

**Monday      Week 42      The Passion of Christ (2)**

Bible Reading: Luke 23:13-25

Q 165 When Pilate asked the people who should go free, Jesus or Barabbas, who did they choose?

A. The people chose Barabbas to go free and called for Jesus to be crucified.

There was a very sad boy who climbed a high building. He was so sad that he decided to jump off the building. As he stood on the edge, he stopped. Should he jump or not? That's when people on the ground saw him. Instead of helping him, they started to yell at him. "Jump!" they said. He listened for a while, then he jumped. The story was on the news. It was a sad story about the boy, but a bad story about a group of people. How could a crowd be so cruel?

The crowd that watched at the trial of Jesus was cruel. Jesus had done nothing wrong. Barabbas was a murderer. Still the crowd decided, "Give us Barabbas!" Pilate asked them what to do with Jesus. "Crucify him!" they yelled. Pilate listened to the crowd and sent Jesus to the cross. Crowds can do wicked things. That's why the Bible says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." Follow Jesus. He will help you say no to a crowd that is evil.

Thinking Deeper

Jerry Falwell was a high profile Baptist preacher who made a mark on America. He was instrumental in launching crisis pregnancy centers all around the country. He founded an association called Moral Majority which informed churches throughout the nation about moral issues and the need to get involved. He was a significant factor in the election of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States.

Falwell was not loved by everybody. When he died people from the abortion movement and those who promoted same sex lifestyles rejoiced. In the mainstream media, reports of Falwell's death were accompanied by statements of glee from these elements as well as people from Hollywood. Why was there so much hatred? The answer can be found in John's discussion of why Cain killed Abel: "And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

Why did the people choose Barabbas? Why did they crucify Jesus? Why did people rejoice at Falwell's death? Why did Cain kill Abel? Because wicked men do not want to be confronted by their sin.

**Tuesday      Week 42      The Passion of Christ (2)**

Bible Reading: Luke 23:32-38

Q 166 Where was Jesus crucified?

A. Jesus was crucified at Calvary.

Ford's Theatre in Washington, D. C. is a historic place. It was there that in 1865 President Abraham Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth. Many people visit Ford's Theatre every year. They go to see where Mr. Lincoln was sitting when it happened. They see the stage where the assassin jumped after the shot. It is a very interesting and very sad experience to go to this place of history.

There is another place of history where many people visit each year. It is outside of the walls of Old Jerusalem in Israel. It is a place that was called Calvary, which means the place of the skull. The soldiers led Jesus there. They then took spikes and nailed Jesus' hands and feet to a cross. Then they stood the cross up. Jesus hung there on the cross until he died. People visit that historic place to remember how Jesus was crucified.

Thinking Deeper

Is the crucifixion of Christ a historical fact? Does it really matter whether or not Jesus was literally crucified on a cross that was made of wood? Some argue that what matters is not whether the story of Jesus is factual, but that there is a "deeper meaning" behind the story. That "deeper meaning" is where truth can be found for each individual. Each person must find that deeper meaning for himself. This view of the Biblical record is called liberalism. It is a belief that the Bible is not necessarily true but there is somehow a truth to be learned through the Bible on a deeper level. In fact, liberals get offended by the suggestion that the Bible is a true record of actual happenings, and that the Bible is truly the authoritative Word of God.

In contrast to liberalism's empty leap of faith, St. Luke described the crucifixion as a real historical event. Jesus of Nazareth died on a cross at Calvary on a specific day in history. He really died for us. We can have real faith in Him.

## Wednesday Week 42 The Passion of Christ (2)

Bible Reading: Luke 23:39-43

Q 167 What did Jesus tell the thief on the cross?

A. Jesus told him that they would be together that day in Paradise.

The great preacher John Wesley lay dying. Friends had come to be at his side. He tried to talk but it was hard. His friends could not understand what he was trying to say. He paused a moment, and gathered his strength. Then Mr. Wesley clearly spoke. "The best of all is, God is with us." He left a clear testimony of his faith and trust in the Lord.

Jesus was dying on a cross between two thieves. They were also dying. One of them wanted to find forgiveness for his sins. He asked Jesus to remember him. Some of the last words Jesus spoke before he died were to this thief, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Jesus gave him hope and comfort. Anyone who comes to Jesus with a humble heart may also find hope and comfort. Just ask Him.

### Thinking Deeper

Does a soul that dies go to sleep until the last judgment? Some argue that when a person dies, they go into "soul sleep" and will not wake up until the great Day of Judgment. What Jesus said to the thief on the cross contradicts the theory of soul sleep. Jesus told the repentant thief that they would be together in Paradise that very day. This very new Christian who would die in moments would be ushered into the holy presence of God. He would not have to wait for the thousands of years to come before the resurrection of the last day. His spirit would go that very day to God who gave it.

When Christians die, they go to heaven. They are with the Lord. Their body is in the grave on earth, but they are together with all the other "spirits of just men made perfect." They are part of that "cloud of witnesses" who have made an abundant entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord." Just as Lazarus was accepted into Abraham's bosom, so are believers welcomed into heaven. Praise God for the blessed hope of those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Thursday    Week 42    The Passion of Christ (2)

Bible Reading: Luke 23:47-56    Death and Burial

Q. 168    When Jesus died, where was he buried?

A. Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea.

In east central Kansas there is a small cemetery north of the small town of Melvern. There are some graves from the 1800s in that graveyard. At the back of the cemetery is an Indian grave. It is evidently the burying place of a little child. It is not marked by a gravestone. Instead, there is an outline of small stones pressed into the ground surrounding the grave. The outline is about four feet long and three feet wide. Not many people ever see that grave, but a few find it and wonder what kind of story is behind it.

There is a very important story behind an empty tomb in Jerusalem. It is the story of how Jesus died and was put in that tomb. The tomb belonged to a rich man named Joseph of Arimathaea. When Jesus died, Joseph took his body and put it in his own tomb. Then a large stone was rolled in front of the tomb. That's how Jesus was buried.

### Thinking Deeper

There is a rather strange report out of India. In 2007, a rich man died and was buried in his car. He had bought the car in 1958 and requested to be buried with it when he died. His wish was granted.\* There is another rather amusing anecdote told of a man who requested to be buried in his Cadillac with its plush interior, shiny paint job, and flashy hub caps. As one of the workers at the site watched the car being lowered into the ground, he saw the man and commented, "Now that's livin'!" The trouble is, the one in the car was not really around to enjoy it.

Jesus was buried in a tomb belonging to a rich man. Jesus of Nazareth was not a rich man. Yet the Bible prophesied that he would make his grave with the rich. Just as the Bible foretold, a rich man took the body of Jesus and buried it in his own tomb. The death and burial of Jesus is part of the Gospel—"I declare unto you the Gospel...how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried..." (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

\* [www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1811895/posts](http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1811895/posts)

**Friday      Week 42      The Passion of Christ (2)**

Review the week's questions.

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Q 166 Where was Jesus crucified?

A. Jesus was crucified at Calvary.

Q 167 What did Jesus tell the thief on the cross?

A. Jesus told him that they would be together that day in Paradise.

Q. 168 When Jesus died, where was he buried?

A. Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea.

In September 2008 in Prince William County, Virginia, the son of Thomas Vander Woude fell into a septic tank. He was in danger of drowning. Thomas saw his son in danger and jumped in to save him. Rescue workers arrived and pulled them both out of the tank. The son was saved, but Mr. Vander Woude died. He died saving his son.\*

God saw that mankind was lost. Man's sin separated him from God. How could man be saved? God sent Jesus to earth to save man. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son." But the only way to save him was to die for him. Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He died to save us. If we believe on him, we can be saved. "That whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

\* [www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php)

Thinking Deeper

Why did Jesus have to die? Was there no other way for mankind to be saved? There is some help in answering this question in the Scripture which states that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." God is just to forgive us our sins. Justice demands that the penalty of sin be paid. "The wages of sin is death." So because sin must be answered by death, one must die for sin. In our case, we all have sinned. That means we must all die. How then can God, who is perfect in justice, justly forgive us? The answer is that Christ died for all, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Because of what Jesus has done through his passion and death, we can be freely forgiven of our sins. So God maintains His integrity in forgiving repentant sinners. He is faithful *and just* to forgive us our sins.

There is no other sacrifice for sin. No other savior has ever been found that can satisfy God's just requirement of death for sin and yet forgive men. That is at the foundation of the reason Christians say there is only one way to heaven. Jesus, the perfect Son of God, has died for our sins. There is simply no other way.