

Connect360: Accomplished

Mission

February 11, 2026

- *Lesson Eleven in the Connect360 unit "God Fulfills His Promises" focuses on Luke 23:32-46, 50-56*

As they nailed Jesus to the cross, he asked God to forgive them.

Jesus recognized that the people crucifying him did not have any idea of what they were doing.

Their sin had blinded them to the truth. They were operating on a natural, sinful instinct to preserve their power and position in this world.

Jesus had earlier described them this way: "For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes" (Matthew 13:15).

Jesus was also modeling one of his most difficult teachings: "... love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

In excruciating agony, Jesus' first words from the cross were a prayer of forgiveness, not condemnation. He interceded for his executioners, modeling love for enemies and the divine willingness to forgive.

The rulers and Roman soldiers began to mock Jesus, throwing his own words and actions in his face. This mockery was both cruel and ironic.

Jesus could have saved himself but chose not to, precisely because he was the Chosen One. His refusal to escape suffering was proof of his identity, not denial of it.

The sign placed above Jesus' head, "This is the King of the Jews," (Luke 23:38) was intended as mockery by Pilate, but inadvertently proclaimed a profound truth. Jesus is the King. He is not a king who conquers with swords, but one who reigns from a cross.

Luke described two things that point to the divine nature of Jesus' death on the cross.

The first was "darkness came over the whole land" and accompanied the final hours of Jesus' crucifixion.

The second was the tearing of the temple curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple area.

This curtain represented the separation of God from the population due to sin.

The darkness signified cosmic mourning and divine judgment. The torn curtain represented the removal of the barrier between God and humanity.

Jesus' death opened the way to direct access to God.

Jesus finally succumbed to death on the cross.

His final words reflected the completion of his divine mandate. Having finished his earthly mission, Jesus knew that he was returning to his heavenly Father.

He committed his Spirit to God, his Father. Jesus died not in defeat, but in surrender and trust.

His final words, drawn from Psalm 31:5, reflected a deep communion with his Father and a fulfillment of the Scriptures.

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