

*I will
never forget
the day I met Jesus.*

TO BEAR HIS CROSS

LESSON 30 → John 19:1-30

The city of Jerusalem was jammed. Yes, this was the eve of the Passover, but surely this throng I found myself in was unusual. I glanced over the heads of some of those about me. They seemed to be moving along together. I turned to work my way out of the crowd, with the intention of going down a side street. So intent was I on getting through, that I suddenly bumped into someone. I looked up into the face of an angry Roman soldier. Grabbing me, he shouted,



“You’re just who we need!” As he pulled me with him, I tried to hang back, explaining that I was new in the city, that I had just come from Cyrene. He didn’t seem to hear me. I was never more afraid in my life.

What could the soldier mean, that I was just who they needed? His rough

grasp on my arm hurried me through the crowd. I looked about . . . was there no one who would help me? But I could see that there was no help for me here. This



crowd was angry, and their faces reflected it.

Suddenly the soldier pushed me in front of a Man bearing up under a heavy cross of timber. I looked at the body of this Man, and it horrified me. Covered with blood from the slashes of a whip, it was evident that He was badly hurt. I looked into His face, expecting it to be hardened and cruel—the face of one deserving such a fate. To my surprise, love shone through saddened eyes which seemed to look deep into my soul. Blood dripped from the





JESUS DIED FOR ME.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. — John 1:29

horrible crown of thorns pressed on His head, but His mouth, all bruised and swollen, smiled at me.

I was shoved beneath the cross and told to carry it to Golgotha, just outside Jerusalem. Thoughts raced through my mind as I struggled under the load. Who was this Man? What had He done?

When we arrived, the soldiers pushed me aside. Two other men were being raised on crosses. I looked up at them. They were hardened and angry looking. Turning back, I shuddered as I watched them nail this Man to the cross I had just carried. Then they lifted Him up and set His cross into the hole between the other two crosses.

Standing off to the side a bit, I heard Him say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Who was this Man who could say, "Forgive them," even though in pain and suffering, and knowing the worst was yet to come?

I asked several people standing there. One said he didn't know of anything terrible He had done, but he knew that His name was Jesus, and that He had healed his brother who was a leper. I asked another and he shrugged his shoulders, saying, "How should I know? The priests said, 'He thinks that He is the Son of God.'"

As the time wore on, I found myself unable to leave the gruesome scene. I heard the people screaming at Jesus, yelling, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." Then a strange thing happened. The sky began to grow darker and darker. Soon it was as dark as night, even though it was only a little after noon. Fear and tension gripped the crowd. What was happening? I heard one of the men on the cross next to Jesus say, "We deserve to die for what we did wrong, but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then Jesus cried out, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Suddenly, I fell to the earth as the ground shook terribly. The rocks broke apart and tumbled down the sides of the hill. Dust filled the air. The noise and screams of everyone was awful!

After what seemed an eternity, it grew calm. I looked at the centurion who stood gazing up at Jesus hanging dead on the cross. He wiped the sweat and dust from his face and said, "Truly this was the Son of God."

I can tell you, I will never forget that day. The scene on that dark hillside is as vivid in my memory as though it happened just yesterday. To think that I saw Him die, that I helped

carry the cross which brought death to God's own Son!

The story of the Crucifixion, as Simon of Cyrene might have told it (Matthew 27:21), brings a question to our minds. Why did Jesus leave all the beauty and happiness and love in Heaven to come to earth to hang on the cross and suffer so terribly?

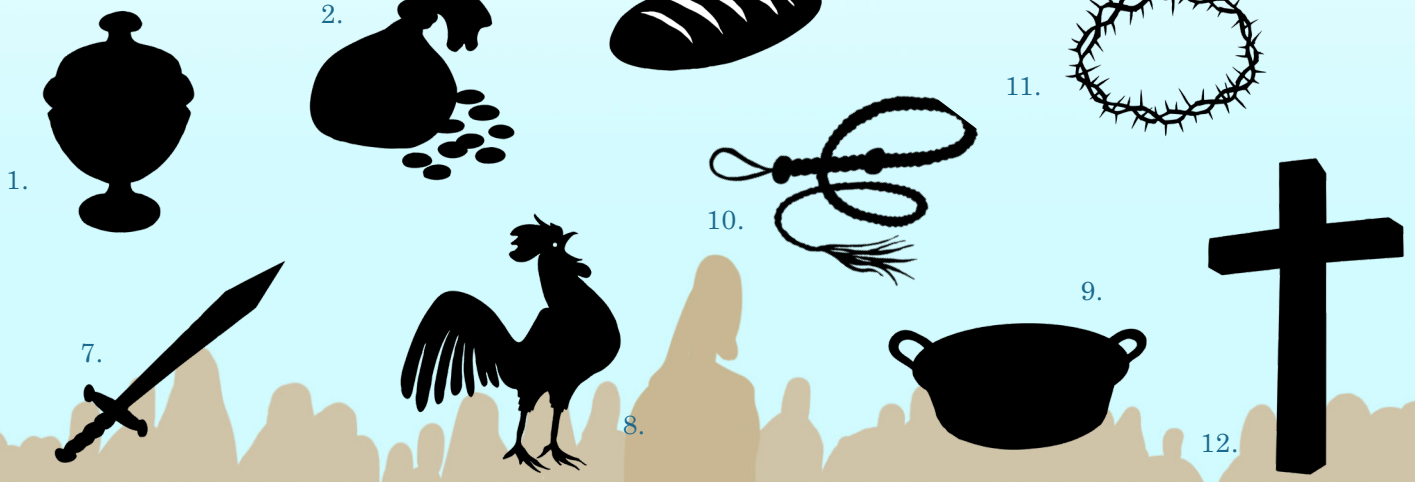
He did it so we could come to the Father and ask forgiveness for our sins. Because of Jesus' shed Blood, God could then say, "You are forgiven."

It wasn't just chance that Christ died on the eve of the Passover. He was the perfect Lamb of God. Only when His Blood is applied to our hearts can we be set free from sin and eternal death.

He is a wonderful Savior. He loves us so much that He went through all the pain and suffering so we could be called the sons of God and live with Him in happiness and joy, now and throughout all eternity.

JESUS' LAST STEPS

Read Matthew 26 and 27 to learn some things that happened to Jesus in His last days. The objects on this page are mentioned in the Scriptures. On the lines below, name each item and tell why it was important. References from the Scriptures are given to help you.



1. (Matthew 26:6-13) _____
2. (Matthew 26:14-16) _____
3. (Matthew 26:17) _____
4. (Matthew 26:30) _____
5. (Matthew 26:36-46) _____
6. (Matthew 26:47-50) _____
7. (Matthew 26:51-54) _____
8. (Matthew 26:69-74) _____
9. (Matthew 27:24) _____
10. (Matthew 27:26) _____
11. (Matthew 27:29) _____
12. (Matthew 27:35-37) _____