

## 58. Jesus Experienced Separation from the Father

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others the most important choice they will ever make in their lives. That choice will determine where each person spends eternity. In our topic today, we are going to see what Jesus did to make that choice possible.

The people had chosen to set Barabbas free and crucify Jesus. Barabbas was able to enjoy his freedom. However, there were two others who did not have that opportunity to be set free. Mark 15:27-28 says, “With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘And He was numbered with the transgressors.’” Since there were three crosses already prepared, it is probable that Barabbas would have been on the other cross if the people had not asked Pilate to free Barabbas and crucify Jesus. Luke 23:25 says, “And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.” Then, Luke 23:33 adds, “And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.” It is very possible that these two men had also been involved with Barabbas in the murder and insurrection since the crime of robbery did not carry the death sentence under Roman law.

However, much more important was the fact that this fulfilled another Old Testament prophecy. Isaiah 53:12 says, “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.” The phrase, “He was numbered with the transgressors,” could only be fulfilled by Jesus dying with these criminals. Christ fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies throughout His ministry. Just on the day Jesus was crucified, He fulfilled more than thirty prophecies.

We see that many other people also reacted to the crucifixion of Jesus by mocking Him. Mark 15:29-32 says, “And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘Aha! *You* who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross!’ Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.’ Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.” Some people were just passing through the area where Jesus was crucified and they blasphemed Jesus. These people mocked the statement of Jesus that He would build the temple in three days. They said that if Jesus was really God, He should prove it by coming down from the cross. This mocking, by those who were passing by, showed that they totally lacked spiritual understanding.

The chief priests and scribes were doing their mocking among themselves. The chief priests were Sadducees and most of the scribes were Pharisees. Although these two groups usually opposed each other, they were certainly united in their opposition to Jesus. This was clearly shown by the things they said as they mocked Jesus. One of the ways they mocked Jesus was by saying, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save.” In their efforts to mock Jesus, they did not realize that

they also described His authority over demons, disease, and even death, when they said that He saved others. The chief priests and scribes certainly did not want to admit that Jesus had any authority at all, but they did not realize that their mocking did recognize the authority of Jesus.

Then, they said, “Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.” Again, these words were only meant to mock Jesus. By these words of mocking, the religious leaders claimed that they would believe that Jesus was the Christ if He came down from the cross. They showed that was not true, and that their hearts were filled with unbelief, when they said after the resurrection, in Matthew 28:11-13, “Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, “His disciples came at night and stole Him *away* while we slept.”’” The guard told the chief priests exactly what had happened. Instead of believing, the chief priests paid the soldiers a large amount of money to get them to tell a lie that denied a miracle much greater than coming down from the cross.

We see that there was also a third group that mocked Jesus. That was the other two men who were crucified with Jesus. However, after He heard Jesus ask the Father to forgive those who had crucified Him, one of those two men later repented. Luke 23:39-43 says, “Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’” The second thief showed that Jesus will forgive a person right up to the moment of death. In contrast, the first thief showed that there are many who will mock Jesus even in their dying breath.

Suddenly, something happened that got the attention of everyone. Mark 15:33-37 says, “Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ Some of those who stood by, when they heard *that*, said, ‘Look, He is calling for Elijah!’ Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put *it* on a reed, and offered *it* to Him to drink, saying, ‘Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.’ And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.” Here, we see that at noon the Father covered the whole land with darkness. This darkness lasted for three hours.

This was the part of His suffering that Jesus dreaded the most. In Luke 22:42-44, Jesus prayed, “saying, ‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” Jesus was in great agony as He prayed the previous evening. He knew that He would experience separation from the Father when our sins were placed on Him as He hung on

the cross. That was due to the fact that the Father cannot look on sin with favor. As Jesus bore our sins, He had to bear them alone without the fellowship of the Father.

When Jesus was first placed on the cross, He said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” Then, after the darkness was over, Luke 23:46 says, “And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, ‘Father, “into Your hands I commit My spirit.”’ Having said this, He breathed His last.” Here, we see that after the payment for our sins, Jesus was again in fellowship with the Father and committed His spirit to the Father. However, during the darkness, Jesus cried out, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Before and after the darkness, Jesus could say “Father” because He was in fellowship with the Father. However, when Jesus had our sins placed on Him, He had to say, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?,” because of His separation from the Father as He bore our sins. He experienced that temporary separation from the Father so we could enjoy eternal fellowship with the Father.

However, the people who were standing near the cross did not understand what Jesus had said as He cried out in the darkness. Instead, they thought Jesus was calling for Elijah. Immediately, someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a short stick and raised it to the mouth of Jesus and offered Him the sour wine to drink. The one who offered Jesus the sour wine said, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.” This was also a mocking statement. Malachi 4:5 says, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” The Jews expected Elijah to come before the Messiah came. As a result, this statement was a form of mocking as the speaker said, “Let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.” Again, this shows a total lack of understanding.

However, once the darkness was over, there was no need for Jesus to suffer any longer. Jesus showed that He was still strong, as we read that He cried out with a loud voice. The words Jesus cried out are given to us, in Luke 23:46, which is quoted in the earlier paragraph, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” The fact that Jesus cried with a loud voice was a testimony to the fact that Jesus willingly gave His life. No one took it from Him. We see what Jesus had said when He came into the world in Hebrews 10:5-7, where we read: “Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.’ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.’” Jesus had completed the will of the Father by paying the penalty for our sins in full. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand, and be able to explain, that Jesus came to do the will of the Father by paying the full penalty for our sins so we could receive forgiveness as a free gift. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to understand and explain this fact.