

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ The Onlookers of the Crucified Christ

Last time...Jesus, The Christ, was crucified
God has raised His sign/standard

Is 11:10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

The crucified Christ is a sign...of judgment for the sins of mankind

Is 49:22a Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people

1 Cor 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

This time...the onlookers of the crucified Christ, of which there are 6 kinds
We will consider what they say and do as Jesus hangs on the Cross
Setting: the morning hours between 9 am and noon

John 19

v19-20 Pilate wrote a title...Hebrew, Greek, Latin:

Part of the process of a Roman crucifixion was to lead the parade of the condemned with a placard giving the name of the criminal and his crime, and then post it on the cross for all passersby to see

In Jesus' case: JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS

Q: Is this placard announcing a crime or is it bearing testimony?

Many Jews...population of Jerusalem is perhaps 10x normal due to Passover... read the placard, both along the "parade route" and then on the cross as they passed by outside the Damascus Gate

In fact, anybody who could read would be able to as they passed by
Hebrew: language of the Jews
Greek: universal language of the Roman Empire
Latin: official language of the Roman Empire

v21-22 Write not...but that He said:

The chief priests, who were part of the parade and were watching the entire crucifixion process, objected to Pilate's wording.

It seems they read what Pilate wrote as a testimony, a statement of fact, rather than a criminal charge so they proposed some wordsmithing to

- deny Jesus is the King of the Jews
- declare Jesus' criminal opposition to "their king", Caesar (v15)

Pilate disdained the Jews before this wretched day even came

Now, having been

- played like a fiddle
- manipulated
- hot-boxed
- bullied

by the Jews on this day to

- free a very violent and dangerous man
- execute an innocent man about whom his wife had a dream

Pilate is done with the Jews

Get out of my face!

v23-24 four parts...without seam:

In John's account of the fulfillment of Ps 22:18

(considered last week from the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke)
are some additional details:

- most of Jesus' clothes were divided up by the 4 soldiers assigned to watch Him
- His cloak was a nice, single-piece garment that would be destroyed (made worthless) if divided, so they gambled for the cloak

They shredded that which was of Priceless Value...the Body of Jesus

But they would not tear that which had finite, worldly value...His cloak

This was a high quality garment, like Joseph's in Gen 37:3

Does that mean

- Jesus was rich
- Jesus wants you to be rich
- If you are not rich it is because you have insufficient faith as the Prosperity Gospel preachers would have you believe?

God forbid!

Mark 15

v26-28 accusation...two thieves...scripture was fulfilled:

Posted was the accusation against Jesus...not His crime,
for He committed no crime, as Pilate and Herod so testified

Jesus is crucified between two thieves;

Not known: members of Barabbas' gang?

Known: Is 53:12 fulfilled

Remember: v25

Jesus was crucified at about 9am

We are now going to consider the onlookers of the crucified Christ, of which
there are 6 "kinds"

Time: between 9am and noon

v29-30 they that passed by:

The 1st kind of onlookers of the crucified Christ: the passersby, the common folk

Jesus is crucified along a busy road that leads to Damascus...
the road Saul of Tarsus will travel in Acts 9

The passersby on that road

- railed on Jesus
 - vilified
 - blasphemed
- wagged their heads
 - cultural expression of disgust and condemnation
- taunted Jesus
 - destroy the Temple and build it in 3 days
 - Where did this taunt come from?
 - John 2:18-22 (1st Cleansing of the Temple)
 - Matt 26:59-61 (trial before Caiaphas)
 - From the chief priests, out on the road "coaching" the passersby as to who and what is going on
 - Save Yourself
 - Could He? 12 legions of angels...
 - Would He?
 - Come down from the cross
 - What if He did?!

Could Jesus have come down from the cross?

Yes!

It was not a case of “cannot” but of “will not”.

If Jesus came off the cross He would have to put all of us on it!
I would still be dead in my sins (Eph 2:1-5)

If Jesus saved Himself, He could not save others (you and me!)
If Jesus came down off the Cross, He would come down not to
save but to condemn and judge...

Not the work the Father sent Him to do; anti-John 3:17

The nails did not keep Him there, His love for you and me did.
(John 15:13, Matt 5:43-44)

v31-32a the chief priests:

The 2nd kind of onlookers of the crucified Christ: the chief priests and scribes

The religious elite of the Jews mock Jesus hanging on the Cross

- He saved/delivered/healed others
an acknowledgement of facts...John 11:47-48, thus envy
- Himself He cannot save/deliver
He is pathetic, helpless and defeated
- Let Christ the King of Israel
denying/not believing Jesus is the Christ, the King of Israel
Matt 10:33
- descend now from the cross
they are the source of the passersby taunt in v30
- that we may see and believe
seeing is believing, right?
they have repeatedly demanded a sign from Jesus that He was
the Christ...this would be a good one!
they have no faith in Jesus
would they believe in Jesus if they saw Him descend from the
cross? No
Matt 22:29 again, this time about the salvation of God

v32b they that were crucified with Him:

The 3rd kind of onlooker of the crucified Christ: the two thieves

They reviled/taunted/chided/upbraided Him

Matt 27

v37-40 they that passed by...If You be the Son of God:

In the Gospel written to the Jews, we get additional information from Mark's account about the passersby taunting of the crucified Christ

Between "Save thyself" and "come down from the cross" is...
"If You be the Son of God"

Where did they get this piece of information?

From the chief priests (Matt 26:63-64) who are on the scene continuing to stir up the people against Jesus (Matt 27:20, 23, 25)

v41-43 If He be the King of Israel...He trusted in God...I am the Son of God:

More information from Matthew not in Mark

The elders are joining the chief priests and scribes in taunting Jesus;
the civil and religious elites are in one accord against Jesus

In their brazen trash talk is heard

- no fear of God whatsoever
 - Jews would normally let the condemned alone, withdraw to leave him in the hands of God
 - They don't leave Jesus, they taunt and insult Him and rile up the passersby to do the same
- truths spoken with malice and venomous contempt
 - He saved others
 - He is the King of Israel
 - He trusted in God
 - He is the Son of God
 - Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels
- idle words (Matt 12:34-37)
 - we will believe Him...Luke 16:29-31
 - let Him deliver Him now...Matt 4:7
 - if He will have Him...Matt 3:17, Matt 12:18
 - for He said...they heard but they did not believe

2 profound testimonies of Jesus...by His enemies
Not condemning Jesus, condemning themselves

1 John 2:22-23a Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?
He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.
Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father

Luke 23

v35-38 the rulers...the soldiers...save thyself:

 In v35 we see the people and the rulers of the Jews...civil and religious...
 in unison deriding Jesus

 In v38 we see the “charge” written is “over Him”, posted over His head on the
 Cross

 Now, here in Luke, we see a 4th kind of onlooker of the crucified Christ:
 the 4 Roman soldiers.

 Heretofore only watching Jesus and gambling for his clothes (John 19),
 the soldiers in v36-37 now join in the chorus mocking and taunting Jesus

 Now we go back to John 19 to see a 5th kind of onlooker of the crucified Christ

John 19

v25-27 His mother...mother’s sister...Mary Magdalene:

 The 5th kind of onlookers: “family”

- 4 women
 1. His mother, Mary/Miriam
 2. His aunt, His mother’s sister, Salome
 3. Mary/Miriam the wife of Cleophas
 4. Mary/Miriam Magdalene
- John

 “Woman behold thy son...behold thy mother.”

 This is Jesus’ 2nd saying from the Cross

 What is He doing?

 Jesus is

1. ministering to His mother unto the very end

 Luke 2:34-35 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his
 mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and
 rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which
 shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce
 through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of
 many hearts may be revealed.

This prophesy is hitting Mary with full force now, crushing her
Her soul is being pierced
The thoughts of many regarding Jesus is being revealed
His concern is her, in spite of His unspeakable agony

2. fulfilling His responsibility of firstborn son in caring for His mother
Matt 12:47-50 and John 7:5
The other sons of Mary and Joseph, His family, are unbelievers;
John is “family”
So care of His mother is given to a believing “brother”

Luke 23

v39 one of the malefactors...railed...save thyself and us:

One of the thieves, hearing the passersby and the civil/religious rulers of the Jews,
and the 4 soldiers taunt Jesus now,

- continues his rant against Jesus
- echoes their taunt
- with one little addition: “and us”

v40-41 the other answering rebuked him:

However, the other thief has had a radical change of heart over the course of the
morning

Initially he reviled Jesus too

He read the accusation against Jesus – The King of the Jews

He also heard the passersby revile Jesus, coached by the ruling elites

He heard the rulers themselves revile Jesus

He saved others

He trusted God

The King of Israel

The Son of God

He watched Jesus suffer, not returning evil for evil but good for evil (v34)

He heard Jesus’ tender care for His mother despite His agony

He has been thinking about all he has seen, heard, and read

And as a result, when his partner in crime continued his reviling of Jesus,
this other thief rebukes him!

Have you no fear of God (in Whose hands you are!)!

Both of us are lawbreakers (Ex 20:15)

This is our proper reward, but not His for He is without fault.

v42 Lord, remember me...thy kingdom:

The “enlightened” thief then turns to Jesus with a reverent plea laced with faith

Lord...Supreme Authority

1 John 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God

remember me...I am dying, You are dying, but I believe we can meet again

when You come into Your Kingdom...I believe the accusation is the truth,
I believe what You have said

This thief

- is repentant
- believes Jesus is the Messiah, Savior and King of Israel
- is also trusting in God and in the Son of God

Jesus was not allowed to call witnesses in His “trials” before Annas, Caiaphas,
Herod Antipas, or Pilate;
a witness is provided now, by a sinner nailed on the very next cross

Q: Who else heard this witness, confession, and profession of faith?!

v43 Today...Paradise:

The 3rd saying of Jesus from the cross

Jesus responds to a profession of faith in Him with...a promise of salvation!
He Who has the power to forgive sin tells the repentant thief that he will be with
Him this day in Paradise aka Abraham’s Bosom (Luke 16:19-31)

Which means what in today’s cesspool of false doctrine?
Jesus did NOT go to hell, like Joyce Meyers and other prosperity
preachers will tell you!

Note: This interaction between repentant thief and Jesus should not be used as a
role model for a person to live like the devil up until the last
minutes of life and then profess faith in Jesus Christ

Far too many ways to die suddenly/instantly/in the twinkling of the eye to
play with hell fire this way
2 Cor 6:2

Such a “strategy” is unadulterated self-love rather than selfless love

v44 sixth hour...darkness over all the earth...ninth hour:
Now we see the 6th Kind of onlooker of the crucified Christ: the Father in heaven

Time: noon

The passages this morning took place between 9am and noon

Now at noon – darkness...until 3pm

Darkness

- over all the earth (Luke)
- over all the land (Matthew)
- over the whole land (Mark)
- over the land of Judea ala over land of Egypt on Ex 10:21 (9th Plague)?
It is impossible for this 3 hour darkness to be caused naturally
ala an eclipse, which lasts only minutes
This is a supernatural darkness sent by God the Father
- over the entire earth, global?

From Creation Ministries' webpage

3-HOUR DARKNESS AT JESUS CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION Historical Evidence for Crucifixion Darkness

CHINA:

"Summer, fourth month, on the day of Ren Wu, the imperial edict reads,
"Yen and Yang have mistakenly switched, and the sun and moon were
eclipsed. The sins of all the people are now on one man. [The emperor]
proclaims pardon to all under heaven."

Recorded: Han Dynasty, 31 A.D.

China Time: The darkness occurred from 5PM to 8PM.

Jerusalem Time: The darkness occurred from 12NN to 3PM.

Chinese records claim not just a darkening of the sun, but also the moon.

PHLEGON: Greek historian in early 2nd Century

"In the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad (i.e., AD 33) there was 'the
greatest eclipse of the sun' and that 'it became night in the sixth hour of
the day [i.e., noon] so that stars even appeared in the heavens. There was a
great earthquake in Bithynia, and many things were overturned in Nicaea."

AFRICANUS: *History of the World* in early 3rd Century

"On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus (historian of eastern Mediterranean region in mid-1st Century), in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. For the Hebrews celebrate the passover on the 14th day according to the moon, and the passion of our Savior falls on the day before the passover; but an eclipse of the sun takes place only when the moon comes under the sun. And it cannot happen at any other time but in the interval between the first day of the new moon and the last of the old, that is, at their junction: how then should an eclipse be supposed to happen when the moon is almost diametrically opposite the sun? Let opinion pass however; let it carry the majority with it; and let this portent of the world be deemed an eclipse of the sun, like others a portent only to the eye. Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth—manifestly that one of which we speak. But what has an eclipse in common with an earthquake, the rending rocks, and the resurrection of the dead, and so great a perturbation throughout the universe? Surely no such event as this is recorded for a long period."

TERTULLIAN: 2nd Century apologist

"And yet, nailed upon the cross, He exhibited many notable signs, by which His death was distinguished from all others. At His own free-will, He with a word dismissed from Him His spirit, anticipating the executioner's work. In the same hour, too, the light of day was withdrawn, when the sun at the very time was in his meridian blaze. Those who were not aware that this had been predicted about Christ, no doubt thought it an eclipse. You yourselves have the account of the world-portent still in your archives." (local historical archives)

Why darkness until 3pm?

Next week

Why darkness?

- God the Father's answer to the Jews' persistent request for a sign from heaven that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?
- The Father putting a veil over His Son's suffering...when 2 Cor 5:21?
- God the Father's testimony of His Son?
- God the Father's testimony of His people, mercifully giving them a glimpse of their own hearts...and an opportunity to repent??
Matt 27:25 His blood be on us and our children
John 19:15 We have no king but Caesar

Whatever the reason – everybody should have repented!!!!

Summary of the onlookers of the crucified Christ in the morning hours from 9am to noon

1. Passersby/Common folks: coached, reviled, railed against
2. Chief priests, scribes, elders (elites): brazen taunting, truth spoken with bitter malice
3. The 2 thieves (criminals/sinners): both railed against, then 1 mimicked and 1 repented
4. The 4 Roman soldiers: mimicked
5. “Family”: crushing grief
6. The Father in heaven: darkness

Application

I was once like the passersby –

- coached (religious and secular education) to trust myself and elite men
- living my life, which reviled the crucified Christ

I was once like the thief on the cross, taunting Jesus

A dead man walking...toward by own ruin/destruction/judgment/Cross

My heart was...darkened

All the while, the Lord testified the truth to me

He is the Son of God Who gave Himself for me

He is the King of kings and Lord of lords

He did trust God

He did save others

His gift of salvation was for me too

I did not see, but I believed

Now I am “family” (John 1:12-13)

Call to Action

- Believe! (2 Cor 6:2)
- Live your faith (Rom 12:1-2)