said in mockery of the Jews. Pilate should have shown firmness with the Jews earlier; now it was too late. Pilate will be judged by the truth of what he wrote. Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the King, and is the King! Pilate will have to admit that truth when he is judged in a coming day.

Four women were standing near the cross (v25). Mary, the mother of Jesus was there, and Mary's sister, who was probably Salome (we see this when we harmonize John's account with Mark's account). Salome was the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of James and John -- that would make James and John cousins of the Lord Jesus. The third woman at the cross was Mary the wife of Clopas, and the fourth was Mary Magdalene. We read of Mary Magdalene in Luke 8 -- the Lord had healed this woman of demonic possession.

## **Doctrinal/Teaching Points**

### **1. It is significant that the gruesome details of the crucifixion are not mentioned.**

Once again, verses 17 and 18: *"And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, 18 where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center."* Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John didn't describe the gruesome details of the crucifixion. He didn't describe how the Roman soldiers pounded the nails into the Lord's hands and feet; he didn't describe how they hoisted and dropped the cross into place, which must have been excruciating for the Lord. John didn't describe the physical pain associated with dying by crucifixion.

Why didn't John mention these gruesome details? Because the focus of the Gospel is not on the physical pain of the crucifixion, but on the **purpose** of the crucifixion!

The crucifixion was the means by which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for the sins of the world -- your sins, my sins. It was during the crucifixion that the Lord Jesus experienced the wrath of God against sin, and then died in our place. It was not the physical pain of Roman crucifixion that brought us salvation. We have salvation because our Lord Jesus suffered the judgment of God against sin while He was on that cross. He died as our substitute.

It is significant that the gruesome details of the crucifixion are not mentioned.

## **2. It is significant that the Roman soldiers fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 22.**

*"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. 24 They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: " They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things" (v23-24).*

This is a quote from Psalm 22:18. The soldiers here were Roman soldiers, and the clothing of the victim was considered the "spoils" of the Roman soldiers who were in charge of the execution. When the soldiers divided up the Lord's clothing and gambled for His seamless robe, they certainly didn't realize that they were fulfilling a prophecy that had been written by King David about 1000 years before this time!

The skeptic of the Bible has a hard time with Messianic prophecies like this one, because they prove the supernatural character of the Bible. The skeptic will often try to say that the prophecies were actually written up after the event that is supposedly prophesied. But the skeptic **can't** say that this Psalm 22 prophecy was written up after the event of the crucifixion, because we have copies of this Psalm in the Dead Sea Scrolls, which date to at least 100 years before Christ!

Now the skeptic will try to get around some Messianic prophecies by saying they were "artificially fulfilled" – like Zachariah 9:9, the prediction that the Lord Jesus would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey. The skeptic of the Bible will say that Jesus and His disciples knew this prophecy, so they obtained a young donkey and placed the Lord Jesus on this donkey - and thus Jesus and the disciples "artificially" fulfilled the prophecy.

Well, the skeptic has a hard time getting around the prophecy quoted in John 20:23-24. It was Roman soldiers who gambled for our Lord's clothes, so it would have been impossible for Jesus and the disciples to "artificially arrange" this fulfillment, even if they had wanted to! In addition, it would have been impossible for the early Christians to fabricate this fulfillment of prophecy and get everyone to believe it that it was true, if indeed it did not happen.

It is significant that Roman soldiers fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 22.

## **3. It is significant that Jesus did not address Mary as "mother."**

*"When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home"(v26-27).*

We might think that the Lord would have said to Mary, "Mother, behold your Son" as He said to John, "Behold your mother!" Although His words were not disrespectful, it is significant that Jesus didn't address Mary as "Mother." Certainly if Mary was meant to be exalted to the place that some people have given her, the Lord would have addressed her here as "Mother."

While Mary was given the honor of being the human mother of our Lord Jesus, she was only a human, and she needed salvation just like the rest of us. The Bible nowhere teaches that Mary is to be exalted or worshiped. In fact, Mary is not even mentioned in the New Testament epistles, which are the books of doctrine for the church.

It is significant that Jesus didn't address Mary as "mother."

## **Practical Application**

### **We have a responsibility to care for our aging parents.**

The Bible says that we are to honor our fathers and our mothers -- that's one of the Ten Commandments. Caring for our aging parents is certainly part of honoring our parents. As the first-born son, the Lord Jesus was responsible for the care of His mother, and He saw to it that his mother would be cared for.

Why did the Lord entrust Mary to John's care? Well, it seems that by this time Joseph had already died, and remember that Mary's other sons were not believers at this point. They became believers later. John, as a son of Salome, Mary's sister, was a close relative -- a nephew -- and John was a believer. The Lord knew that John would care for Mary as his own mother. As a close relative, John would realize that he had a responsibility here, and verse 27 tells us that *"from that hour that disciple took her to his own home."* We believe that John took Mary into his own home.

As the Lord cared for His mother, so we have a responsibility to care for our aging parents. Unfortunately some Christians think of their aging parents only on Mother's Day and Father's Day -- they don't take much responsibility for the care of their parents the rest of the year. That's wrong! It is not always easy, and people can come up with all kinds of excuses, but remember that, **in the midst of His great suffering**, the Lord was concerned for the care of His mother.

Remember -- we have a responsibility to care for our aging parents.