

“Salvation: By God’s Design”
“The Astonishment and Turnaround of the Crowd”
 Luke 23:48

Every year at this time special emphasis is given to the resurrection of Christ. However, every Sunday is resurrection Sunday, because the Lord Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week.

The “Passion Week” began on **Sunday**, with the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem which occurred six days before the Passover. Hostility was growing toward Jesus. His enemies had issued a proclamation, that if anyone knew where He was they should report it to the chief priest so they could take Him and put Him to death.

The Lord did not, however, enter the city in disguise but rather with a fan fare. Yet He was not taken by His enemies because His hour had not yet fully come. This is why it is called the “Triumphal Entry”.

He entered the city of His throne, not on a white horse, the emblem of a conquering victor; but on a borrowed donkey, the emblem of humility and peace.

He brought salvation, but it wasn’t the kind of salvation they were looking for, and it was rejected.

- **Monday** we see Him cleansing the Temple.
- **Tuesday** He returned to Jerusalem to be confronted by the Pharisees.
- **Wednesday** is a day of silence.
- **Thursday** there was the preparation for the Passover; the upper room; Gethsemane;
- **Friday** was the day of illegal and unjust trials.
 1. The trial before **Annas**,
 2. The trial before **Caiaphas**
 3. The third trial before the **chief priests and elders**
 4. The fourth trial was held before **Pilate**
 5. The trial before **Herod**
 6. The **final trial before Pilate** resulted in a second announcement of innocence and the offer to scourge and release Jesus
- **The Signs That Followed**—Matthew 27:51-56

The events that followed were the wicked treatment of Jesus as He was crucified on the cross and the signs that followed. The events were;

- The victims were nailed to their crosses, which were raised and fixed in position.
- Either prior to this or shortly after drugged wine was given to deaden the pain.
- The clothing of Jesus was divided among the four soldiers, by lot.
- Railing accusations and mocking occurred throughout the ordeal—the crowd somehow seems to file or pass by the cross.
- Jesus cried out, “*Father, forgive them ...*”.
- The criminals joined in reviling Christ.
- The thief on the cross came to faith in Jesus as his Messiah.
- Darkness falls over the scene, from 6th hour (noon) till 9th hour (3:00).
- Jesus cried out, “*My God, My God, why has thou forsaken Me?*”. (Matthew, Mark)
- Jesus said, “*I thirst*” (John), drank a sip of vinegar
- Jesus said, “*It is finished*”. (John)
- Jesus bowed His head and said, “*Father, into your hands I commit My spirit, ...*” and died.
- Immediately, the curtain of temple torn in two, top to bottom (Luke)
- Earthquake, tearing of the curtain and the raising of dead saints. (Matthew)
- Legs of other two were broken, but Jesus’ legs not broken, seeing He was already dead. (John)
- Soldier pierced Jesus’ side with a spear—blood and water gushed out. (John)
- Centurion (and the other soldiers) who witnessed it said, “*Surely this was son of God*”.
- The crowds left, beating their breasts, while the Galilean followers stay on, watching from distance

These women followed Jesus all the way to Calvary. Their **motivation** was love for the Saviour. Their **manner** was that of dedication to Him. Their **ministry** was to serve Christ; v.55 says they ministered to (or served) Him.

G. Turnaround of the Crowd—Luke 23:48

There was in the crowd that day, after the supernatural events that had taken place, a sense of astonishment, even what appears to be inward guilt and change of heart. One cannot know the inner workings of the heart that occurred there, but something did happen in the people.

1. The Reason for the Turnaround

This is a completely different scene than a few hours before when this same crowd was shouting “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”. This is also the same people that jeered and mocked and railed at Jesus as He hung there dying. But all this would soon change.

Quote Charles Spurgeon;

“There unanimously, whether of malice or of wantonness, they all joined in mockery of the Victim who hung upon the center cross. Some thrust out their tongue. Some wagged their heads. Others scoffed and jeered—some taunted Him in words and others in signs—but all alike exulted over the defenseless man who was given as a prey to their teeth.

Meanwhile the earth trembled beneath their feet. The rocks were split and the temple, ... had its holy veil torn as though by strong invisible hands. The news of this and the feeling of horror produced by the darkness and the earth tremor caused a revulsion of feelings.”

There were no more jeers and taunts from the crowd. The only sound heard was the loud voice of the Lord Jesus as He cried, “*It is finished.*” The only thing left to be said to fulfill the Scriptures was, “*Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.*”

Notice the use of the word, “*spectacle*” in v.48. This the only place in the NT this word is used, though the verb parent is used many times. What does it mean?

The word is not used of an indifferent spectator, but of one who looks at a thing with interest and for a purpose. It denotes a careful observation of details. Like a general officially reviewing or inspecting his army.

These people were there because of the spectacle of crucifying Jesus. So, what happened? Notice the words, “*when they saw what had taken place...*”

This seems to indicate that when they saw the miracles that occurred, the darkness, the earthquake, coupled with the words of Jesus

triumph, it changed their outlook on the scene. Generally when one was crucified their ability to speak was severely diminished, but Jesus could still speak loudly.

This had an effect on the spectators. After all this was no ordinary man that was dying on the middle cross. This was the Son of God. They had heard the centurion's witness, they had seen the visible signs of His sacrifice.

2. The Reaction of the Turnaround

Why would we speculate that there was a turnaround in these people in first place? Because of their reaction. They "*beat on their breasts*" v.48.

The beating upon the breast, is seen in Scripture as a sign of contrition and humility. Take for example the Tax-collector in; Luke 18:10-14

How many a soul has approached the cross with nothing but feelings of scorn and reproach only to go away praying and praising God for the grace they've found. Then there are others who feel a sense of heavy guilt and go away as lost as they came, their conscience being brought a place of remorse. But isn't that where it starts? A person hears the gospel, sees themselves as a sinner, experiences the guilt of their sin, and in many cases repents with humility. See: 2 Corinthians 4:2-5

One's conscience alone is not enough bring them to Christ. Even the troubled conscience can be hardened to the gospel. We don't know what the condition was that day.

One thing we do know, that the cross has the power to change the hard and stony heart and transform it into a receptacle of grace.

Quote CH Spurgeon

"We need despair of no man now that Jesus has died for sinners. With such a hammer as the doctrine of the Cross, the most flinty heart will be broken! And with such a fire as the sweet love of Christ, the most mighty iceberg will be melted! We need never despair for the heathenish or superstitious races of men. If we can but find occasion to bring the doctrine of Christ Crucified into contact with their natures, it will yet change them and Christ will be their king."

That's why James and Peter agree that humility is the only way to

approach God (as the publican did). James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5 “*God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*”

I don't know if those people were saved from their sin or not on that day. Maybe a few. They certainly had the gospel in living form right before their eyes.

You say yes, they could see and hear the things that happened. I say to you have a more sure record of those events than they did. 2 Peter 1:19

Are you one who feels the raging of your conscience today? Are you beating your breast because of conviction of your sins, then I have good news for you.