

MEN WHO MET THE MASTER

John Phillips



Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

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STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

It all happened so long ago! But Jesus, the Son of God, really did live down here on earth in a body of flesh and blood, just like ours. The people who crossed His path were real people with hopes and ambitions, passions, sorrows, shortcomings, and virtues—just like ours.

Since Jesus Christ was God in human flesh, it follows that to cross His path must have eternal consequences.

In this study, six men have been selected who had contact with the Lord Jesus in events connected with His death. What did these men do in this golden moment of opportunity? Well, some reacted against Him; others came out boldly for Him. And part of what they did and said is recorded for us that we might take to heart the lessons that they teach.

Your path, too, crosses the path of this same Jesus. So, go ahead! Study the brief sketches of these six men. Three of them were eternally blessed for their response to the Lord; the other three have had many centuries to regret their treatment of Him. As you study, ask yourself again and again, “What is *my* response to Jesus Christ?”

Lessons You Will Study

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Course Components

This course has two parts: this study course and the exam booklet.

How To Study

This study has six chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

Exams

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions. It is important that you read the Bible passages referenced as some questions may be based on the Bible text.

How Your Exams Are Graded

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the course where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.

1

THE DYING THIEF

Luke 23:32-43

32 There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. 35 And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God." 36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself." 38 And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." 43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

About nine o'clock in the morning they nailed an unnamed Jewish criminal to his cross. They placed the charge against him over his head and hung him up to die. But before the day was over he was saved—the first convert of Calvary.

Sometime between five and six o'clock that same afternoon, Roman soldiers came and broke his legs. This threw the weight of his tortured body onto his arms and ruptured his heart. He went into eternity—with God!

God forgave that unnamed man's sins the same way God forgives anyone else. He was not forgiven by going to church. The church was not yet formed when he died. He was not assured of eternity in heaven by reading his Bible, by trying hard to be good, or by living a blameless life. Baptism did not save him. He was saved simply by turning to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He Was a Dying Man

When we first see this Jew on the cross, he was close to death already. Each drop of blood that dripped from him made him weaker.

The nearer this man came to death the more he thought about his sin—and the fairness of his death sentence. “We receive the due reward of our deeds” he said to the other criminal crucified beside him. His public sins had been written down and nailed to the cross on which he was dying.

And what about the sins nobody knew about? What about his secret sins? What about the things he should have done, but did not do? “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law” (1 Corinthians 15:56).

He was a dying man—but then, we all are moving steadily towards death, too. We push that unpleasant thought from our minds. Like the ostrich, we bury our heads in the sand. Death is so chilling that we refuse to think about it. But the fact still remains—we will all die.

We are all dying for the simple reason that we are all sinners. We do not like to think about that, either, but it is a fact as certain as death. “The wages of sin is death,” says God (Romans 6:23), and that will not change even if we deny it or ignore it. This dying thief on the cross had been a sinner all his life, but facing death made him face his sin. He began to feel the sting of it.

He Was a Discerning Man

Look at him as he suffers on the cross, crazy with thirst and fear, cursing the pain and cursing Christ. Years before, Jesus had taught, “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” Jesus always practiced what He preached. As the Roman soldiers nailed Him to His cross,

He had asked His heavenly Father to forgive them. So, we can be sure that as this dying thief cursed Him, the Lord Jesus prayed for him.

But soon the curses stopped, and a new look began to creep into the condemned criminal's eyes. He began to *look* at Jesus. He looked into the face of the Son of God, a face beaten and bruised. He saw holiness and peace stamped upon that noble face. He lifted his eyes still higher and saw the ugly crown of thorns stuck deep into the bleeding head of Jesus. He lifted his eyes even higher and read the title the Romans had nailed to Jesus' cross: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." And the more he looked, the quieter he became.

Perhaps he remembered the teachings of his boyhood days. Perhaps words memorized as a boy came back: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed . . . You make His soul an offering for sin" (Isaiah 53:5, 10). Was this man Jesus the one whom the prophet Isaiah had talked about? Had he been referring to the Messiah's crucifixion? And what was it this dying criminal had learned as a boy about Moses lifting up a serpent? Oh yes, the dying Israelites had found life just by looking at the snake raised up high on a pole. Perhaps, if he were to look at Jesus . . . So, he began to look at Jesus until he saw Him in a new and wonderful light.

Then he began to *listen* to Jesus. He remembered how Jesus had said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." He listened, too, to what others were saying about Jesus, "He saved others, let Him save Himself." He heard the gospel from the enemies of Christ—and he believed!

He believed that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah of Israel. "Do you not even fear God?" he said to the other crucified thief, "seeing you are under the same condemnation?" He believed Jesus was innocent. Perhaps he believed He was sinless. "This man has done nothing wrong," he said. He believed Jesus could save him. "Lord, remember me," he cried. He believed Jesus was a King. "Remember me when You come into Your kingdom." He believed that the kingdom of Christ lay somewhere beyond death. And he believed he could have a share in it too!

So this unknown criminal believed—fully and completely. Surely his prayer must have fallen like sweet music on the ears of the dying Christ!

This thief did not have nearly as many chances to trust Christ as we do. He was not sitting in a soft seat in his home studying the gospel. He

did not have friends who prayed for his salvation. He did not have a single page of the New Testament. Instead, his body throbbed with pain. But he believed anyway because he looked and listened. When faced with life's final reality—death—he turned to Jesus and was saved.

He Was a Delivered Man

“Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). “Lord, remember me,” called this poor man, and the Lord heard him and saved him right there. Without anything except simple faith in Christ, God saved him. And in exactly the same way, God will save you also if you realize your need and call on Him in faith.

The dying thief was saved and sure of it. “Today you will be with Me in Paradise” was the Lord’s promise. “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

“My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought,
My sin, not in part but the whole;
Is nailed to His cross and I bear it no more!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, oh my soul!”

About 3 p.m., the Savior of sinners died. The Light of the World went out into the dark regions of death to light the way for that criminal, the first trophy of Christ’s death.

Between five and six o’clock that afternoon, cruel Roman hands viciously ended that thief’s agonies (John 19:31-34). But he was met on the other side of death by the Lord Jesus Himself. Nail-pierced hands reached for each other. The One whom the angels worship led that forgiven thief into Paradise.

But remember, *two* thieves were crucified with Christ. One was saved, to signal that we all have hope for heaven. But one was lost, a reminder that none of us should delay in making sure that heaven is our final destination. That lost one went from the presence of Christ to eternal separation from God.

To meet the Christ of Calvary face to face is to reach a crossroads in life. Which way will you go from Calvary? Will you believe in Christ? Will you call on the name of the Lord and be saved from your sin? Or will you turn your back on Him and depart from His presence forever? The choice is yours.

MEN WHO MET THE MASTER

EXAM BOOKLET AK '11 (1 UNIT) MMM

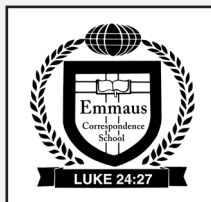
STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: _____

INSTRUCTOR



Exam developed by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue C. yellow
B. green D. orange

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

DO NOT PHOTOCOPY THESE EXAM PAGES

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CHAPTER 1 EXAM

THE DYING THIEF

EXAM GRADE

Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.

Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

1. The thief was crucified with Christ
 - A. inside a prison in Jerusalem
 - B. on a hill called Calvary
 - C. in the garbage dump outside Jerusalem
 - D. in a garden called Gethsemane_____

2. The dying thief was assured of eternal life by
 - A. going to church
 - B. reading his Bible
 - C. doing his best
 - D. turning to the Lord Jesus as his Savior_____

3. The Bible says the “sting of death is . . .”

A. the grave	C. the agony of dying
B. hell	D. sin

4. All people will eventually die because
 - A. all people are sinners
 - B. we do not have the right medicines yet
 - C. no one knows how to take care of their body correctly
 - D. people are not made to live forever_____

5. One of the thieves being crucified
 - A. at first mocked Christ but later prayed to Him
 - B. always had been a devoted follower of Jesus
 - C. asked one of the disciples to pray for him
 - D. was told by the Lord Jesus that he must wait awhile before he could go to Paradise_____

6. The dying thief heard the gospel preached by Christ's enemies. The words he heard were:
- A. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel."
 - B. "Behold how He loved him."
 - C. "This man receives sinners and eats with them."
 - D. "He saved others, let Him save Himself." _____
7. The dying thief admitted that the Lord Jesus was
- A. the promised Messiah
 - B. innocent
 - C. a King
 - D. all the above _____
8. The one thing the dying thief had was
- A. simple faith in the Lord Jesus
 - B. important friends in high places
 - C. a good reputation
 - D. plenty of money _____
9. When the thief put his trust in Christ as his Savior, he was sure he would go to heaven because Jesus said,
- A. "Your faith has saved you."
 - B. "This pain will last only a little while."
 - C. "This cross is Mine to bear."
 - D. "Today you will be with Me in Paradise." _____
10. When we consider the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus, we read that
- A. both thieves were saved
 - B. one thief was saved, the other was lost
 - C. Christ only saves people who are good
 - D. all people will one day be saved _____

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What basic lesson from the experience of the dying thief applies most to you?
