

## What Did They See?

*And sitting down they watched him there;*

*Matthew 27:36*

When the Lord Jesus graced this world by walking in the form of a man, He was viewed in different ways by each person with whom He interacted. Many were riveted by His words of hope, while others thought He was mad. His miracles caused some to proclaim Him to be the Son of God; but others said His miracles were powered by the devil. Jesus' words and deeds were meant to penetrate the hearts and minds of men so that they might see the fulfillment of their deepest need in Him. Whether accepting, indifferent, or rejecting of Jesus' words and actions, all would be accountable for what they witnessed.

Crucifixions were a common mode of Roman capital punishment, so it was probably not the first assignment for the soldiers on that fateful day. After mocking Him, crowning Him with thorns, piercing His hands and feet with nails, and gambling over His garment, they sat down to watch Him slowly die. Though they had performed the vilest of deeds that day, God was providing for them the greatest opportunity in allowing them to observe the Son of God as He was completing His eternal plan. This event was *foreordained before the foundation of the world*, and would open heaven's gates for all who would believe. This day would change the course of history, and would be the topic of countless books and songs. Lives that had been destined for misery and bondage in this current life as well as in their eternal life to come, could now have the opportunity to be miraculously changed for God's glory. The apex of God' plan was unfolding before their eyes. Consistent with how He had lived his earthly life, Jesus displayed love and forgiveness as His holy blood drained from His body. His words, *sharper than a two-edged sword*, penetrated their souls, doing that invisible work designed to bring spiritual life. After watching Him draw His last breath and experiencing the resulting earthquake, the soldiers were convinced and declared that *Truly this was the Son of God*.

As believers, it is important for us to take time to sit at the foot of the cross, and gazing up and looking into the eyes of the lover of our soul, hear Him say *Father forgive them*. For these words we will be eternally grateful. ~J. Ekis