

The Reactions To The Cross

Matthew 27:45-54

1. The Sky Darkened – Judgment Approached (45; cf. Heb 9:27)

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

2. The Savior Cried Out – Judgment Executed (46, 50; cf. 2 Cor 5:21; Ps 22; Jn 19:30; Lk 23:46)

⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ... ⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

3. The Crowd Mocked – Judgment Ignored (47-49; cf. Mark 15:35-36; Lk 23:48)

⁴⁷ And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." ⁴⁸ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him."

4. The Veil Tore – God Accessed (51a; cf. Heb 4:16; 9:7-8, 11-12)

^{51a} And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

5. The Earth Shook – Creation Responded (51b; cf. Heb 12:25-27)

^{51b} And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

6. The Tombs Opened – Believers Resurrected (52-53)

⁵² The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, ⁵³ and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

7. The Centurion Believed – Faith Saved (54; cf. Mk 15:39; Lk 23:47)

⁵⁴ When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Conclusion: How will you react to the cross? (1 Cor 15:3-4)

- Like the crowd, with mocking, apathy or disbelief?
- Like the centurion, fear God's judgment and believe in the saving work of Christ on the cross?
- Like the resurrected, *who lived, and died, now tell His story?*

Discussion:

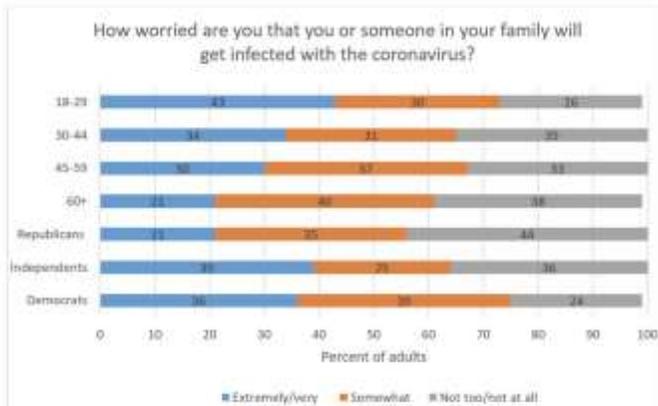
- Before you trusted Christ as Savior, what was your attitude or reaction towards Christ?
- Upon salvation, how did you become convinced of the reality of Christ's death on the cross?
- Why did so many people who saw Christ in person, were ministered to by Him, witnessed his miracles and even saw his crucifixion, not believe in Christ?
- What does the cross mean to you today?

The Reactions To The Cross

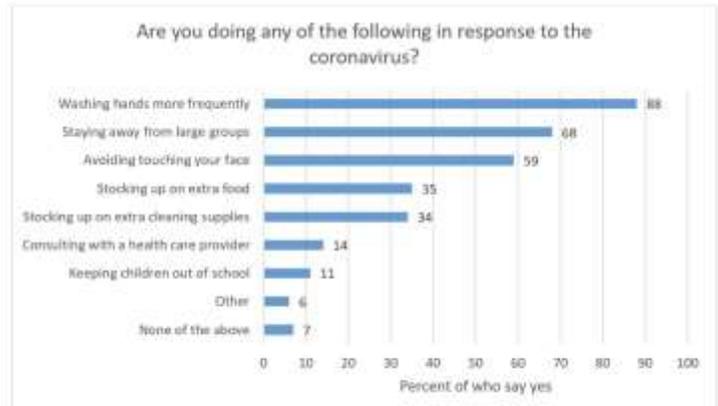
Matthew 27:45-54

Introduction:

1. The NORC from the University of Chicago published American reactions to the Covid19 virus:



Question: How worried are you about you or someone in your family being infected with the coronavirus?
Source: AP-NORC Poll conducted March 12-16, 2020, with 1,003 adults.

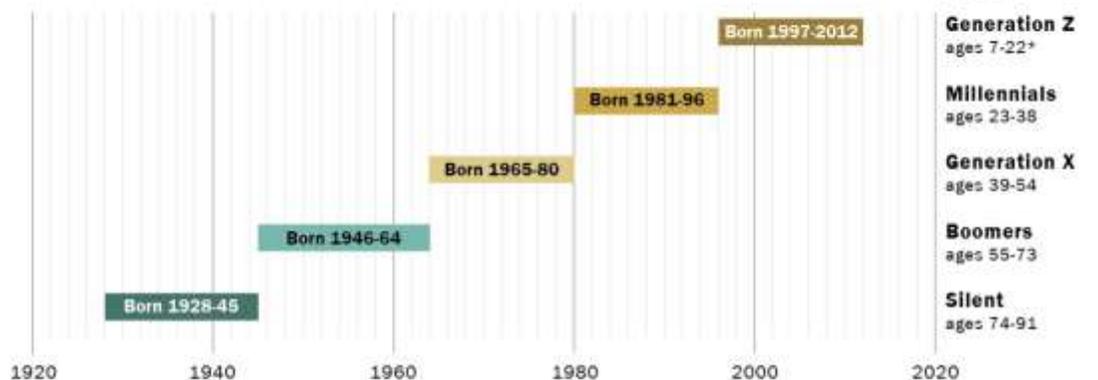


Question: Which of the following measures, if any, are you taking in response to the coronavirus?
Source: AP-NORC Poll conducted March 12-16, 2020, with 1,003 adults.

<https://www.norc.org/NewsEventsPublications/PressReleases/Pages/worries-about-the-coronavirus-increase.aspx>

2. Generations are defined by major events

The generations defined



*No chronological endpoint has been set for this group. For this analysis, Generation Z is defined as those ages 7 to 22 in 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>

- Generations are shaped by key events:
 - Greatest Generation (1910-1928) were born into the WW I era (1914-1918)
 - Silent Generation followed the Great Depression into the war era (1929-1945)
 - Baby Boomers followed the costly victory after World War II (1946-1963)
 - Generation X followed Kennedy's assassination and were shaped by the computer and internet era (1964-1981)
 - Millennials (1982-2004) will usher in the new Millennium
 - Generation Z followed 9/11 (in 2001)
 - My wife wonders if this next generation will be called the **Coronials**

3. Reactions to World Events

- Whether we lived through the Protestant Reformation, Lincoln’s assassination, Kennedy’s assassination, Neil Armstrong on the moon, 9/11 or Covid 19, what about the reaction to the world’s greatest historical event ever? The cross.

HOW WOULD WE REACT TO THE CROSS?

- Our eternity is determined by how we react to the cross

Scripture Reading

Matthew 27:45-54

⁴⁵Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ⁴⁷And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” ⁴⁸And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” ⁵⁰And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

⁵¹And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵²The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, ⁵³and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

Proposition: We will look at 7 reactions to the cross in Mt 27

1. The Sky Darkened – Judgment Approached (Mt 27:45)

⁴⁵Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

Event	Matthew 27:45	Mark 15:33	Luke 23:44-45a
Universal Darkness	⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.	³³ Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.	⁴⁴ Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. ^{45a} Then the sun was darkened,

- 6th hour = noon (days start at 6 am - 0 hour)
- until 3 pm
- **What happened to the light of the sun in the middle of the day?**
 - The sun was at it’s height from noon to 3 pm
 - A critic suggested an eclipse
 - But astronomical records point out the moon was far away from the path of the sun on that day
 - Passover time was during full moon (lunar calendar)

- Luke used the word *ekleipoi* to describe the darkness, and we do get our word eclipse from this - but it literally means failing or ceasing to exist – there was no eclipse of the sun by the moon
- **Q:** Who ever heard of a 3 hour eclipse anyway?
- God could bring miraculous light and darkness – He controls the sun
- Plague of Darkness from Locust (Ex 10)

Exodus 10:14-15 ¹⁴And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. *They were* very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. ¹⁵For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened

- Sun stood still for 24 hours (Josh 10)

Joshua 10:12-14 ¹²Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." ¹³So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge upon their enemies. *Is this not written in the Book of Jasher?* So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day. ¹⁴And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

- Earth's rotation reversed (2 Kings 20)
 - Isaiah told Hezekiah that the shadow would go back 10 degrees on the sundial

2 Kings 20:9-11 ⁹Then Isaiah said, "This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing which He has spoken: *shall* the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?" ¹⁰And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees." ¹¹So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.

- **How far did the darkness extend?**

- Darkness fell upon the **land** (word used for earth)
- Luke indicates that it was worldwide: "over all the earth until the ninth hour."
- Some literature aside from the Scriptures that may give hint that it was worldwide darkness:
 - Origen (*Against Celsus*, 2.33) cited a Roman historian who mentioned this darkness
 - Tertullian noted that the pagans knew of the darkness of this day: "At the moment of Christ's death, the light departed from the sun and the land was

darkened at noonday, which wonder is related in your own annals and is preserved in your archives to this day." (*Apologeticum*, quoted by MacArthur, *The Murder of Jesus*, p. 228-229)

- Pilate had a report to Emperor Tiberius that assumed his knowledge of this darkness - even mentioning it from 12 noon - 3 pm

- **What is the purpose of the darkness?**

- The purpose is not clear, but the picture is
- Darkness is a sign of God's judgment on man's dark heart
- Amos & Zephaniah describe the day of judgment as a day of darkness and gloom
- The cross was the place of judgment of man's sin
- The people didn't pay attention to the darkened sky nor their darkened heart

Hebrews 9:27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,

- Judgment is pending for everyone after death

2. The Savior Cried Out – Judgment Executed (Mt 27:46, 50)

⁴⁶And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ... ⁵⁰And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

Divine Judgment	⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"	³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"	
Voluntary Death	⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.	³⁷ And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.	⁴⁶ And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last.

- **The Righteous Christ: Our Sins He Took**

2 Corinthians 5:21 ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- **The Holy Father: His Son He Forsook**

- Holy God must forsake sin
- *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani* - quoting Ps 22:1 in Aramaic

- **Significance of Cry:**

- 1) **Jesus knew all along what He was going to experience**

Read Ps 22:1,6-7,14-18

¹ My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? *Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?*

⁶ But I *am* a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people. ⁷ All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, ⁸ "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"

¹⁴ I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me.

¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.

¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet;

¹⁷ I can count all My bones. They look *and* stare at Me.

¹⁸ They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.

2) **Sense His agony of separation from that which had always been eternally united**

- God the Father & Son spent forever in eternity past together
- Death = separation
- Physical death – separation of soul from body
- Spiritual death – separation of soul from God

- Man is already spiritually dead without Christ

Ephesians 2:1 "dead in trespasses and sin"

- When man physically dies without Christ – spiritual death continues in hell

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 "everlasting destruction *from* the presence of the Lord"

Elizabeth Browning:

Yea, once Immanuel's orphaned cry his universe hath shaken.

It went up single, echoless, "My God, I am forsaken!"

It went up from the Holy's lips amid his lost creation,

That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation

Voluntary Death	⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.	³⁷ And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.	⁴⁶ And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last.
------------------------	--	---	---

- **Christ Did Not Die By Crucifixion, But He Gave Up His Life**
 - The crucifixion had more to do with the breaking of His body and shedding of blood, than it did in His death
 - The crucifixion limited His ability to breath – exhale
 - Yet mustered enough strength to shout loudly
 - Christ gave up His own life when He decided

Jn 19:30 "It is finished"

Luke 23:46 "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit."

- **Yielded** = *aphiemi* - letting go or send away by choice
- He willingly yielded to death, He willing gave in to the death man planned

3. The Crowd Mocked – Judgment Ignored (Mt 27:47-49; Mark 15:35-36; Lk 23:48)

⁴⁷And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." ⁴⁸And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him."

Public Mocking	⁴⁷ Some of those who stood there, when they heard <i>that</i> , said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" ⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled <i>it</i> with sour wine and put <i>it</i> on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."	³⁵ Some of those who stood by, when they heard <i>that</i> , said, "Look, He is calling for Elijah!" ³⁶ Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put <i>it</i> on a reed, and offered <i>it</i> to Him to drink, saying, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down."	⁴⁸ And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned.
-----------------------	--	---	--

Man's Response: One Gave Gall, The Others Had Gall (47-49)

- even with the miraculous darkness, man mocked
- one gave gall - give cheap wine - sour - highly diluted with water
 - thirst quencher - probably like All Sport (I'm a Gatorade guy myself)
 - *oxos* = vinegar
 - not sure if act of **mercy** or **mockery**
 - given to ease pain or prolong pain - had both effect
- but others mocked - referring to Elijah - because they heard Eli, Eli - not misunderstand - they intentionally mocked & changed words around
- Luke points to their return

4. The Veil Tore – God Accessed (51a)

^{51a}And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

Torn Veil	^{51a} And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.	³⁸ Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.	^{45b} and the veil of the temple was torn in two.
------------------	---	---	--

- This is God's reaction
- He is both grieving and welcoming

a. Tearing The Veil Showed The Heart Of The Griever

b. Tearing The Veil Was An Access For The Believer (Heb 4:16)

- temple - *naos* - refers to inner sanctuary, Holy of Holies where God dwelt
- thick veil - massive blue curtain, woven with ornate decorations
- God is giving His presence to all who would enter in the holiness of Christ
- no more need for Jewish sacrificial system of animals to gain access to God – gained through Christ
- Only High Priest had access to God before Christ

Hebrews 9:7-8 ⁷But into the second part the high priest *went* alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and *for* the people's sins *committed* in ignorance; ⁸the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.

- The temple is no longer significant
 - dramatic - temple full of worshipers for Passover Sacrifice
 - 3:00 pm - time of sacrifice - Jesus died when they killed a lamb and trumpet shout
 - Christ, the ultimate High Priest, gave the ultimate sacrifice

Hebrews 9:11-12 ¹¹But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹²Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

- God invites us to come before Him confidently

Hebrews 4:16 ¹⁶Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

5. The Earth Shook – Creation Responded (51b)

^{51b} And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

Shaken Earth	^{51b} And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.		
---------------------	---	--	--

Hebrews 12:25-27 ²⁵See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. ²⁶At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." ²⁷This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

6. The Tombs Opened – Believers Resurrected (52-53)

⁵²The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, ⁵³and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Resurrected Saints	⁵² The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, ⁵³ and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.		
---------------------------	--	--	--

- Not all the dead in the world were raised, but those who were believers - O.T. saints
- Many questions raised - aren't answered (suggested by Carson):
 - What kind of bodies did they have? probably resurrection bodies
 - Did they die again? - probably not - translated to heaven
 - Who saw them? - not said
 - If raised when Jesus die, but not appear until after resurrection, what we're they doing in the meantime? (they knew a good Shwarma place)
 - one scholar convincingly suggests that sentence should end at middle v. 52
 - the graves were opened - at time of death
 - later, at resurrection - bodies were raised and resurrected
 - Jesus, the Firstfruit of resurrection
 - remember - no punctuation in actual writing
- When Jesus Arose His Story They Told
 - didn't spread out until 3 days later when Jesus was resurrected
 - 1 Cor 15:20 - Jesus was first to be resurrected (Firstfruits of resurrection)
 - were a temporary witness of **victory over death**

7. The Centurion Believed – Faith Saved (Mt 27:54; Mk 15:39; Lk 23:47)

⁵⁴When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Centurion's Faith	⁵⁴ When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"	³⁹ So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"	⁴⁷ So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"
--------------------------	--	---	--

- Centurion – commander over 100 man unit
- The Roman Army (adapted from MacArthur, *The Murder Of Jesus*, p. 236)
- 25 Legions worldwide
- 1 Legion = 6,000 men
- Each legion divided into 10 Cohorts
- Cohort = 600 men
- Each cohort had 3 maniples
- Each maniple had 2 centuries
- Each century was commanded by a centurion

- **Matthew's indictment upon Jews who not believe - that a Gentile did**

Proper response:

- 1) **Fear** (awe) – *phobeo* - frightened of God's power, judgment and holiness
 - fear of God in light of our sinfulness
- 2) **Faith** - soldier believed
 - men disciples chickened out and fled

Conclusion: How will you react to the cross?

1. Like the crowd, with mocking, apathy or disbelief?
2. Like the centurion, fear God's judgment and believe in the saving work of Christ on the cross?
3. Like the resurrected, who lived, and died, now tell His story?

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures

Discussion:

1. Before you trusted Christ as Savior, what was your attitude or reaction towards Christ?
2. Upon salvation, how did you become convinced of the reality of Christ's death on the cross?
3. Why did so many people who saw Christ in person, were ministered to by Him, witnessed his miracles and even saw his crucifixion, not believe in Christ?
4. What does the cross mean to you today?