

# The Crucifixion

by C.I. Scofield

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*The crucifixion is a mystery that cannot be fully understood, but it is a central theme of the Christian faith and holds the key to understanding the meaning of Christ's death and sacrifice.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 27:46, John 19:17, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24

**Topics:** "The Atonement", "Christ's Sacrifice"

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## Description

C.I. Scofield delves into the profound significance of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, highlighting the various aspects such as the title written by Pilate, the fulfilled prophecy, and the cries from the cross. He emphasizes the humility and reverence required when approaching the death of Christ, cautioning against attempting to fully comprehend the atonement. Scofield points to the forsaken cry of Jesus on the cross as the key to understanding the deepest meaning of His sacrifice, emphasizing the reality and necessity of the forsaking, as well as the identification of Christ with the sin of humanity to bear its penalty.

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## Transcript

(John xix:17-30.)

### I. The Analysis.

1. The crucifixion. Verse 18. Simply does the pen of inspiration record the most stupendous event in all history, whether of heaven or of earth. Truly this is not the manner of man. An uninspired pen writing of the crucifixion would have added a multitude of details.
2. The title written by Pilate. Verses 19-22. Pilate little thought of the deeper meaning of his words in verse 22. He had written an awful record against himself that day.
3. The fulfilled prophecy. Verses 23, 24. This was the day of the fulfilment of the 22d Psalm. The student should read that Psalm very carefully.
4. The order now should follow the cries from the cross. The first three were uttered in the light, before the darkness and the forsaking; the last four, out of the darkness.

### II. The Heart of the Lesson.

How shall any mortal say what is central here? Sometimes I think we shall be more ashamed in the glory of our theories of the atonement than of our sins. Perhaps the highest reach of impertinence, the final touch of insolence, will be found in our poor efforts to compress within a definition the meaning of the death of Christ. Let us, at any rate, stand unshod before the cross. If Moses were commanded to take the shoes from off his feet before the bush that burned with fire, and yet was not consumed, surely we, before the dying agonies of the Son of God, should have bowed hearts.

Much of the discussion of the meaning of the cross seems little separated from a mere psychological interest--a cold, scientific analysis of the mind of Christ in His sufferings. How could the Holy Spirit interpret aright those holy mysteries to a callous curiosity?

I have long believed that the Scriptures are absolutely self-interpreting, and, in particular, that the deeper mysteries of the person, teachings and work of Christ are accompanied by words which yield, to reverent minds, a clue to their right interpretation. I do not mean that such interpretative words are the exclusive explanations, for I look upon the Apostolic writings as inspired commentaries on the Gospels, but only that Christ Himself gives the authoritative first clue.

If this be true, we are to find the deepest meaning of the crucifixion in His desolate cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The other six utterances from the cross present no difficulty. Partly Godward, partly man-ward, they are simple. But what shall we say of this?

We must say, first of all, that the forsaking was real. The notion that Christ so identified Himself with the woe and sorrow of humanity that He spoke as it were representatively: "Why hast thou forsaken us?" is inadequate because Christ knew that so far from having forsaken humanity in its dire need, God had "so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The words in the 22d Psalm which immediately follow those quoted by our Lord make that clear. "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded." Then follows that which also was in our Lord's mind: "But I am a worm, and no man." No, we are face to face with the fact that a holy God forsook, in the hour of His dire extremity, the only sinless man who ever lived.

And our reverence for that infinite Love whom we call God, and adore and love, requires us to say in the second place, that there must have been an absolute necessity for that forsaking. Thrice the Father had spoken from heaven concerning that holy forsaken One: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Was He doing something now with which the Father was displeased? Impossible!

And the Scriptures require us to say, in the third place, that the holy sinless one was there on the cross, identifying himself in some sense so infinite that we cannot wholly understand it, with the sin of man. "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way and Jehovah hath caused the iniquities of us all to meet on him." Even deeper in its awful tragic mystery of meaning is that word: "He hath made him to be sin for us--who knew no sin."

And now we understand a little why the sinless One was forsaken. He was suffering in our stead. The penalty of sin--separation from God, was being borne by Him that it might not be borne by us. He was vindicating that primal law of the moral universe which, as even Plato discovered, "rivets together" sin and suffering.

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