

The Crowds At The Cross— 3/31/24

TEXT- Matthew 27:54-56 *Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.*

INTRO – The setting of Jesus crucifixion was the Passover feast in Jerusalem. It is estimated that between 80,000 and 100,000 citizens inhabited Jerusalem during the time of Jesus. But hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions visited Jerusalem during the time of the festivals. Jerusalem overflowed with people and animals during the time of the Passover.

I. The Jewish Leaders.

A. The chief priests and the council wanted Him dead

Mark 14:55 *And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none.*

B. They had animosity toward Him

Mark 14:53 *And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.*

John 19:14-15 *And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! 15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.*

John 19:7 *The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God*

C. He was falsely accused

Matthew 26:59-60 *Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; 60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,*

We see animosity toward Christianity like never before in our country.

Many leaders hate our gospel because it condemns them.

II. The Political Leaders

Herod and Pilate - Luke 23:11 *And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.*

Luke 23:35 *And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.*

The political leaders only cared about their position in government.

III. The Roman Soldiers

Matthew, Mark, and Luke draw special attention to the centurion in charge of the carrying out of the crucifixion.

The soldiers mocked Him. They did the bidding of the leaders.

Matthew 27:27-31 *Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.*

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.*

Isaiah 50:6 *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.*

IV. The Crowds of People

- **People mocked and scorned Him as they passed by.**

Matthew 27:36 *And sitting down they watched him there;*

Matthew 27:39-40 *And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*

V. The Two Thieves

Matthew 27:44 *The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.*

Luke 23:39-43 *And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

VI. The Followers of Jesus

A. John the Apostle and Mary His mother

John 19:26-27 *When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy*

son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

B. Mary Magdalene: Her steadfast presence amidst the anguish and despair reflects her unwavering commitment to Jesus and her willingness to endure the harrowing spectacle of his crucifixion.

C. Mary, the wife of Clopas and Mary the mother of James Joses: She exemplifies the resilience and unwavering faith of Jesus' followers.

D. Salome: The mother of James and John, Salome was also present at the crucifixion, standing alongside the other women

E. The other women

Luke 23:27 *And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.*

Luke 23:49 *And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.*

Matthew 27:55 *And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:*

F. Joseph of Arimathea: "After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus

G. Probably Nicodemus

He is named in the Gospel of John immediately after the Jesus expires on the Cross to provide the customary embalming spices, and assists Joseph of Arimathea in preparing the body of Jesus for burial

VII. Those Absent

- Judas betrayed Him but hanged himself.
- There is no mention of Peter or Thomas
- James may have been there since his mother and brother were there.
- It is uncertain if the rest of the Apostles were there.

VIII. The Distress of The Crowds

Signs at His death.

- Darkness for three hours.
- My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me
- The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.
- The Temple vail was torn in two
- The earth quaked
- Graves were opened and OT saints went into the city

Standing back and gazing out upon that mixed multitude, we notice the women, the soldiers, the malefactors, the centurion, the chief priests, the members of the Sanhedrin, the group of His own disciples, and in addition to

these, the vast multitudes of people from the whole surrounding country. All sorts and conditions of people are gathered to the Cross, representative crowds, the whole scene being a picture and a prophecy of how, through all the centuries, every sort and condition would be gathered to the uplifted Cross of the Son of man.

They who before had triumphed in His misery, are struck with deep astonishment. One says, "Surely this was a righteous man." Another says, *they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. Matthew 27:54* "Luke 23:48 *And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.*

They came to the execution with eager haste and bitter zeal. They retired slow, silent, and pensive, with downcast looks and labouring thoughts. Their smiting their breasts indicated some painful sensations within.

Simon of Cyrene carried His cross.

- **Observe His calmness.** Amidst the rudest and most provoking insults, He discovered no malice or resentment toward His enemies; but all His language and behaviour was mild and gentle. When He was reviled, He reviled not again; but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously.
- **See His benevolence.** He attended to the case of His afflicted mother, and commended her to the care of His beloved disciple. He wrought a miracle to heal an enemy wounded in the attempt to seize Him. He extended mercy to a malefactor who was suffering by His side.
- Consider His humble piety. He maintained His confidence in God; and into His hands committed His Spirit.
- Their smiting their breasts was expressive of their compassion for this innocent Sufferer.
- This action expressed a deep remorse of conscience.

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.*

CONCL – The crowds at the cross are representative of all of society today. Where do you stand in your attitude of Jesus Christ and His crucifixion.