



## NG Study Guide: Mark 15:21-41 "It Is Finished" (9.26.21)

### Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

### The Study

**Thesis:** The cross is simultaneously the most ugly and beautiful place in the universe. It reveals the ugliness of sin, and Jesus' voluntary sacrifice on the cross provides the way for you to be restored to God. On the cross, Jesus finished the work of salvation. The gospel is good news, because even though you can't earn your salvation, you can receive it as a gift through faith in Jesus' finished work (Eph. 2:8-10). Your faith is proven by following Jesus (learn of and imitate). Thus the cross is simultaneously the most ugly and beautiful place in the universe.

**Subject:** Christ crucified

**Object:** Draw close to Jesus

#### 1. Jesus crucified (21-32): Why the cross?

*Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross. <sup>22</sup> And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. <sup>23</sup> Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it. <sup>24</sup> And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take. <sup>25</sup> Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.*

#### **The cross fulfills prophecy (21-25).**

Simon was compelled by a Roman soldier to carry Jesus' cross (21). The crossbar could weigh one hundred pounds. John informs us that Jesus initially carried the cross, but after being whipped He was unable to carry the weight (Jn. 19). *And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull (22).* Golgotha in Latin is translated *Calvaria* yielding our English "Calvary." The hill is part of Mount Moriah where Abraham and Isaac typified the demonstration of worship, love, obedience and faith as a father prepared to give his only son, and a son voluntarily submitted to his father (Gen. 22). The Patriarchs' actions on that same mount point to Jesus' fulfillment at Calvary. It is interesting that the words "love" and "worship" appear for the first time in our Bibles in the record of Abraham and Isaac. Jesus was offered *wine mingled with myrrh to drink (23)* as a painkiller, but *He did not take it (23)* so that He can empathize with our suffering (Heb. 4:15). While Jesus was hanging from the cross, the soldiers *divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take (24)*. Amazingly, this event was foretold about a thousand years before (Ps. 22:18). Jesus was crucified at the third hour (25), or 9:00 a.m., three hours after dawn. The timing of Jesus' crucifixion fulfills the instructions for the Passover lamb [Ex. 12] which all point to Him. At the beginning of Jesus ministry, John the Baptist identified Jesus as, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29). There at the cross, Jesus fulfilled the prophecies.

#### **The cross proves God's love (26-29)**

*And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS. <sup>27</sup> With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. <sup>28</sup> So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with the transgressors." <sup>29</sup> And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, <sup>30</sup> save Yourself, and come down from the cross!" <sup>31</sup> Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. <sup>32</sup> 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.*

Mark notes that Jesus was *crucified* (25,27). God doesn't dwell on the extreme cruelty, or terrible suffering. The description is simple and unemotional. The torture of the cross was well known to the original audience. Roman citizens could not be crucified. The term "excruciating" meaning literally "out of the cross" was created to describe the suffering of the cross. Yet, the purpose is to arouse faith not pity.

The *inscription* above: *THE KING OF THE JEWS* (26) was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek (Jn. 19:20). The Romans intended the inscription to deter other suspected rebels, but God intended the words as a testimony to the world.

Jesus was crucified with two criminals one on each side (27) which fulfilled the prophecy of Is. 53:9-12, "And He was numbered with the transgressors" (28). And those who passed by blasphemed Him or mocked (29).

**"But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).**

Jesus died for the criminals on either side of Him, the mockers, the Jewish leaders, the Romans, you and I. God demonstrates His love for humanity at the cross even while humanity rebels.

**The cross shows the way to be saved (30-32)**

Jesus is mocked by the crowd, the religious leaders, and even those who were crucified with Him, *He saved others; Himself He cannot save* (31). The mocking taunt is full of irony: If Jesus saves Himself, others will not be saved; and for others to be saved, He cannot save Himself. It is Jesus' sacrifice for sin that saves us not His example or teaching.

## **2. Jesus' death (33-37): What's the problem with sin?**

*Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. <sup>34</sup> 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?" <sup>35</sup> Some of those who stood by, when they heard that, said, "Look, He is calling for Elijah!" <sup>36</sup> 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." <sup>37</sup> And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.*

From the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> hour, or noon until three, there was total darkness. This could not have been a mere solar eclipse because Jewish feasts, such as Passover, occur at full moon. This was Jesus bearing the sin of the world. In the Exodus, darkness was the plague that preceded the slaying of the Passover lamb (Ex. 10:21-22).

**Sin separates you from God:** Jesus cried out in Aramaic, the language of common people. He said, *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* (34, Ps. 22:1). This is the only time Jesus referred to YHWH as "God" rather than "Father." It is the cry of agony that the perfect communion between God the Father and Son was broken when Jesus who knew no sin was made sin for us (2Cor. 5:21, Is. 53:6). The most painful experience for Jesus is separation resulting from sin.

What makes heaven so wonderful and remarkable is God's unhindered presence.

**Jesus took the penalty for sin, so you can be restored to God:** Mark records Jesus death as follows, *And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last* (37). He cried loudly which is supernatural, because crucifixion makes it essentially impossible. His cry was for all to hear. John tells us what Jesus cried out, "It is finished" *tetelestai*, paid in full (Jn.19:30). Jesus didn't say "I'm finished" but "It is

finished.” The work of redemption, and His mission were completed. The penalty for sin is death (Gen. 2:17, Rom. 6:23). Then Jesus breathed His last as He committed His Spirit into the Father’s hands (Lu. 23:46). Because of Jesus’ sacrifice, you can be restored to relationship with God in this life, and forever in the life to come, through faith in Jesus (Eph. 2:8-9).

### **3. Jesus’ invitation (38-41): What should you do?**

*Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.* <sup>39</sup> So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!” <sup>40</sup> There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, <sup>41</sup> who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

#### **Recognize the invitation (38): The tearing of the veil is God’s invitation to enter His presence.**

The *veil of the temple* was a six-inch thick curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple (Ex. 26).

The tearing of the veil *from top to bottom* demonstrates that it was God who removed the barrier. The Jewish historian Josephus describes the veil as so thick that two teams of horses pulling in opposite directions would not tear the curtain. All of the temple practices (Levitical system) was intended to show the separation between God and man caused by man’s sin. Only priests, descendants of Moses and his brother Aaron, were able to enter the temple (worshipers gathered outside of the temple). The High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, where God was uniquely manifest above the ark of the covenant, only one day per year – Yom Kippur the Day of Atonement [Lev. 16]. The priest entered after offering sacrifices with a sense of awe, reverence, and trepidation that God might strike the priest dead. Jesus gave His life for our sin, and made the way for us to boldly enter God’s presence (Heb. 10:19-20). Access to God is our greatest blessing and comfort.

**Recognize Jesus is the Christ (39):** *So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!”* (39). The centurion had presumably witnessed countless other crucifixions, but never observed anyone else like Jesus. When others were crucified they cursed those who mocked them, but Jesus prayed, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do” (Lu. 23:34). Even one of the criminals declared, “Remember me when you come into your kingdom” and Jesus assured Him that today he would be with Him in Paradise (Lu. 23:42-43). The centurion realized that truly Jesus is the Son of God. Finally Luke tells us that the crowd that witnessed the events beat their chest as a sign of mourning and repentance (Lu. 23:48).

**Recognize how close you are to Jesus (40-41):** There were women who were part of those who followed Jesus, and who served when Jesus was in Galilee. They were *looking on from afar* (40). They sought to keep a safe distance especially in the heightened sense of persecution and fear. Yet, as we will soon discover together, love overcame fear so these women came to Jesus tomb to honor their Savior, no matter the hardship (Mk. 16:1-2). They discovered the resurrected Jesus! James, the half-brother of Jesus, encourages us, “Draw near to God and He will draw near you” (Ja. 4:8). If you have been looking on from afar, today is the day to choose to draw close to Jesus.

### **Study Guide Qs**

**Q1. What thoughts or feelings do you have as you contemplate Jesus crucified?**

**Q2. How might believers explain to unbelievers the problem with sin?**

**Q3. Contemplate the idea that Jesus finished the work of salvation upon the cross. How can that impact your relationship with God?**

**Q4. Consider a time when you felt very close to Jesus. What were some of the characteristics?**

## “Disciples Who Dig Deeper” (optional or alternative study)

1. Here is a good article to understand the meaning of, “It is finished?” - <https://www.gotquestions.org/it-is-finished.html>.

2. Here is some more good stuff regarding why Jesus had to die: <https://www.gotquestions.org/why-Jesus-die.html>.

### Love your neighbors (inside + outside the group) better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors inside or outside the group?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbors inside or outside the group?

### Disciples who make disciples:

1. Who would like to share how they recently sought to make disciples?
2. Here is a disciple making idea to consider for the weeks ahead:  
[Disciple making among family members can be made easier using resources that we make available for free to Calvary Nexus available at RightNow Media https://calvarynexus.org/resources/](https://calvarynexus.org/resources/).

### Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

### Leader Notes:

1. **Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
2. **Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
3. **The “Disciples Who Dig Deeper” section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the “Disciples Who Dig Deeper” section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.
4. **Every time you meet consider asking:**
  - a. **What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.