

# **"AT THE CROSS, WHAT WAS AND IS SEEN"**

**MATTHEW 27:27,35,36**

**By Mike Burnham**

As the soldiers sat at the foot of the cross, what did they see?

What was their attitude and the attitude of the people when Jesus was hung on that cross that Passover morning? Luke 23: 35-37.

Though they didn't know it at the time they saw the most amazing event of all history.

They saw the most tragic deed ever done and at the same time the most glorious deed ever done. They saw God incarnate, God made flesh, taken by his enemies hands and slain and at the same time saw the redeemer voluntarily laying down his life for sinners.

To the soldiers it was an ordinary event, the execution of a criminal, and this is the way it's viewed by most who hear the gospel. To the Roman soldiers, at least for a while, Christ appeared only as a dying Jew, just as it is with most today.

But as they continued to sit at the foot of the cross, to some of them at least, their attitudes changed. As they looked, they saw the perfections of mercy and forgiveness that made this crucified one different than all others in the same circumstances.

He didn't curse his predicament or speak abusively to his enemies or feel sorry for himself. He did the very reverse. We find him in Luke 23:34 engaged in prayer.

How amazed the soldiers must have been as they heard him "making intercession for his enemies."

At first, the thieves crucified near-by reviled and mocked him...Mat. 27:38-43. But when one of them cried out to him he didn't turn him away. These soldiers witnessed an amazing display of sovereign grace to one of the greatest of sinners, a thief and a murderer.

They beheld mysterious phenomena...Luke 23:44. If you put yourself in their place, you can hear them talking about it later...it was as though the sun refused to shine on such a scene, as though nature itself mourned over such a sight. Never has there been such darkness.

During those three hours a transaction took place between our lord Jesus Christ and God the father that might have been too sacred for human eyes to gaze upon. The sins of us all were laid upon him and the judgment belonging to us fell upon him during those three hours.

Then they saw another phenomena...Mat. 27:50-53. This was no ordinary sufferer; it was the creator of heaven and earth and both heaven and earth expressed their sympathy in the darkness and the earthquake.

While watching and hearing, a change was taking place in the soldiers...Mat. 27:54. I wonder if they were ever the same again? We may meet them in heaven and hear the whole story if we are going there.

### **"What do I see?"**

I see the suffering of Christ. Not just his physical suffering on the cross or the beatings, the mocking and ridiculing, the crown of thorns upon his head or being despised and rejected of men. These are common to all men who died on the cross though they deserving and he undeserving. But I see his suffering in Gethsemane while

praying...Luke 22:41-44.

I see his suffering in Mat. 27:46. In Psalm 22 verse one, God turned away from the sin bearer. Our suffering saviour cried out, "why?" and then in verse 3 he answered his own question, "thou art holy." Christ was made sin for us and God is pure and cannot look upon sin.

I see his suffering during those three hours of darkness when God poured out wave after wave of his righteous judgments upon him, alluded to in Psalms 42:7, "all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." in Psalms 88:7 "thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. In Psalms 88:16 thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off." in Psalms 38:2 "thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth one sore." the suffering of the judgment of God for our sin was infinitely greater than anything man could have done and did do.

There are many other things I see, like the awfulness of sin, the inflexible justice of God, his amazing grace, his wonderful love.

But, I also see myself. As the sinner in the Old Testament laid his hands upon the head of the lamb so as to be identified with the one who would die in his place, so I with the hand of faith identify myself with him, Jesus Christ who took my place.

In the person of my substitute I satisfied every requirement of God's law.

In the person of Christ I paid the full price which divine justice demanded.

In the person of Christ I stand approved before God for I am clothed with his righteousness.

**"What do you see?"**

Something happened to those soldiers that day at the foot of the cross as they beheld Jesus. Something can happen to you to right now if it hasn't already. See what Jesus has done for you and cry out for him to save you, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved...Rom. 10:13. Romans 6:23 tells us that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." receive the free gift of God and Jesus will collect those wages that belong to you.