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Ignorant & Wicked men!

Matthew 27:27-37

Matthew 27:27-37, *Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. ²⁸And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. ²⁹When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on 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!" ³⁰Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. ³¹And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.*

³²Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. ³³And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, ³⁴they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. ³⁵Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." ³⁶Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. ³⁷And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

A death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and dreadful.

What we know about crucifixion is this: In crucifying someone, no one was concerned with a quick and painless death. No one was concerned with the preservation of any measure of human dignity. Quite the opposite.

Crucifiers sought an agonizing torture of complete humiliation that exceeds any other design for death that man has ever invented. Such was the torture that our Lord Jesus Christ endured for us.

The crucifixion of Christ is the climax of redemptive history.

It is the focal point of God's purpose for salvation. Everything culminates in the cross where the Lord bears the sins of the world and therefore provides salvation to all who believe.

The cross demonstrates the grace, mercy, goodness, kindness, and the love of God like no other event in history ever can.

The gospel of John writes about the cross from the viewpoint of God. He shows that it is a fulfilment of prophecy and God's plan on schedule.

When we look at the record of the crucifixion in the gospel of John and we are in awe of the wonder of God's glory, grace, and love in the death of Jesus Christ.

But that is not Matthew's purpose. Matthew describes the crucifixion not from the standpoint of the goodness of God but **from the standpoint of the wickedness of men.**

The focus of Matthew is on how evil men are and how much the death of Jesus Christ demonstrates the wickedness of the human heart.

- On one hand the death of Jesus Christ is the single greatest revelation of the love and grace of God,
- On the other hand, it is the single greatest revelation of the defilement and wickedness of the human heart.

We have the two opposite truths monumentally revealed in this one event.

Acts chapter 2, when Peter preaches at Pentecost, he says God has ordained this but you by wicked hands have brought it to pass.

The crucifixion of Jesus is wickedness unmatched.

Jeremiah 17:9, *"The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked"*

Now it is not as if wickedness has not appeared in the life of Christ before this, for it has.

Wickedness tried to kill Him at birth.
It tried to discredit His teaching.
It tried to stop His miracles.
Finally, wickedness secured His condemnation to death by violating every standard of justice in the Jewish and Gentile world.

Wickedness has already betrayed Him.
Wickedness has already put the hypocrite's kiss on His cheek.
Wickedness has arrested Him,
it has framed Him,
it has slapped Him,
It punched Him,
It spit on Him,
it mocked Him, and
It beaten Him.

Wickedness has done all of that and will kill Him.

- One side the fulfilment of the plan of a gracious God.
- On the other the supreme effort of wickedness.

Evil was not satisfied with simply ending the life of Jesus. Killing Him was not enough but wickedness demanded that He be **tormented** until the very end. The physical agony of the cross—though extreme and shameful—wasn't sufficient for His enemies.

While Jesus was dying, those around Him continued to mock, insult, and shame Him. Their hatred was so intense that His death seemed to disappoint them. They wanted His suffering to last even longer so they could continue to pour out their venom.

The heartless cruelty of the words and actions at the cross is almost **impossible to describe**.

Matthew 27:27-44, we see four groups of the wicked around the cross.

1. **The Ignorant Wicked:** Those who joined in the cruelty without truly understanding who Jesus was or the gravity of what they were doing.
2. **The Knowing Wicked:** Those who acted with full awareness and intent. They knew exactly who they were hurting and chose to be cruel anyway.
3. **The Double minded Wicked:** The "flip-floppers." These people may have cheered for Him days earlier but turned against Him the moment the wind changed, proving their hearts were shallow.
4. **The Religious Wicked:** Those who used their positions of faith and law to justify their hatred. They hid their evil behind a mask of "doing God's work."

Ignorant wicked men.

The ignorant wicked are illustrated to us by the callous soldiers in **V 27-37**.

V 27, Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him.

Pilate is the governor.

- He has already sinned against justice.
- He has sinned against conscience.
- He has sinned against truth.
- He has sinned against integrity.
- He has sinned against character.

Pilate has sold his soul for popularity and security. He is a miserable man. He is cornered by the Jewish population.

He is threatened as to the security of his position, fearful that another uprising and troublesome time with the Jews there will result in the loss of his job and reputation. He is forced to do things to Jesus he knows justice do not require.

Even though Pilate had repeatedly declared Jesus' innocent, he didn't release Him. Instead, he tried to satisfy the crowd's bloodlust through a cruel compromise. He ordered Jesus to be whipped and mocked, then brought Him back out to show the people how beaten and "pathetic" He looked.

Pilate's goal was to prove that **Jesus was a helpless man who posed no threat to Rome or Israel**. He hoped that by seeing Jesus in such a humiliated state, the crowd's hunger for violence would be satisfied, and they would stop demanding the execution of an innocent man.

Jesus has already endured the scourging.

V 26, *Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.*

Jesus has been tied to a post by His hands, His feet suspended off the ground so that His body, is stretched.

Two men, one on each side, Romans soldiers, have wooden handles in their hand to which are attached leather thongs, the end of which are filled with bits of rock and bone and metal filed down to a knife edge.

They proceed to lacerate the body of Jesus Christ extensively until blood is oozing out all over His body and His inner parts are made visible. This is the first effort to satisfy the blood-thirsty mob. This is carried on by the soldiers.

Following the scourging and before the crucifixion the scene then takes place.

V 27, *Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him.*

Speira in the Greek which is to say a group of 600 soldiers. The soldiers are Roman legionnaires. They belong to the legions of Caesar. They are not, for the most part, Italian, although it is mentioned in **Acts chapter 10 that Cornelius** was of the Italian band.

For the most part, Rome conscripted soldiers out of the countries it occupied, and frequently in the land of Israel, they had brought in soldiers that they had taken from Syria.

They used Syrian soldiers who were working for the Roman military power there because the Syrians could speak Aramaic, which was the common conversational language of Israel.

They soldiers are Roman in the sense of reflecting the Roman military power, presence, and allegiance to Rome.

They were not Jews, because Jews were exempted from any service in the Roman military and would not at all desire to do that.

Furthermore, this cohort probably was associated with Pilate, whose headquarters was at Caesarea on the seacoast, about 60 miles to the west from Jerusalem. Because of that they were not familiar with Jerusalem and all its theology and didn't understand much about Jesus at all.

They understood nothing about Jesus. He was just a prisoner to them, because they didn't often meet prisoners who claimed to be king, not so pathetic as this man anyway.

Since they had been brought with Pilate from Caesarea, they were not really in the know as to all the things that were true about Jesus and that He claimed.

What they did they did in ignorance.

They then represent the ignorant wicked who are seen around the cross.

They see Jesus as a strange and pathetic figure without a doubt. By the time He gets to this moment, He is a tragedy to look at.

- ✓ His face has been slapped repeatedly.
- ✓ He has been punched until it is swollen and bruised.
- ✓ He has been spat on till His face is covered with spit.
- ✓ His body now is torn.
- ✓ He bleeds profusely from the shoulders down.

They know that He is supposedly a king, because the people are screaming about His claim to be that.

They know the people want Him dead.

They see Him as a rather pathetic fake and fraud, perhaps mentally deranged and worthy only of their mockery.

When all through this entire encounter with them, He never says a single thing, they no doubt questioned His intelligence and perhaps even His sanity.

They play Him like a clown. They are cold. They are ignorant.

Under the guidance of Pilate, they mock Jesus' claim to be a king, because that is part of Pilate's plan.

Now the soldiers did this with the approval of Pilate. Under his watchful eye.

The gospel of John tells us that Jesus later was brought out to the crowd Pilate also came along after scourging and in this garb of the king with which they dress Him.

Pilate must have been back in the praetorium aware at least of what was going on. He wanted Jesus appearing bruised as mock king to be brought before the Jews. So that they would see how foolish and silly their claim was that this man was a threat either to Rome or Israel.

Already bleeding from the scourging which opened His flesh, blood flowing out all over His body, agony in every nerve, His whole-body quivering in tortuous pain. He becomes the object of the soldiers ridicule as they all gather around Him and begin their little game.

The first thing they did was strip Him.

They don't like the Jews. They have had a lot of problems with them.

Any way they can mock them, they can enjoy thoroughly. There are no Jews in the praetorium. The Bible tells us they wouldn't come in there lest they would be defiled and thus be unable to celebrate the Passover.

They do just exactly what they want to this individual. They don't really know Him. They don't know who He is. He has never been cross purposes with theirs.

There is no concern for His suffering.
They have been trained to torture.
They have been trained to kill.

They express the wickedness of the human heart in a definitive portrait of wickedness that is ignorant.

They reflect their father, the devil!

They find their great joy in increasing the pain that Jesus Christ endures. They are without kindness and without sympathy.

Now when Jesus was scourged, obviously He was naked. After the scourging was over, they put back on His inner-seamless garment, His inner robe. Only can be imagined the pain that that would cause Him, a rough cloth put over open

wounds. That has remained on Him for a time as He is brought back into the praetorium.

They make Him naked. Greek word ***Ekduō*** means to undress.

V 28, *And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.*

Somewhere lying around on the pavement in Pilate's praetorium is a discarded scarlet robe, a robe that one of the soldier's would wear as an outer garment, a rough cloth, a heavy cloth that would be used to keep him warm.

- **Matthew** says it was a scarlet colour.
- **John** tells us it was purple robe.

The difference between scarlet and purple isn't great, and a robe like that in the sun and very old would maybe fade in certain places, maybe overall so that it sorts of lost its true colour.

But on the other hand, it was scarlet at least to Matthew, but it was purple to John.

It may have been just in the perception of the colour. It may further have been that in the mind of John, he knew it was intended to represent a purple robe, because purple was the colour of majesty, and they were mocking Him as a king.

Matthew it was just a scarlet robe.

But to John it becomes a purple robe for that is to represent Him as some kind of king.

They place upon Him the scarlet robe that is intended to represent the purple robe, to mock Him as if He were some king.

Isaiah 1:18, *“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.*

The scarlet robe draped over the flesh of Jesus, **the symbol of the bearing of our scarlet sins**. He bore our sins. He became sin for us who knew no sin. A mock imitation of His royalty.

V 29, *When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on 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!”*

Greek word **Stephanos** is the crown.

Greek word **Akantha** if thorns.

Thorns are from many possible plants in Palestine at that time and even today that would have great thorns on them. This was intended to be a cheap and painful imitation of the royal

wreath that was on **every coin with the image of Tiberius Caesar. On every coin where his face was, he had that wreath on.**

Here was their way to mock Jesus, to put on Him a royal wreath. But it was not a wreath like the one Caesar wore. It was a wreath of thorns.

They put it around His head and crushed it down. The thorns piercing His brow and little streams of blood running down to mingle with the rest of the blood on His body.

After the sin of Adam and Eve, God curses the earth.

Genesis 3:18, *Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.*

- The purple robe symbolic of His bearing sin.
- The crown symbolic of His bearing the curse of the world.

For on the cross, Jesus not only took away sin, but He removed the curse of the whole earth.

Romans 8:22, *For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now.*

The whole creation waits for the glorious manifestation of the sons of God when it too shall be liberated from the curse.

Here is Jesus in symbol bearing the sins of the world as scarlet and the curse of the earth as thorns, which He Himself in His glorious death and resurrection will reverse.

But all of this makes Jesus look ridiculous.

He is bloody from head to foot. His face is now unrecognizable. He is hardly human. His face is distorted by the pain of emotion. It is distorted by spiritual anguish.

Jesus is a scene of ugliness of which **the prophet Isaiah says there is no beauty that we should desire Him.**

V 29, they put it on His head,

The right hand was the hand of authority.

The reed was the symbol of a sceptre and in those days the kings would hold a sceptre often of ivory and gold.

His sceptre was made from a reed, just a common stalk. They put it in His hand to depict His authority, His sovereignty.

For Tiberius on his coins also was shown with a sceptre in his hand. If He was going to be a king, He had to have a sceptre.

Jesus is with a crown of thorns and a robe of scarlet and a sceptre of a reed.

They carry on their little mockery.

V 29, *And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"*

They bowed the knee before Him as if He were king, they gave Him homage. They mocked Him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews." There was no sincerity in that.

It was just mockery, sarcasm, cynicism, ridicule, and scorn.

The Jews mocked Him for being a prophet.

Matthew 26:68, *saying, "Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"*

The band of ignorant wicked Roman soldiers bow their knee.

V 30, *Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head.*

Down on the knees, "Hail, King of the Jews"

On the way up they spit in His face.

The ultimate human indignity, to spit on someone.

The Jews had spat on Him earlier.

Matthew 26:67, *Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands,*

The whole world is gathered to spit on the Son of God.

If they only knew who they were spitting on.

If they only knew who they were mocking.

If they only had known who it was upon whom they placed a crown of thorns and a scarlet robe.

Can you imagine what hell is like today for those people who that day spit on Jesus?

Can you imagine what must be their thoughts as they remember that one day when it all seemed like so much fun in the judgment hall of Pilate?

They carried on their little game further.

V 30, *and took the reed and struck Him on the head.*

The Greek text says repeatedly struck Him on the head.

More blows, slaps already, punches with the fist already, spit, and now hitting Him repeatedly in the head with this reed.

Why were they doing that?

Not particularly to crush the thorns deeper into His brow, although it certainly had that effect.

They did this primarily to show what a joke His authority was.

What kind of a king are you?

We can rip the very sceptre out of your hand and beat on your head with it.

Your sovereignty is a laugh.

Your kingliness is a joke.

Anybody who can spit on a king and hit him in the head with his own sceptre and have nothing happen in retaliation is some kind of king.

John 19:3, *Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.*

Unbelievable scene of human evil.

It isn't that they have anything against Him. They don't even know Him. It is the depravity of the human heart. Given the opportunity to do whatever it wants, it does this. Inconceivable.

Though He endures it all, He says nothing.

He offers no resistance.

He says nothing.

He is willing to suffer for sinners, to suffer not only the death on the cross but everything that came along with it.

He will fulfil His calling.

He endured such contradiction of sinners.

Hebrews 12:3, *For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.*

He endured it all, and He knew it was going to come.

Jesus did tell the disciples what He must endure in Jerusalem.

Matthew 20:18-19, *“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death,¹⁹ and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.”*

Jesus was right on schedule.

He had been to the Jews, now He was with the Gentiles
They would mock Him, and then they would crucify Him. He was right on schedule. Silently He endured it all humiliation, agony, pain beyond belief.

After the scourging and mockery Matthew breaks off the scene at verse 30 doesn't tell us what happened further.

We need to go to **John chapter 19**.

After Jesus is decked out like this king, Pilate then comes out with Him before the Jewish crowd.

Pilate doesn't want to do this, so he says, "You take Him and crucify Him." They won't do it. They want this thing done legally. They force Pilate, and they say to him, "If you don't do it, you are no friend of Caesar."

As if to say, we will report you to Caesar again if you do this and you are going to be in trouble with him for not being able to control the people you are put in power over.

John 19:14-15, *Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" ¹⁵But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"*

Then Pilate says, "Shall I crucify your king?"

They say, "*We have no king but Caesar.*"

This one statement we find the culmination of the apostasy of the nation Israel.

They had no God. Their king was Caesar.

They said it in their own mouth, the apostasy of the nation Israel.

Pilate was stuck with Jesus, and he determined then that he had no choice but to crucify Him.

V 31, *And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.*

Matthew skips over the portion that John covers. Matthew's just summarizing.

They took off that scarlet heavy robe, took the reed out of His hands. We don't know whether they left the crown on or not. The Scripture doesn't say. They put His own raiment back on Him again.

They led Him out of the praetorium to be crucified, the most terrible way to die.

Crucifixion originated in Persia and it originated from the strangest circumstance. The Persians had a deity by the name of **Ormuzd**.

Ormuzd was the god who considered the earth to be sacred. Anyone who was executed had to be lifted up above the earth lest that person being executed, by virtue of his evil, would defile the sacredness of the earth.

The Persians devised a crucifixion as a way to suspend a person above the earth in execution. It passed from the Persians to the Carthaginians and somehow the Romans took it from those in Carthage and used it.

The Romans used it extensively. From the best we could ascertain at the time of Christ and around the era of Roman occupation of Israel, **the Romans crucified at least 30,000 Jews**. They did it all over the highways in order to warn people what happens to someone who violates Roman law. Vivid illustrations of the foolishness of going against Rome.

They were going to lead another victim to crucifixion. They followed the normal procedure.

V 32, *Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.*

Out of the city, because execution always had to be out of the city. The Jews would never tolerate it in their city. That was a part of Levitical Law. Execution always had to be outside the city.

Hebrews 13:12-13, *Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. ¹³Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.*

He went forth out of the city.

V 32, *they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.*

Matthew doesn't tell us what went on before they went out of the city. He just skips the part from leaving the praetorium to leaving the city.

John 19:16-17, *Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away. ¹⁷And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha,*

We know from how the Romans crucified people that Jesus would leave the praetorium and bearing His own cross.

There is nothing in the Scripture to suggest that He carried a part of His cross. Some have suggested He carried only the crosspiece. Some, the long centre piece. There is nothing in Scripture to suggest that He carried anything less than the whole thing.

Jesus would be carrying wood that would **weigh more than 90 kgs** on His back in the condition that He was in absolutely inconceivable weight on someone in His circumstance. He went forth carrying His cross.

The prisoner would be surrounded by a quaternion, four Roman soldiers, one at each corner, moving Him through with other soldiers before and behind.

With the city of Jerusalem overcrowded with the people from all over had come in for the time of the Passover. Now this being the very Passover day and everything in motion, the place would be crawling with people. They would parade the prisoner down the main streets.

Hanging around the prisoner's neck was a placard or being held by someone walking in front of him, on which was the indictment for which the prisoner was to be executed so that everybody would know the price of the crime.

Jesus carrying His own cross is paraded before the people before He ever can leave the city, so that everyone is warned about how it is to violate Roman law, to be brought to execution by the Romans. The procession moves through the streets.

It was during that procession that **Jesus gave His last public message**. The last public sermon He ever gave was a very brief one.

Luke 23:27-31, *And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. ²⁸But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' ³⁰Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" ' ³¹For*

if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

No Jewish mother could ever imagine being said that I wish I never had children. Jesus says you better weep for yourselves and your children because the day is coming when you will wish you had no children. You are going to have such terrifying judgment. You will wish you had no children to be slaughtered before your very eyes.

Jesus is the green tree.

The populace of Jerusalem is the dry tree.

If the Romans will do this to Him, who is innocent, what will they do to the Jews who are guilty?

He is a green tree. He doesn't even fit the burning process. You don't even use Him to burn.

The Jews are a dry tree and they should be burned. That's His implication. You burn dry wood.

If the Romans will burn a green tree, that is an innocent one, one not fit to be burned, what will do to you who are guilty, who have been having insurrections after insurrections against them?

When the time for your judgment comes, you watch and see what they will do to you.

If they would do this to Me as an innocent man, what are they going to do to you as guilty ones?

We all know He was referring to the destruction of **70 A.D.** which was precipitated by their hostilities against Rome.

Jesus' last message to them on the way to His cross was a message of coming judgment, and it was coming very fast, within the lifetime of many of those people there. The holocaust of 70 A.D. from which the land of Israel has yet to recover.

V 32, *Now as they came out,*

They came out the gate because there was always a crucifixion outside the city and always along a main highway.

No doubt they came out a **northern gate** in the city, may well have been the **Damascus gate**.

The northern part of the city, they came out and there they found a main highway, and that would be the place where the execution would occur so that everyone would see it.

Everyone would know, an agonizing testimony of the foolishness of crimes against Rome. **The Jews didn't crucify people, they stoned people. The Romans did.**

Even Jesus in all the strength that humankind could ever have has run out. His blood has drained. The agony is beyond belief a full week, a late Passover, no sleep, the betrayal of Judas, the defection of the disciples, the trials, the injustice, the beatings, the scourging's. It has dissipated all His strength and there aren't any angels now to help Him.

V 32, *Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.*

Cyrene was a Greek settlement.

It was located west of Alexandria and directly south of Greece on the north African coast, about ten miles inland. **Today it would be located in Libya.**

There were many Jews there, because it was a trade centre. Simon was a Jew from that Greek settlement on the north coast of Africa who was in Jerusalem because it was Passover.

We do know from the book of Acts that there was in fact a Jewish synagogue for Cyrenians in Jerusalem.

His name is a Jewish name but no other insights.

Mark 15:21, *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.*

Jesus comes out of the city.

Jesus is leaving Jerusalem. Simon's coming into Jerusalem. He has been out in the country perhaps securing some things for the preparation of his own Passover that day.

Some have suggested that he shouldn't have been doing that because it was a **holy day**, but remember **the Sabbath law did not apply on the feast day**. It applied on the Sabbath day.

This is Wednesday the feast day. It would not have been wrong for him to be walking.

A devout Jew come to the Passover. Simply passing along, runs into this procession coming out of the city.

He is conscripted by the crowd of Roman soldiers to carry the cross of Jesus. No Roman would carry a criminal's cross, certainly not a Jewish criminal.

They get Simon.

Mark 15:21 that he was the **father of Alexander and Rufus**. Alexander and Rufus, Greek names. He gave his sons Greek names. Very common, especially if he lived in a region other than Israel, as he did on the north coast in a Greek settlement.

Who are these two and why are they identified?

Mark wrote his gospel most likely from Rome and the first readers may well have been Romans and here may well have been two that the Romans knew.

He simply identifies Simon further as the father of two that they know, Alexander and Rufus.

Romans 16:13, *Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.*

Paul referring to someone named Rufus and writing to the Romans. Mark referring to someone named Rufus, who seems to be commonly known by the Christians, and writing in Rome.

Rome there was an Alexander and a Rufus. Here we find Rufus identified as one chosen in the Lord.

Paul says "*And his mother and mine.*"

Who would the mother of Rufus be?

The wife of Simon.

Simon, though inadvertently passing by and made to carry the cross of Jesus Christ, through that experience came to faith in Jesus Christ, raised two sons who became strong stalwarts in the church at Rome, his wife herself becoming like a mother to the Apostle Paul.

What started out as an enforced act became the means of his conversion.

When we get to heaven, we are going to meet Simon of Cyrene along with his wife and his children.

V 33, *And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull,*

Simon now carrying the heavy cross, Jesus alongside, surrounded by the four soldiers and all the rest before and behind.

They come unto a place called **Golgotha** an Aramaic term transliterated really into Greek and then into English. It means **skull place**, the place of a skull.

Luke 23:33, *And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.*

Luke calls it a skull and uses the **Greek word *kranion*** from which we get cranium.

The Latin Vulgate translated that Calvary which was the Latin term for cranium or ***kranion***.

We conclude then that this is a place not as some have suggested where skulls are lying all over everywhere, or it would have been called the place of the skulls, plural.

Furthermore, the Jews weren't going to have any place where a whole lot of bones were lying around above the ground, which was the antithesis of their toleration. It was called the place of a skull, or skull place, because it was shaped like that.

V 34, *they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.*

When they came to Golgotha, the place of a skull, they began the procedure, which started with giving Him vinegar to drink.

The text in the Greek says wine, **Oinos**. They gave Him wine to drink.

"Mingled with gall."

Gall, simply a general term referring to something that is bitter.

Mark's gospel says the bitter that they gave Him was myrrh.

Myrrh is a sort of a vegetable narcotic that was put into the wine as a way to calm the person down.

Psalm 69:21, *They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

From the vantage point of the soldiers, no doubt, that the stupefaction wasn't on their part an act of mercy. They really

didn't care whether the patient suffered or the victim suffered or not.

They weren't trying to treat this person with kindness, or they were in the wrong business to start with. It accommodated them, because it might have been very difficult otherwise to hammer four nails through someone's limbs if they weren't stupefied to some degree.

Consequently, at that very time, it would be encouraging for them to have some way to shock the patient.

Here is a most fascinating thing.

While from the soldier's viewpoint it was simply an accommodation to the process of crucifixion.

From history it was done by an association of wealthy women in Jerusalem. They provided this from their viewpoint to ease the pain, and they did it in a direct connection, according to what we know from ancient Jewish teaching.

A direct reflection of Proverbs 31.

Proverbs 31:6, *"Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish and wine to those that are of heavy hearts."*

They were wanting to be Proverbs 31 women.

Out of the kindness of their heart to render that service required to a victim who was in this direst of all situations.

The wealthy women come out and try to give Jesus this in order that His pain might be alleviated.

V 34, *But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.*

They put it to His mouth.

He wouldn't drink it. He spit it back.

Why?

John 18:11, *So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"*

Jesus was not going to drink this. He was not going to have any of His senses dulled.

He was going to the cross to endure the full pain of everything.

V 35, *Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots."*

There was no fanfare, no hammer this nail and hammer the next nail. There are no adjectives here, no descriptives, no nothing, no cries of pain. It doesn't say a thing. They crucified Him.

Having crucified Him ones parted His garments, which even makes the crucifixion more insignificant, because it only refers to it offhandedly as a way to describe the ones who parted His garments.

It's as if he just runs right by that.

Why?

Because the issue for Matthew is the wickedness of the men.

“And the crucifiers parted His garments in casting lots”

There isn't even a reference to the actual crucifixion.

The Bible is not preoccupied with the physical events of the cross. It is preoccupied with the wickedness of men.

It never describes the agony of Jesus.

It only describes what men did to Him.

It doesn't describe His own feeling.

Outside the garden, we know nothing of the agony.

Outside the sayings on the cross, which themselves do not express His agony, except in separation from God.

The physical agony of Jesus is not the issue.

They crucified Him and parted his garments, casting lots.

V 35, *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:*

Psalm 22:18, *They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.*

It is a fulfilment.

Every Jew had five pieces of clothing.

1. He had his shoes.
2. He had his inner cloak.
3. He had his head piece.
4. He had his belt.
5. He had his outer cloak.

They split up the first four and what was remaining, according to John's gospel, was that inner garment, that inner cloak.

John 19:23, *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.*

That inner garment is called a seamless garment. It went with holes for the arms and the head, just over the body.

There were four soldiers. They each take one of the first four and it remains that they should decide who gets the inner garment and they gamble for it, they cast lots, they draw straws. This indeed is a fulfilment.

V 36, *Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.*

Why?

It was their job.

They were on guard, lest somebody be unduly savage to Christ or lest somebody tried to rescue Him. They had to stay on guard.

With cruel mockery and morbid sensation, they stayed on their guard to make sure nothing happened beyond what had already happened.

V 37, *And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

Matthew doesn't give us the whole thing.

Compare Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, pull it all together then we will get the whole statement.

"This Is Jesus Of Nazareth, The King Of The Jews."

That was the whole sign. Matthew just emphasizes again, *THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

The Jews didn't like that.

John 19:21-22, *Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews.'"* ²²*Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."*

It was mockery. He wanted everybody going by to look and say, "This is the king of the Jews. This is Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jew. What a laugh."

Pilate put it in **Aramaic, Greek, and Latin**.

- **Greek**, the universal language.
- **Aramaic**, the language of the area.
- **Latin**, spoken by the Romans.

It was there for everybody to read, this is the king of the Jews, what a joke. The Jews hated that, but Pilate would not change it.

Sarcasm to the very end. The soldiers put the sign up there. Wicked, but ignorant wicked soldiers.

Conclusion:

The world is full of people like that.

Full of people who just laugh at Jesus, the whole thing seems so silly, such a joke, so ridiculous, and they are so ignorant.

The world is full of ignorant people who are callous toward Jesus Christ. They don't know who they are talking about. They don't know who they have on their hands and unless they awaken to it. They will spend an eternity in the same kind of remorse these soldiers are spending right now.

Very frightening.

Matthew 27:54, *So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"*

What a wonderful thought.

Luke 23:47, *So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"*

Out of that group of soldiers that day, there was at least one of them that came to true faith in Christ.

Jesus was dying on the cross, put there by ignorantly wicked men and offering those very same men the salvation that He was procuring.

Is Jesus not the friend of sinners?