

Matthew 27b

As they were taking Jesus out to be crucified, who did they encounter (v. 32)? Simon of Cyrene. The soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. Jesus could no longer carry it Himself, being weak from the beatings.

What was the name of the place where they were going to crucify Jesus (v. 33)? A place known as Golgotha, which in Aramaic means the Place of the Skull. The actual site is uncertain.

What did they offer Jesus (v. 34)? They offered Him wine mixed with gall, a drink given to dull the senses and make the pain of crucifixion somewhat easier to bear. Jesus refused to drink the mixture....He wanted to be in complete control of His senses even while hanging on the cross.

What did they do after they crucified Jesus (vv. 35-37)? The soldiers cast lots for His garments, fulfilling Psalm 22:18. They also hung a sign over Jesus' head, on which was written **THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS**, for that truly was the charge for which Jesus was dying.¹ Pilate had the sign written in Aramaic, Greek, and Latin and it states concisely Matthew's main message.

Who else was crucified with Jesus (v. 38)? He was flanked by two robbers.....Isaiah had predicted 700 years previously that He would be numbered with the transgressors (53:12).

What did those passing by say to Jesus (vv. 39-40)? In mockery, they recalled what Jesus had said earlier about destroying the temple and raising it up three days later (John 2:19; Matthew 26:61). If He were the Son of God, then He ought to be able to perform a miracle and come down from the cross.

How did the religious leaders treat the crucified Jesus (vv. 41-43)? They also mocked Jesus. They implied that their failure to believe in Jesus was His fault. They said that if He came down from the cross, they would believe in Him. *They* would have believed if He had come down; *we* believe because He stayed up. They also claimed if He were really the Son of God, God would rescue Him.

The irony of this scene was that Jesus could have easily come down from the cross and physically saved Himself. But that was not in the Father's will. It was necessary that the Son of God die for the salvation of others.

How did his fellow crucified companions react (v. 44)? The robbers crucified with Him also insulted Him. Luke, however, recorded that a change of heart took place in one of the robbers and he joined Christ that very day in Paradise (Luke 23:39-43).

What happened between 12 noon and 3 PM (v. 45)? There was a supernatural, literal darkening of the sky. This was especially remarkable because at the time of a full moon – during which Passover was always held - a natural eclipse of the sun was impossible. So, you can't explain away the darkness by using naturalistic phenomenon. This was an extraordinary miracle in the heavens.²

It was during those hours that Jesus bore the indescribable curse of our sins. Jesus was drinking the Cup which represented the outpouring of the Father's *wrath* upon Him as a substitute for sinful humanity. No mortal mind can ever understand the agony of separation from His Father that He endured when He was made a sacrifice for sin.

At some point right before He died, an awesome spiritual transaction took place. God the Father set upon Jesus all the guilt and wrath our sins deserved, and Jesus bore it in Himself perfectly, totally satisfying the wrath of God toward us. It was as if God said "I am satisfied – the debt of the world caused by sin is paid for in full."

What did Jesus say (v. 46)? "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" (Psalm 22:1). In this period of darkness Jesus became the Sin-offering for the world (John 1:29). Jesus acutely sensed a separation from the Father having never known anything but intimate fellowship. In becoming sin, the Father had to turn judicially from His Son.

What was the end result of those three hours? In those three hours, we simply cannot understand what it meant for Him to satisfy all God's righteous claims against sin. We only know that in those three hours, He paid the price, settled the debt, and finished the work necessary for mankind's redemption.³

What did the spectators think and do (vv. 47-49)? One used a long reed to lift a sponge soaked with sour wine to His lips. Others, however, said to leave Jesus alone and see if Elijah would come and deliver Him. But it was not time for Elijah to come (Malachi 4:5); it was time for Jesus to die.

What did Jesus do next (v. 50)? With one last cry Jesus gave up His spirit. We die because we have to; He died because He chose to. Jesus was in complete control of His life and died at the precise moment He determined. No man took Jesus' life from Him. No one killed Jesus. He laid His life down in keeping with God's plan (John 10:11, 15, 17-18) and He was also involved in taking it back up again in His resurrection.⁴

What supernatural things happened next (vv. 51-53)? Upon Jesus' death, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. This curtain separated the holy place from the holy of holies in the temple (Hebrews 9:2-3). The fact that this tearing occurred from top to bottom signified that God is the One who ripped the thick curtain. It was not torn from the bottom by men ripping it. God was showing that the way of access into His presence was now available for everyone, not simply the Old Testament high priest.⁵ It marked the end of the old Mosaic Covenant and the beginning of the New Covenant.

Subsequent to an earthquake, the tombs of many holy (righteous) people were opened, probably at a Jerusalem cemetery. The text suggests that these saints were resurrected when Jesus died and then went into Jerusalem after Jesus' resurrection. Matthew is the only gospel that mentions this event.

What observation did the centurion and his fellow guards make (v. 54)? The darkness, earthquake, and Jesus' manner of dying struck fear in the soldiers' hearts. Their response was, *"Surely He was the Son of God!"*

Who else was watching all these activities (vv. 55-56)? Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and Salome, the wife of Zebedee. They remained with Christ while the male disciples ran for their lives! These women were the last at the cross and the first at the tomb (cf. 28:1), indicating their extreme devotion to Jesus.

Who next appeared on the scene (v. 57-58)? Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man and member of the Sanhedrin. Boldly he went to Pilate and requested permission to bury his Lord. Imagine the surprise to Pilate, and the provocation to the Jewish leaders, that a member of the Sanhedrin would publicly take his stand for the Crucified!

When Pilate gave him permission, what did he do (vv. 59-60)? Joseph lovingly embalmed the body. Then he placed it in his own new tomb, carved out of solid rock. The mouth of the tomb was then closed by a large stone. In a very real sense, Joseph buried himself economically, socially, and religiously when he buried the body of Jesus. This act separated him forever from the establishment that crucified the Lord Jesus.⁶

The next day, what did the religious leaders do (vv. 62-64)? The chief priests and Pharisees remembered what Jesus had said about rising again, so they went to Pilate and asked for a special guard to be placed at the tomb. This was allegedly to prevent His disciples from stealing the body, thus creating the impression that He had risen. Should this happen, they feared, the last deception would be worse than the first; that is, the report concerning His resurrection would be worse than His claim to be the Messiah and the Son of God.⁷

What order did Pilate give (v. 65)? Pilate agreed with their suggestion and ordered that a guard be sent to the tomb to make it as secure as possible.

What did the guards do (v. 66)? The Roman guard not only sealed the tomb (presumably with the official Roman wax seal which, if tampered with, could be detected) but also continued to keep guard at the scene. Their presence made stealing the body impossible.⁸

¹ Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 89.

² Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Matthew, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 715.

³ William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1309.

⁴ Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 90.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1310.

⁷ Ibid., 1311.

⁸ Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 92.