

Matthew 27:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

Analysis

A man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross (ἡγάρευσαν, ēngareusan)—the technical term for Roman impressment, forcing civilians to perform labor (cf. Matthew 5:41). Jesus, weakened by scourging and blood loss, cannot carry the crossbeam the full distance.

Simon from Cyrene (North Africa, modern Libya) becomes the literal fulfillment of **take up his cross and follow me** (Matthew 16:24). Mark identifies him as **father of Alexander and Rufus** (Mark 15:21), suggesting his family became known Christians. The cross-bearer becomes a disciple.

Historical Context

Cyrene had a large Jewish population (Acts 2:10, 6:9). Simon was likely in Jerusalem for Passover. Roman soldiers had legal authority (angaria) to compel civilians to carry military equipment for one mile—Jesus taught submission to this (Matthew 5:41).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How did Simon's forced service become his salvation—from compulsion to conversion?
2. What does Jesus's physical inability to carry his cross reveal about the human cost of atonement?

Interlinear Text

Ἐξερχόμενοι δὲ εὗρον ἄνθρωπον Κυρηναῖον ὄνόματι
as they came out And they found a man of Cyrene by name
G1831 G1161 G2147 G444 G2956 G3686

Σίμωνα τοῦτον ἡγγάρευσαν ἵνα ἀρῃ τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ
Simon him they compelled to bear cross his
G4613 G5126 G29 G2443 G142 G3588 G4716 G846

Additional Cross-References

Mark 15:21 (Cross): And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

Matthew 16:24 (Cross): Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Luke 23:26 (Cross): And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

Acts 2:10 (Parallel theme): Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

Acts 6:9 (Parallel theme): Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

Acts 13:1 (Parallel theme): Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and

Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Acts 11:20 (Parallel theme): And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

John 19:17 (Cross): And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

1 Kings 21:13 (Parallel theme): And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

Leviticus 4:12 (Parallel theme): Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org