INTRO:

• We live in a world today that is very antagonistic to God and the things of the Bible.
  o EX: Answers in Genesis – Creation Museum in KY...huge success.
    ▪ Newest project – life sized replica of Noah’s Ark. There was a feature story on ABC’s “World News With Diane Sawyer, and article in the New York Times, and many other world-wide publications.
    ▪ With this notoriety came a lot of negative backlash. Much of it came from the secular world, but some of it even came from the “religious” crowd who were against promoting a literal belief in Genesis.
  
• Why? Because to believe literally in Genesis would mean that mankind would be held accountable to its Creator and then would have to take the remaining Bible literally.
• DEC: Most of religion today does not want to take a literal approach to God’s Word, especially to Jesus’ claim to be the only way to heaven.

• This was never more evident than at the crucifixion of Jesus, as we see in vs. 42 and the phrase, “let him now come down from the cross...”

• But if Jesus had not died on the cross, shed His precious blood for the remission of sins, and rose from the grave on the third day, then there would be no hope of salvation.

• The sad truth is that the world is filled with people who don’t want to recognize Jesus as dying on the cross for their sins.
• **PROP**: Are you one of the ones groups of people who wanted Jesus to come down from the cross?

• **TRANS**: We notice from the text 3 groups of people who wanted Jesus to come down from the Cross:

  i. **SINNERS IN THE CROWD** – 27:39-40

     a. **Speaking Evil** – reviled

        i. **blasphēmeō Thayer Definition:**

           1. to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate, blaspheme

           2. to be evil spoken of, reviled, railed at

        ii. They spoke all manner of evil and lies about Jesus as He hung there on the cross paying for their sins.

        iii. We live in a world, and amongst people who can’t wait to blaspheme the name of Jesus.

        iv. Whether it is taking the Lord’s name in vain out of anger, or making our precious Saviour the punch line of some crude joke on a television show – people are still reviling the name of Jesus.

        v. They try to “tear down” the name of Jesus because **Act 4:12**

           Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

     b. **Stirring Emotions** – wagging

        i. This was a display of their contempt and a public insult.

        ii. Job suffered the same response from his so-called friends, as he said in **Job 16:4** I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in
my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.

iii. David felt the same shame and penned this: Psalms 109:25 I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shaked their heads.

c. **Spewing Error**— saying

i. Here is a group of people who probably never read OT Scripture, or would have anything to do with anything else Jesus might have said, but are quoting Him now OUT OF CONTEXT because it helps their cause.

ii. Just like those today who like to quote (Judge not...God is love... etc) but have no clue on the context of those verses and what they really are saying.

iii. There are a lot of “Bible experts” out there who never have even read the Bible from cover to cover before.

d. **SINNERS IN THE CROWD** wanted Jesus to come down off the cross, but He didn’t!

II. **Scribes and the Chief Priest** — 27:41-43

a. **The Religious Are Often Copycats** — 27:41

i. These religious leaders were acting more like politicians than they were prophets or preachers.

ii. It is a sad truth that many preachers and teachers will change, or soften, what they believe in order to gain a larger crowd.

iii. Most do not proclaim what they believe based on conviction; but test the wind to see what is the popular and follow after that.

iv. Beware of those who claim to be preachers, yet will not stand against anything.
v. “If you won’t stand against anything, you will fall for everything.”

b. The Religious Are Often Compassionless – 27:42
   i. They knew of all the people Jesus helped, because they themselves often ignored them.
   ii. They did not believe in Jesus while He was amongst them healing the sick and lame; they wouldn’t have believed on Him had He came down from the cross.
   iii. The measure of a man’s religion can been seen in how they help others less fortunate than himself.
   iv. The religious leaders always had to have the attention focused on them, and thus had no time or desire to help others.
   v. When the spotlight must always be pointed on us, even while helping others, reveals a real deficiency in our character.

c. The Religious Are Often Convicted – 27:43
   i. By making the statement, “for he said, I am the Son of God,” these religious rulers reveal to us that secretly, they were under conviction.
   ii. They wanted Jesus to come down from the cross because they did not want to admit that they were sinners in need of Redeemer.
   iii. When under conviction, you have one of two ways to respond, as we see from the final group:

III. SENTENCED ON THE CROSSES – 27:44
   a. Two were Critical – 27:44

   FBC-W 2/13/11 AM
Matthew’s Gospel account clearly shows us that both of the thieves who were on the cross, suffering from the death penalty for their sins and transgressions against society.

Both of these men were just like the scribes and chief priest in that they were under conviction for their sin.

And when we go to Luke’s gospel account, we see that there are two ways to respond to conviction.

b. **1 was Calloused** – Luke 23:39

   i. This thief was looking for what just about everyone else is looking for – some sort of temporal relief from their current situation.

   ii. He was not seeking forgiveness of his sins, but just a pardoning from his punishment.

   iii. He was bitter at his lot in life – though it was well deserved.

   iv. Some people are so obstinate to their need of a saviour, even till the bitter end.

c. **1 was Convicted** – Luke 23:40-43

   i. This second thief shows us a couple of truths:

      1. It is never too late to turn to Christ as long as you have breath.

      2. When under conviction, we can choose to either get better or get bitter.

   ii. Too many people today are under conviction about their sin, yet too prideful, scared, or confused to turn to Christ.

CLOSE: Mtt 27:50, Lk 23:46 – HE DID NOT COME DOWN!

- M. Henry - He {Jesus} was, at His death, numbered amongst the transgressors, that we, at our death, might be numbered among the saints.
• We are all one of the thieves on one of the crosses because we are all sinners who deserve an eternity in Hell and the Lake of Fire.
  ○ I am glad that in June of 1999 it was not too late for me and I called out to Jesus in repentance and faith and He saved my soul!
• How about you? Which thief are you?