

Salvation Isn't Free – Matthew 27:36-44

1 of 2 pages

Cultural Context: Crucifixion was a style of execution that the Roman government reserved for criminals that were seen as a threat to the stability of the empire. It was designed to torture the individual physically and emotionally. It was also used to scare anyone connected to that individual into abandoning any attempts to attack the Roman government.

A person who does any of the following would've committed the crime of blasphemy during the time that Jesus lived:

- Cursing God
- Saying the proper name of God out loud
- Saying and/or acting like the rights and qualities of God are yours
- Treating something sacred like it is not sacred

Biblical Context:

- The Roman soldiers have just crucified Jesus and they have just divided his clothes amongst themselves

Going Deep:

1. List the kinds of things that Jesus has to endure while hanging on the cross for the sins of the whole world.

2. Why do you think the Roman soldiers put what Jesus was charged with over his head?

3. The word in verse 39 that describes how the first group addresses Jesus is the word for blaspheme in Hebrew. Do you think the groups of people who engage in this behavior

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2 of 2 pages

with Jesus would accept and/or acknowledge that they were committing blasphemy?
Why or why not?

4. Re-read verses 41-43. What, if anything, within those verses suggest that the religious leaders don't believe Jesus is the son of God?

5. Many of us were drawn into the faith by the catch phrase, "Salvation Is Free." Since some people don't value anything that's free, what's another way of summarizing the gift of salvation that was offered to us through Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross?

6. In order to fulfill his ministry of offering salvation to the world, Jesus had to give up stuff *and* submit to stuff that he could've avoided. What are some things that believers might have to give up and/or submit to in order to claim the gift of salvation Jesus offers?
