

was done. He then surrendered Himself to death.

A great darkness had precluded His death and now, with death, the veil of the temple is torn from top to bottom, a great earthquake shakes the city and rends the rocks, and graves were opened. Many bodies of dead saints came out of their graves after His resurrection. The centurion who had been in charge of the crucifixion, considering what was happening, observed, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54).

Because of the Sabbath, the Jews asked the Romans to quickly remove the bodies from the crosses. To hasten death, the Romans normally broke the legs of the crucified ones. Since Jesus had already died, His legs were not broken but one of the soldiers pierced His side and blood and water flowed forth. Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah, was dead — crucified by His own people.

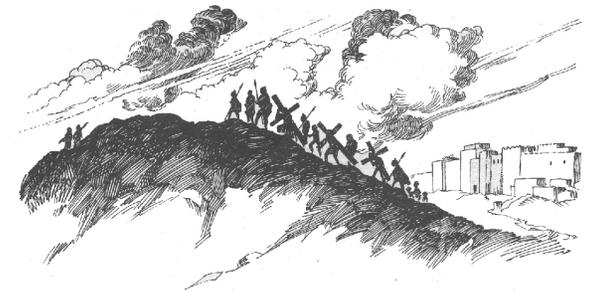
Jesus was buried and, on the third day, was raised from the dead by the power of God. He overcame death as He had overcome sin. He had been the propitiation for the sins of all mankind. He had triumphed over all foes, including Satan. By His victory He now provides salvation to anyone who believes in Him and obeys His gospel. ☩

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"And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off of Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified."
(Matthew 27:31)

The Crucifixion of



Jesus Christ

Gene Taylor

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When He came to earth, Jesus knew He had a mission to accomplish. He knew He would have to die on the cross. He realized He had to be the sacrifice for mankind's sins to provide them hope of salvation.

The Old Testament prophesied, in detail, of every phase of His life—the crucifixion is no exception. Isaiah 53:8 and Daniel 9:26 indicate He would have a violent death. Psalm 22:16 shows that He was to die by crucifixion. Psalm 22:11 states that this death would be in the midst of His enemies. That His garments were to be parted and lots cast for His vesture was foretold in Psalm 22:18. Verses six through eight of that psalm say that He would be cruelly mocked. Psalm 34:20 prophesied that He was to have no bones broken while Zechariah 12:10 relates that His side would be pierced. Even the sayings Jesus uttered while on the cross were a matter of prophecy.

Crucifixion was the form of punishment reserved by the Romans for slaves, foreigners, and the vilest criminals and could not be inflicted on a Roman citizen. With its prolonged and excruciating torture, it was the most agonizing death which the cruelty of a

cruel age could imagine. Though Jewish law knew nothing of it, the Jewish people demanded Pilate administer it upon their Messiah.

The site of Jesus' crucifixion was Golgotha, the place of the skull. Though it was outside the wall of Jerusalem, it was in the immediate vicinity of the city.

The crucifixion took place on Friday and began about 9 A.M. It took place during a time when Jerusalem was filled with Jews from all over the world who had come there for Passover.

Part of the victim's torment in crucifixion was that he had to bear his own cross. In the case of Jesus, after He had stumbled beneath its weight unable to go on, Simon, a man of Cyrene, was compelled to carry His cross for Him.

When Calvary was reached, a Roman centurion and his men drove nails into the hands and feet of Jesus and erected the cross. Two robbers, one on His left and the other on His right, were also crucified—fulfilling Isaiah 53:12. Above His head was placed a plaque which read in three different languages—Hebrew, Greek and Latin—which said, "This is the King of the Jews" (Luke 23:38), an ironic statement of truth.

The triumph of Jesus' enemies now seemed complete and their glee was unrestrained. To them, Christ's seeming helplessness reinforced their views and disproved His claims. They railed at Him and taunted Him to come down from the cross if He were the Messiah. Even one of the robbers who was being crucified with Him began to revile Him. The other thief, though, defended Him by saying that He was being crucified unjustly because He had done nothing wrong. Jesus comforted him by saying that he would be in paradise with Him that very day.

Standing near the cross was a group of women. One of them was Jesus' mother. Even though He was in agony, He spoke tenderly to her and made sure she would be cared for by John.

At noon, the sun's light failed and a deep darkness, lasting three hours, covered the land. It was as if nature veiled itself and shuddered at the enormity of the sin and crime being perpetrated on Calvary. Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46)

The end was now very near. With a last effort, Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30), then, in His final utterance, commended His spirit to God. "It is finished" was not the cry of a defeated martyr but the shout of a triumphant victor for it signified completion. Jesus died with a consciousness that His work