

# Luke 23:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

## Analysis

The crucifixion: 'And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.' The location: 'Calvary' (Κρανίον, Kranion, Latin Calvaria, meaning skull), elsewhere called Golgotha (Aramaic for skull). The act: 'there they crucified him' (ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτόν, estaurōsan auton)—simple, stark statement of history's central event. Remarkably, Luke doesn't describe crucifixion's details (though readers knew its horrors). The criminals: 'malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left' (κακούργους, ὃν μὲν ἐκ δεξιῶν, ὃν δὲ ἐξ ἀριστερῶν, kakourgous, hon men ek dexiōn, hon de ex aristerōn). This fulfills Isaiah 53:12: 'he was numbered with the transgressors.' Jesus dies as a criminal, bearing the curse for our crimes.

## Historical Context

Crucifixion was horrific: victims were stripped naked, nailed or tied to a cross, and left to die slowly through asphyxiation, exposure, and shock. Death could take days. The victim's position between two criminals fulfilled prophecy while symbolizing human choice—two thieves, two responses, two destinies. One mocked (v. 39), one believed (v. 42). This pattern continues: humanity faces Jesus crucified and must choose. The brevity of Luke's crucifixion description ('they crucified him') suggests early Christians knew these details too well—many had seen crucifixions. Later readers must learn what first-century readers knew viscerally: the cross was

ultimate shame, suffering, and horror. Jesus endured this willingly for our salvation.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. What does the location 'Calvary' (place of a skull) symbolize about death and judgment?
2. How does Jesus being crucified between criminals fulfill prophecy and symbolize His mission?
3. Why do you think Luke describes the crucifixion so briefly without detailing its horrors?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ ὅτε ἀπῆλθον ἐπὶ τοὺς τόπου τοὺς καλούμενον  
And when they were come to which the place which is called  
G2532 G3753 G565 G1909 G3588 G5117 G3588 G2564

Κρανίον ἐκεῖ ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτὸν καὶ τοὺς κακούργοντ  
Calvary there they crucified him And which the malefactors  
G2898 G1563 G4717 G846 G2532 G3588 G2557

ὄν μὲν ἐξ δεξιῶν ὄν δὲ ἐξ ἀριστερῶν  
the other one on the right hand the other and on the left  
G3739 G3303 G1537 G1188 G3739 G1161 G1537 G710

## Additional Cross-References

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**Acts 13:29** (Parallel theme): And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

**Zechariah 12:10** (Parallel theme): And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

**John 18:32** (Parallel theme): That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

**Deuteronomy 21:23** (Parallel theme): His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

**Galatians 3:13** (Parallel theme): Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

**1 Peter 2:24** (Parallel theme): Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

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