

New Caney
Church of Christ

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Assembly Times

Sundays

Bible Class 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

Wednesdays

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Retaining The Standard
Of Sound Doctrine

Evangelist: Charles Willis
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- Know Your Bible: Answers
1. Julius (Acts 27:1–3)

2. Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:8)

3. Amasa (2 Samuel 17:25)

4. Paul (Acts 23:16–22)

This Week's Assignments & Events			
Sunday Worship		Sunday Afternoons	
Greeter:	Corwin Richardson	Aug 2	Nothing
Announcements:	Tyler Blazek		
Encouragement Talk:	Kevin Buckner	Aug 9	Nothing
Opening Prayer:	Jordan Thomas		
Scripture Reading:	Kemarui Bluitt	Aug 16	3PM Devotionals
	Luke 23:20–25		
Song Leader:	Arturo Orozco		
Table Talk:	John Franks	Aug 23	3PM Visitation Day
Contribution:	John Van Baale		
Helper:	Gobi Warner		
Fruit of Vine:	Gary Tuttle		
Helper:	Leighton Daniels		
Helper:	Paul Hainline		
Closing Prayer:	Kyle Crain		
		Wednesday Evening	
		Song Leader:	Kevin Buckner
		Speaker:	John Van Baale



Standing Firm

“Take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist
in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm”
Ephesians 6:13

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The Mocking Of The Messiah

For those of us who were adults in the 70’s and 80’s, the name Ted Bundy conjures up a variety of thoughts—none of which are pleasant. As a serial kidnapper and killer, the accounts of his crimes turn even the strongest of stomachs. After years of eluding law enforcement, he was eventually captured in Florida in 1978 and convicted for the murders of 3 young women. Living in Florida at the time, I remember his capture and conviction being prominent stories in the local news. Sentenced to death, the appeals would last for years before Bundy was finally executed in Florida’s electric chair in January, 1989.

By 1989 I was now living in Indiana and vividly recall the images televised on the network news. Outside the prison gathered the typical group of folks protesting the death penalty, some carrying signs proclaiming it was unbiblical. Though that contingent bothered me, there was another group I found even more troubling. In a field across the road from the prison were gathered more than 2000, some of whom professing a connection to Jesus. These had come for a very different reason. They sang, danced, and even set off fireworks at the moment of Bundy’s execution. As the hearse carried the body away from the prison, these same revelers cheered loudly in celebration.

Did Ted Bundy deserve to die for his crimes? I believe he did. Does the Bible teach that the government has the authority to carry out such executions? I’m convinced it does (Romans 13:4). Was I repulsed by the actions of those who chose to revel in his death? Yes, yes I was. Justice was being served. There was no cause to celebrate the end of Bundy’s life in such an egregious manner—surely death was enough.

If I was appalled by such actions toward a guilty man, surely there must be even greater disgust when similar brutality is demonstrated toward a man who is totally innocent.

Though there were no TV cameras present to capture the images, the gospels reveal

such a scene centuries earlier at a place called Golgotha. After years of hatred and hostility, the religious leaders had finally achieved their objective. They were about to eliminate this itinerant rabbi they believed to pose such a threat to their power and position. Under compulsion, the Roman governor sentenced Jesus of Nazareth to die by crucifixion. When we consider the barbarity and the horrible agony involved, how could anyone ever think of it as a time for mockery? But for many, the cross was a joke and Jesus would be the recipient of their derision. Having stripped Him of His freedom, His rights, His friends and His clothing, they now seek to strip the sinless Jesus of any dignity that remained.

The writers of these accounts say very little about the crucifixion itself. In fact, their extreme restraint is evidenced in just four English words: *“There they crucified Him”* (Luke 23:33). But while they say nothing specific about the procedure itself, since the original readers were well acquainted with the particulars, they reveal much regarding the attitudes of those gathered. Achieving their objective of getting rid of Jesus (after all, no one survived crucifixion) and witnessing such horrible anguish (this was not a “humane” death by electrocution or lethal injection), one might think they would simply leave Jesus to die. But in Luke 23:33–39 we read of four groups for whom death was not enough. Instead, they are intent on inflicting even greater suffering.

While Luke 23:35 tells us that people stood by, looking on, both Matthew and Mark reveal even the passers-by taunted Jesus, *“Save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross!”* (Matthew 27:40). Some of these may well have been healed by Jesus at some point during His ministry or eaten from the few loaves and a couple of fish miraculously provided along the shore of Galilee. No doubt many had heard Him preach and witnessed His compassion. Now as they watch Him fight for every breath, they repay His kindness with sarcasm and scorn.

In the same verse we also read of the religious leaders *“sneering at Him”* with a similar declaration: *“He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One.”* They deride Him by way of two Messianic titles, relishing the fact they have

***Know
Your
Bible***

Military

1. What Roman soldier treated Paul kindly on his voyage to Rome?
2. What foreign king had Nebuzaradan as commander of his troops?
3. Who was commander of the rebel army when Absalom rebelled against David?
4. Who had a nephew that informed the Roman soldiers of a plot to kill a prisoner?

Answers On Back

Sunday Sermon

Point your phone camera at the square below, then click on the link to hear the sermon. Recordings will change mid-week.



vanquished, what is in their minds, a phony king!

As Luke’s account continues the soldiers join in (23:36–38). Though they know little about Jewish theology, they follow the same line of merciless insults, taunting Him to *“save Himself.”* There’s the added component of their offers of sour wine as they pretend to “serve” Him as mock courtiers for Israel’s alleged “monarch.”

Finally, there are the thieves who have been crucified with Him (Luke 23:39). Both Matthew and Mark inform us that initially both men were casting similar insults. Even those on the lowest rung of human society, those who were in the process of dying themselves, play the same cruel game of ridicule.

Considering the brutal nature of crucifixion, one might think that such a horrific death was enough. Instead, those at the cross seek to add insult to injury as they treat Him with as much disdain as they could muster. In their minds it was utterly absurd that this man would claim to be a king! Yet, this was blasphemy without equal, evil in its very lowest form as they mock deity, ridiculing the very Son of God with one sarcastic taunt after another. They couldn’t have done more to offend a righteous God. After all, Jesus was the only truly innocent person present! If there was ever a time when divine justice was demanded, surely this was it!

Yet, judgment falls, not on them, but on Jesus. The wrath that should have crushed them instead crushes Him. He willingly bears both their insults—and their sin! What kind of cruelty would be required to witness a fellow human experiencing such incredible agony, yet delightfully engage in such merciless ridicule? And what kind of love would it demand to refuse their scornful suggestions “Save Yourself!” in order to be able to save them instead?

Had I been present, would my voice have been heard among the mockers? Would those same vicious taunts fall from my lips? The mere thought of such brutality sickens me. Surely I wouldn’t have done that! Or would I? That question will never be answered. What I can know is that He endured the agony of the cross and the anguish of their taunts so He could save me—and anyone else who would bow in humble submission to God’s crucified King.

Terry Slack, *Focus Magazine*, Sept. 15, 2014

Addendum: *“For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.”* (Hebrews 6:4–6) - Charles Willis