

Subject: *The Murder of Jesus*

Scripture: *John 19:17-37*

We usually refer to this event as the death of Jesus or His crucifixion, but it was actually His murder. Calvary was a crime scene that revealed at least three things:

1. His murder was a display of human depravity

- It was a display of injustice

Jesus was nailed to the cross because the Jews demanded his death. The blood-thirsty mob wanted an innocent man to die and they wanted a guilty man named Barabbas to be set free.

- It was a display of self-interest

And this was done so that the Jews and Pilate would be satisfied and their interests would be protected.

- It was a display of cruelty

After the scourging, the crown of thorns, the beating, and the mocking, Jesus was led outside the city to the place called Calvary, the place of a skull. They drove spikes through His wrists and His feet and lifted Him up for all to see.

- It was a display of mockery

Pilate wrote a title and put it over Jesus' head: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." He did that to spite the Jews, but God used it to remind people that He is in fact the King. The Jews tried to get Pilate to change the wording, but he refused: "What I have written I have written."

- It was a display of greed

At the foot of the cross the soldiers gambled for Jesus' clothes.

2. His murder was a fulfillment of Bible prophecy

There were many people involved in this drama, and they were doing the very things that God predicted they would do. The Scriptures were like a road map for Jesus' life and ministry.

- Jesus went to Calvary without resistance (vs. 17)

Isaiah 53:7 *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* He went willingly and was not driven by force like most prisoners.

- Jesus was lifted up on the cross (vs. 18)

John 3:14 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.* In Numbers 21 Moses lifted up the brass serpent on the pole so dying people could look and live.

- Jesus was crucified between two thieves (vs. 18)

Isaiah 53:12 *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

- The soldiers divided and gambled for His clothes (vs. 23-24)

Psalms 22:18 *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. They cast lots for the four outer garments (head covering, belt, sandals, outer robe), and they cast lots to see who would get the tunic worn next to His body.*

- Jesus was thirsty and they gave Him drink (vs. 28)

Psalms 69:21 *They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

- Jesus had none of His bones broken (vs. 31-36)

OT Scripture said that a bone of the Passover lamb must not be broken, **Exodus 12:46** *In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.* The NT says that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Passover lamb. **1 Corinthians 5:7** *For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:*

- His side was pierced (vs. 34, 37)

Zechariah 12:10 *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*

After all this took place the apostles understood that the Scriptures had been fulfilled and they pointed to it as powerful evidence in their sermons.

Acts 2:23 *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*

Acts 3:17-18 ¹⁷ *And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.*

3. His murder was a display of divine mercy

While Jesus suffered on the cross He made seven statements. Three of them are recorded in John: the words to Mary and John (vs. 26-27); the statement about thirst (vs. 28); and the statement of victory (vs. 30). Jesus did not say, "I am finished." This was a statement that God's eternal plan of redemption was complete and the penalty for sin had been paid. It was a shout of victory. Mission accomplished. Satan was defeated. God's law was satisfied. God's wrath was turned away. Everything was done.

Actually Jesus used only one word that is translated into three English words. It was a word found on business transactions that meant “paid in full.”

At the cross of Christ we see man at his worst and God at His best. We see the miscarriage of human justice and the satisfaction of divine justice. We see human responsibility and at the same time we see divine sovereignty. We see human cruelty and divine mercy. This old song expresses the gratitude that every believer feels in his heart:

Years I spent in vanity and pride
Caring not my Lord was crucified,
Knowing not it was for me He died on Calvary
Mercy there was great and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty, at Calvary.