

Why was Jesus Silent?

Matthew 27

Hypothetically, if God and Heaven are real, on what basis do you believe God will or will not accept you into Heaven?

What Does The Bible Say?

11 Now Jesus was standing before Pilate, the Roman governor.

“Are you the king of the Jews?” the governor asked him. Jesus replied, “You have said it.” (Matthew 27:11 NLT)

34 Jesus replied, “Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?” (John 18:34 NLT)

Have you investigated Jesus or just repeated what others say?

35 “Am I a Jew?” Pilate retorted. “Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?”

36 Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world.” (John 18:35–36 NLT)

Jesus explained that His kingdom is not of this world.

12 But when the leading priests and the elders made their accusations against him, Jesus remained silent. 13 “Don’t you hear all these charges they are bringing against you?” Pilate demanded. 14 But Jesus made no response to any of the charges, much to the governor’s surprise. (Matthew 27:12–14 NLT)

Why was Jesus silent?

15 Now it was the governor’s custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner to the crowd—anyone they wanted.

17 As the crowds gathered before Pilate’s house that morning, he asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you—

Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” 18 (He knew very well that the religious leaders had arrested Jesus out of envy.) (Matthew 27:15;17–18 NLT)

19 Just then, as Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: “Leave that innocent man alone. I suffered through a terrible nightmare about him last night.”

(Matthew 27:19 NLT)

22 Pilate responded, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” They shouted back, “Crucify him!”

23 “Why?” Pilate demanded. “What crime has he committed?”

24 Pilate saw that he wasn’t getting anywhere and that a riot was developing. So he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood.

The responsibility is yours!” (Matthew 27:22–24)

Jesus was innocent, and Governor Pilate knew it.

So why was Jesus silent? Why did He not defend Himself?

Because He had to die; why?

Here is where we get to the problem in the Western World's belief about Heaven.

“If a person is generally good or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven.”

21% of Christians Agree Somewhat

23% of Christians Agree Strongly

(Barna Group, 2019 Survey of US Christians)

Most people know about Jesus but don't know Jesus.

Most people see Jesus as a role model, not as a Savior!

Christianity teaches that Jesus came not "to show" the way to Heaven based on our merits, but "to be the way to Heaven based on His merits.

How Can You Obey?

Why did Jesus have to die, and how does His death enable me to have forgiveness and obtain eternal life?

Only Jesus as God could pay for an offended God.

16 “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NLT)

Have you repented of your sins and begun to follow Jesus?

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Additional Notes:

This week's Insights to The Biblical World is from Michael S. Heiser, *Brief Insights on Mastering the Bible: 80 Expert Insights on the Bible, Explained in a Single Minute, The 60 Second Scholar* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 57.

Explore:

Matthew 27:11-26

According to Luke's account, the religious leaders accused Jesus of three crimes (Luke 23:2). They claimed He was guilty of misleading the nation, forbidding the payment of taxes, and claiming to be a king. It was regarding these three charges, and specifically the third one, that Pilate questioned the Lord. Pilate knew his handling of this matter would impact his political future.

Pilate's first question is recorded in verse 11, Are you the king of the Jews? This was an important inquiry since the Roman government did not permit political rivals. The Lord's answer to Pilate was affirmative, yet not in the sense that Pilate was expecting. In fact, on the surface, Jesus' response may seem confusing. John's gospel (18:33-37), however, provides more specifics regarding the type of kingdom Jesus was establishing. Note the differences between what He said and what the

religious leaders were accusing Him of. Pilate realized that Jesus was no threat to the Roman regime and sought to let Him go.

The chief priests and elders would not accept this, however, and they continued questioning the Lord in verse 12. This time He gave no answer. Pilate could not understand why the Lord continued to stand there in silence, not saying a word in His own defense (verses 13-14).

In verse 15, the reader is introduced to a custom of the day in which the governing authorities, in an act of good will toward the people, would release one prisoner of the crowd's choosing. Scholars believe Pilate offered this hoping the people would request that Jesus be set free. In Pilate's mind, Jesus was an innocent man. Further, Pilate's wife had warned him not to have anything to do with Jesus because of a dream she had earlier in the day (verse 19).

Pilate's plan backfired as the people shouted to free Barabbas, the insurrectionist and murderer (verses 16-17). The people's request came at the coercion of the chief priests and elders, the avowed enemies of Christ (verse 20). There is little question that Pilate underestimated the power and sway of these religious leaders. After their demands to free Barabbas, Pilate asked what to do with Jesus and the crowds shouted, Crucify Him! The Greek text shows their response to be a mere one-word response, Crucify. This demand puzzled Pilate and he questioned the reason for their wish, only to hear them shout even more, Crucify (verse 23).

Pilate realized that he was fighting a losing battle and John's gospel (19:12) reports that the Jews threatened to report Pilate to Caesar. Pilate then washed his hands, a gesture symbolizing his innocence in the matter, and released Barabbas to them just as they had demanded (verses 24-26). The Jews readily accepted

any blame that would come their way. Jesus was then scourged or flogged, and delivered to the soldiers to be crucified.

The people's response in verse 25 is most compelling as they stated, His blood be on us and on our children. What a brash statement! In a broader sense, this was true in that Christ died innocently for all guilty humanity (Isaiah 53:3-8). Perhaps the release of the wicked Barabbas so that Jesus could take his place alluded to that truth. Jesus's innocence was also highlighted by His silence when charged, by Pilate's wife's dream, and by Pilate's clear statement that he could find no fault with Him.

Explore:

The act of scourging typically involved a victim being tied to a post and then whipped with leather straps with bone, rocks, and

other sharp debris attached. This served to bruise the body and shred the flesh, sometimes exposing bones and organs. This could be given as a stand-alone punishment, or as a preparation for execution. The victims sometimes died from this horrific act itself.

Explore:

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Explore:

Matthew 27:27-54

While verses 27-31 contain some very tense and painful moments, the mockery of Jesus was the main focus. Crucifixion was the most embarrassing and painful way to die. Picture the scene—a group of Gentile soldiers mocking a Jewish “king” wearing a dark, violet-red cloak as an imperial robe, holding a

stick as a scepter and bearing a crown made of thorns. At this point, they do something that no subject would ever do to a king—they spat on him and struck Him repeatedly on the head. They then led the Lord away to be crucified among the thieves.

Amazingly, Jesus took all this pain, humiliation, and mockery, without uttering a word or fighting back.

John's account informs us that Jesus started out carrying His own cross (John 19:17). However, being weak from the beatings and loss of blood, Jesus apparently was unable to carry the cross all the way to the site of crucifixion, as was the custom for criminals (verse 32). In an act of mercy or impatience on the part of the Roman soldier, a Jewish man named Simon, likely in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, was forced to carry the cross the rest of the way. This could only happen because the Romans had the legal right to make such demands. Touching the bloody cross would have rendered Simon "unclean" and therefore unfit to celebrate the Passover.

Golgotha, in Aramaic, literally means “place of the skull,” possibly because the features of the hill resembled a skull (verse 33). At that point the Lord was offered a painkilling drink, and in spite of the fact that it would have eased the pain, He refused. Matthew did not share many of the gory details of Jesus’ death, stating only “they crucified him” (verse 35). Because Roman law permitted the seizure of any items left behind by criminals, the soldiers divided his garments among themselves as was prophesied in Psalm 22:18.

Although the accusation that was posted above the head of Jesus (verse 37) was intended as mockery, it pointed to a reality. The thieves on the other crosses served not only as factual markers, but also as a fulfillment of prophecy (Isaiah 53:12). In verses 39-44, the insults, mockery, and derision continued (Psalm 22:7-8) from passersby, religious leaders, soldiers, and even the men who were on the crosses beside the Lord.

After this mockery, darkness covered the land at noon (verse 45). It was then that Jesus could bear the agony no longer and cried out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? quoting Psalm 22:1. Jesus now sensed a separation from the Father that He had never experienced before and that He would never know again. He was now bearing in His body the sins of the world and was suffering on our behalf (verse 46). For the infinite, eternal Son of God, even such a brief separation would have been greater suffering than could have been experienced by all of finite humanity for eternity. In verse 48, someone attempted to moisten Jesus' parched lips by putting wine vinegar, a common drink among the Roman soldiers, on a sponge and lifting it up with a reed. This again fulfilled prophecy—Psalm 69:21. In verse 50, Jesus cried out one last time, likely It is finished as recorded in John 19:30, and then yielded up His life and died.

The term excruciating is derived from crucify. Jesus was stripped nearly naked, beaten, mocked, insulted, jeered at, and in the end, even abandoned by God. There could have been no worse way to die. He endured humanity's abuse in a mental, physical, and emotional sense, and God turned His back on Him in order to punish sin, causing a spiritual suffering unimaginable to us.

At the time of Jesus' death, three significant events occurred. First, the veil or curtain of the Temple was torn in half from top to bottom (verse 51). This curtain separated the Holy Place in the Temple from the Most Holy Place. Only the high priest could go beyond that curtain, on the Day of Atonement, on behalf of Israel. The veil of the Temple ripping (a huge, thick curtain) was an unmistakable sign that Jesus' death made it possible for the barrier between a holy God and sinful humanity to be removed. We can now come into God's presence through Christ. There is no more separation from the holy of holies, into

which only the high priest could go. Everything changed at the moment Christ died.

Second, an earthquake occurred, one that was strong enough to split rocks. This was one more piece of evidence illustrating the magnitude of the Crucifixion and how all of creation was affected. It is believed by many commentators that this was a sign of God's power and judgment. Third, there was an event mentioned only by Matthew in which the

tombs of many righteous people were opened (verses 52-53).

These righteous people were believed to be Old Testament saints and according to verse 53, after Jesus' resurrection, they appeared to many people. These saints may have been raised in mortal bodies, as was Lazarus (John 11) and then died again some time later, or they could have been raised with transformed bodies and then ascended to Heaven. While scholars

debate the details, it was definitely a demonstration of God's resurrecting power.

As a consequence of these events, a Roman centurion and other Roman guards were filled with awe and amazement (verse 55).

They acknowledged that Jesus was truly the Son of God. Being Gentiles, they may not have had a total understanding of the title they were ascribing to Jesus. Interestingly, however, these Gentiles recognized Jesus for who He was when most of Jesus' own people did not.

Explore:

Many skeptics and some religious groups such as Muslims deny that Jesus actually died on the cross. They posit such theories as "the swoon theory" and the theory that someone else actually died in Jesus' place. The Gospel writers are unanimous,

however, in attesting that Jesus Himself hung on the cross and, after suffering enormous torture and abuse, died. The apostle Paul affirmed that Jesus was buried, attesting to the actual death of the Lord. Consider the following pieces of evidence affirming the fact that Jesus literally died a physical death.

- Jesus predicted His own death (Matthew 16:21).
- There were numerous witnesses to Jesus' death (Matthew 27:54-56; John 19:26).
- The Romans were very careful to eliminate the possibility of anyone living through crucifixion.
- Medical evidence, both biblical and extra-biblical, supports the fact that Jesus died. (See The Journal of the American Medical Association article at bit.ly/JAMA-Jesus).
- The Roman soldiers, experts in the field of crucifixion and death, confirmed that Jesus was dead (John 19:32-34).

- For more information about other false theories of Jesus' death and resurrection and appropriate response and refutation see, [bit.ly/False- TheoriesRefuted](http://bit.ly/False-TheoriesRefuted).

Explore:

The tearing of the Temple curtain illustrates how we now have access to the Father because He offers salvation and forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ.

Question 1 of 5

How would you define biblical inspiration?

Question 2 of 5

Why is Jesus' crucifixion the greatest demonstration of love ever given?

Question 3 of 5

How can we express our gratitude for Jesus' suffering and dying for us?

Question 4 of 5

How did Jesus' death on the cross make it possible for the barrier between the lost people and God to be removed?

Question 5 of 5

What activities help us walk in a close relationship with God?