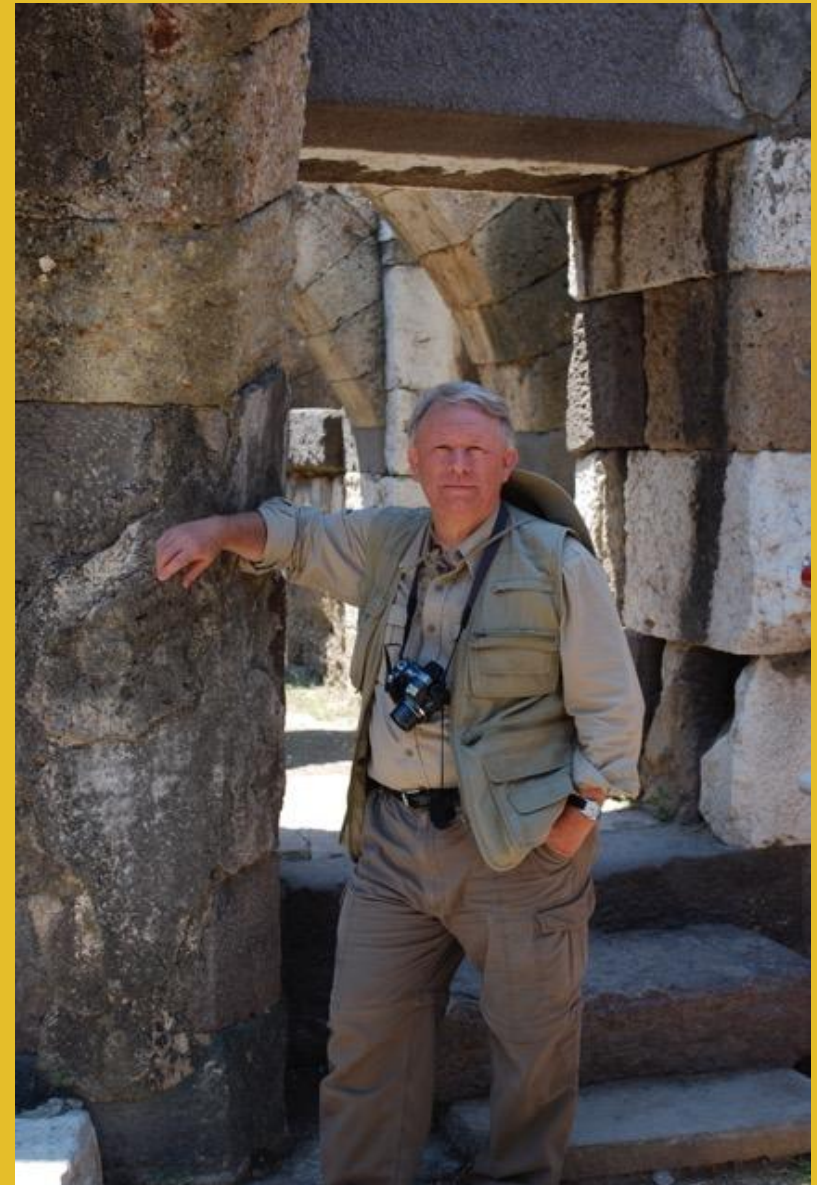
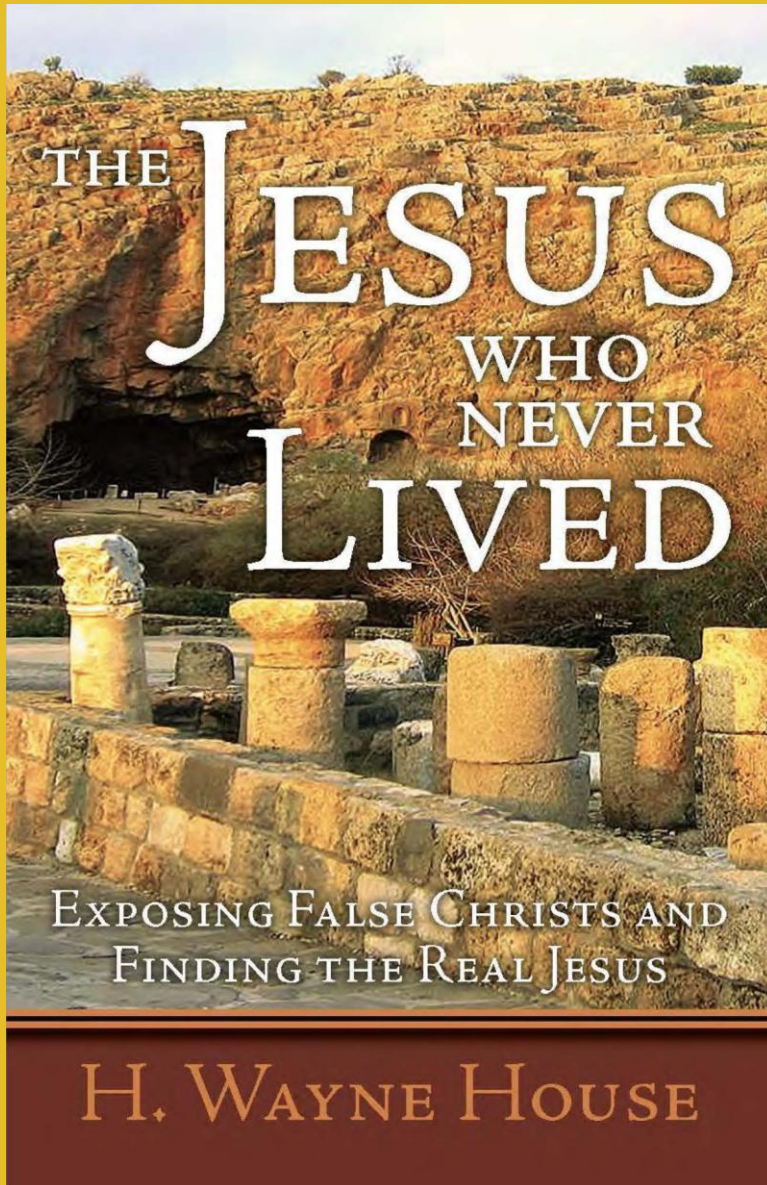


The Great
Misunderstanding
Matthew 27:39-43

THE GREAT MISUNDERSTANDING

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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Life is full of misinformation and misunderstanding. Most of us know times in which our efforts, motives, or words have been misunderstood. Rumors abound which may impugn our character and distort who we really are.
- B. We are not alone; the same happened to Jesus.
 - 1. Many people today, no less than those who lived two thousand years ago, misunderstand who Jesus is, what He taught, and why He came to this earth.
 - 2. In fact, misunderstanding is one of the recurring themes of the Gospels.
 - 3. His family misunderstood Him (Mark 3:21).
 - 4. His hometown misunderstood Him (Luke 4:22).
 - 5. His disciples often misunderstood Him (Luke 18:31–34).
 - 6. The crowds misunderstood Him (John 6:14–15).
 - 7. The religious leaders misunderstood Him (John 10:33).
 - 8. Even political rulers misunderstood Him (John 18:33–38).

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C. Modern misunderstandings of Jesus.

1. Some see Him only as the **BABY** lying in a manger in Bethlehem.
2. Others see Him merely as a **SOCIAL REFORMER** seeking justice for the oppressed.
3. Still others view Him as a **WEAK MYSTIC** calling people to inner peace and self-discovery.
4. Each of these views contains a measure of truth but falls far short of the biblical picture

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- D. The greatest misunderstanding occurred at Calvary.
1. As Jesus hung upon the cross, the crowd misunderstood who He was.
 2. They misunderstood what He taught.
 3. They misunderstood why He came.
 4. Ironically, the insults hurled at Jesus reveal the spiritual blindness of those who uttered them.
 5. What they saw as defeat was actually victory.
 6. What they viewed as weakness was divine power.
 7. What they believed disproved His claims actually fulfilled them.

Read Matthew 27:39–43.

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II. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHO JESUS WAS

- A. “If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross” (v. 40).
1. This accusation echoes Satan's temptation in Matthew 4:3, 6.
 2. Satan said, “If You are the Son of God.”
 3. The crowd repeats the same challenge.
 4. Sonship is not proven by miraculous displays but by obedience to the Father.
 5. Jesus refused Satan's temptation and now refuses the crowd's challenge.

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II. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHO JESUS WAS

B. “If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross” (v. 42).

1. The Jews expected a political Messiah.
2. After feeding the five thousand, they attempted to make Jesus king by force (John 6:14–15).
3. They wanted liberation from Rome.
4. Jesus came to provide liberation from sin.
5. His kingdom would not be established by military conquest but through sacrificial death

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II. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHO JESUS WAS

C. “He trusts in God; let God deliver Him now if He desires Him”
(v. 43).

1. The crowd questioned His messianic claims.
2. They assumed God's approval would prevent suffering.
3. Yet Scripture repeatedly teaches that God's servants often suffer before they are exalted.

D. Psalm 22:8 fulfilled.

1. The mockers unknowingly fulfilled prophecy.
2. Their words echo David's description of the suffering righteous one.
3. Their mockery became evidence of Christ's identity rather than a refutation of it.

II. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHO JESUS WAS

- E. Misunderstandings before the cross.
 - 1. Nazareth asked, “Is this not Joseph's son?” (Luke 4:22).
 - 2. His brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:5).
 - 3. The religious leaders accused Him of blasphemy (John 10:33).
 - 4. Many saw only His humanity and failed to recognize His deity.
 - 5. John 7:40–44 reveals the same confusion:
 - a. Some said, “This is the Prophet.”
 - b. Others said, “This is the Christ.”
 - c. Still others rejected Him because they thought He came from Galilee.

II. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHO JESUS WAS

F. Clarity finally came through faith.

1. Jesus asked, “Who do you say that I am?” (Matt. 16:15).
2. Peter answered:
 “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”
3. The crowd at Calvary represents the confusion of the world.
4. Peter's confession represents the faith of the church.

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III. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHAT JESUS TAUGHT

A. “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days—save Yourself” (v. 40).

1. Jesus never claimed He would destroy the Temple.

2. He said:

“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19).

3. John explains that He was speaking of His body.

4. The crowd misunderstood literal and spiritual meaning.

5. Ironically, they were participating in the fulfillment of His words.

6. Matthew 27:63 records that His enemies remembered His prediction of resurrection.

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III. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHAT JESUS TAUGHT

B. The crowd misunderstood Jesus' relationship to the Father.

1. They assumed God's Son would never suffer.
2. Peter made the same mistake (Matt. 16:21–23).
3. Peter wanted a Messiah without a cross.
4. Jesus understood that the cross was central to the Father's plan.

C. Nicodemus misunderstood Jesus.

1. Jesus said, “You must be born again” (John 3).
2. Nicodemus thought only in physical terms.
3. Jesus was speaking of spiritual rebirth.
4. One of Israel's greatest teachers failed to grasp Christ's meaning.

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III. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHAT JESUS TAUGHT

D. The Samaritan woman misunderstood Jesus.

1. Jesus offered “living water” (John 4).
2. She thought He was referring to water from Jacob's well.
3. Jesus was speaking of eternal life.

E. The disciples misunderstood Jesus.

1. Jesus warned about the leaven of the Pharisees (Matt. 16:5–12).
2. The disciples thought He was discussing bread.
3. Jesus was speaking about false teaching.

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III. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHAT JESUS TAUGHT

F. The crowds misunderstood Jesus.

1. They desired physical bread (John 6).
2. Jesus offered Himself as the Bread of Life.
3. Many turned away because they failed to understand His teaching.

G. John 7:33–36 provides another example.

1. Jesus said, “Where I am, you cannot come.”
2. The crowd wondered whether He was planning to travel among the Greeks.
3. They interpreted His words geographically.
4. Jesus was speaking of His return to the Father.
5. Once again people heard His words but missed His meaning.

H. Again and again people heard His words but failed to grasp His meaning.

1. They interpreted spiritual truth physically.
2. They heard earthly words while Jesus spoke heavenly realities.

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III. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHY JESUS CAME

A. The crowd assumed that if Jesus were truly God's Son, God would rescue Him immediately.

1. Yet Jesus came precisely to die.
2. Psalm 40:7–8 declares:
“Lo, I come ... to do Thy will, O God.”
3. Hebrews 10:7 applies these words to Christ.
4. The cross was not an accident.
5. The cross was God's eternal plan.

B. The Garden of Gethsemane reveals Christ's understanding of His mission.

1. “Not My will, but Yours be done.”
2. Jesus willingly embraced the Father's plan.
3. He could have called twelve legions of angels.
4. Instead, He submitted Himself to the cross.

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IV. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHY JESUS CAME

C. God did deliver Him.

1. Not immediately.
2. Not in the way His enemies expected.
3. On the third day God raised Him from the dead.
4. The resurrection became Heaven's answer to Calvary's mockery.
5. God snatched the victory of life from the jaws of death.

D. Others misunderstood Christ's mission.

1. Peter attempted to keep Him from the cross (Matt. 16:21–23).
2. Martha looked only to a future resurrection (John 11:24).
3. Jesus replied:
“I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25).
4. Even the disciples repeatedly failed to understand His predictions of death and resurrection (Luke 18:31–34).

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IV. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHY JESUS CAME

E. Others understood more than they realized.

1. Caiaphas declared:

“It is expedient that one man die for the people” (John 11:49–52).

2. He intended political expediency.

3. God intended prophetic truth.

4. Christ would indeed die for the nation and for the world.

F. The thieves on the cross.

1. Initially both joined in the mockery.

2. One remained hardened.

3. The other came to faith.

4. While the crowd misunderstood Christ, the repentant thief recognized the King.

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IV. MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHY JESUS CAME

G. Paul understood.

1. “I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).
2. “God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. 6:14).
3. Paul understood what the crowd missed.
4. The cross was not defeat.
5. The cross was God's triumph.

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V. CONCLUSION

- A. There have been many distortions and misunderstandings of who Jesus is, what He taught, and why He came to the earth.
 - 1. Some see Him only as a baby.
 - 2. Some see Him only as a teacher.
 - 3. Some see Him only as a reformer.
 - 4. Some see Him only as a prophet.
 - 5. The crowd saw Him as a failed Messiah.
 - 6. Scripture presents Him as the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior, and the risen Lord.

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III. CONCLUSION

B. How will we respond?

1. Will we respond like the crowd and remain in misunderstanding?
2. Will we respond like Peter and confess:
“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God”?
3. Will we respond like the repentant thief who saw the King beyond the cross?
4. Will we respond like Paul who gloried only in the cross?
5. Will we respond like the centurion who declared:
“Truly this was the Son of God” (Matt. 27:54)?

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III. CONCLUSION

- C. The greatest question is not whether others misunderstood Jesus.
1. Will we respond like the crowd and remain in misunderstanding?
 2. Will we respond like Peter and confess:
“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God”?
 3. Will we respond like the repentant thief who saw the King beyond the cross?
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