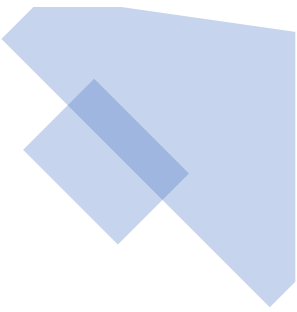


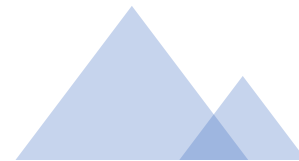


Simon of Cyrene
An African Compelled
to the Spotlight!
(Mark 15:21-24)



Observations

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- The lesson today is about a man who was “forced” to be famous
 - This one incident in his life connects him with the story of Jesus’ crucifixion around the world
 - History is replete with this truth: Good deeds don’t have to be, “Voluminous to be Valuable”
 - To respond appropriately at a certain intersection in a person’s life may be all they need to positively change their life forever!

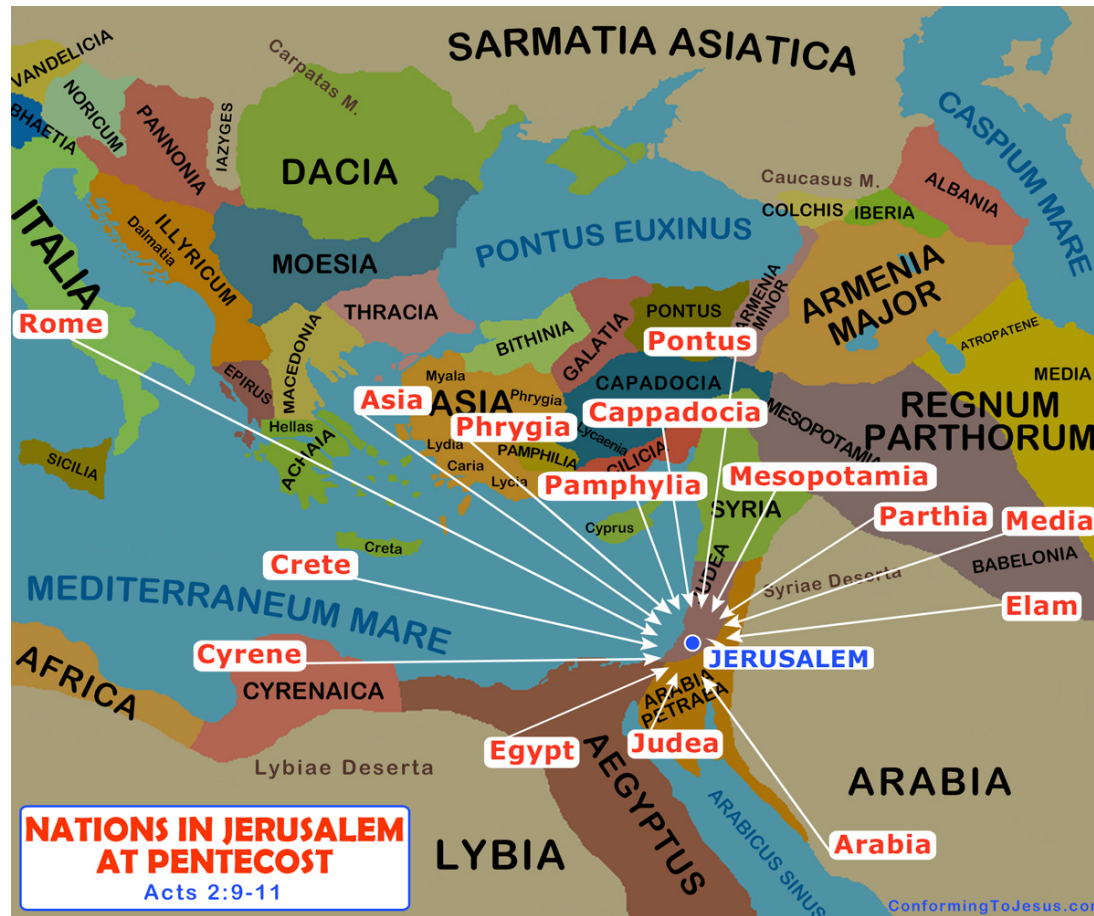




This Simon
Was From
Africa!

- **Cyrene was one of the largest cities in Libya, located in North Africa (800 miles to Jerusalem, or approx. 32 days)**
- **Simon was either an African Jew or a proselyte—a foreigner, converted to Judaism**
- **On the famous “Day of Pentecost” in Acts 2, Cyrene is listed as one of the places from which people had come to observe the celebration**

About 800 Miles From Cyrene to Jerusalem



#1 Simon Was Compelled to Bear the Cross!

- The Roman Soldiers had the right to compel a civilian to help them to carry out their tasks
- Jesus used “compel” in the Sermon on the Mount this way:
“And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain.” Matthew 5:41
- The scriptures don’t say why Simon of Cyrene was chosen
Jews came for 3 Feasts (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacle)
We know he hadn’t come to Jerusalem to have his plans to worship interrupted by a prisoner’s procession to a crucifixion
Jesus’ death should interrupt our plans; Galatians 2:20
The usual scenario in movies is that Jesus was weak (had already been scourged), and fell while carrying the cross; so Simon from Cyrene was compelled by the soldiers to help Him

Just As Compelling Would Have Been the Eyes of Jesus When He Looked at Simon!

- Jesus had the power, with His eyes, to move the hearts of men
- Just hours before the crucifixion, Jesus' eyes had moved another Simon, Simon Peter, to tears of shame and sorrow
- Remember in Luke 22:59-61, when Peter had denied the Lord twice: *About an hour later, another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with Him, for He is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him And he went out and wept bitterly."*

- It could have been that Simon of Cyrene was also compelled to cross-bear by, “a look of love” that drew out his compassion, when Jesus “looked at him!”
- The sensitivity of our consciences to God and His word should prompt the right actions. *“Godly sorrow for sin leads to repentance while worldly sorrow leads to spiritual death”* 2 Cor. 7:10
- Christians, beware of the “seared-conscience mentality” 1 Timothy 4:1-2 (a sign of apostasy)



Our Agreement to Water Baptism is Validated By Our Conscience; 1 Peter 3:21

“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

- My conscience has satisfied God’s will when I submit my will to water baptism (there is a peace within when satisfying God)
- In that act I become like Him; Romans 6:4

“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.”

#2 Bearing Jesus' Literal Cross Changed Simon of Cyrene's Life

- Listen to what Mark says in our lesson text for today as he pens the story of the crucifixion in Mark 15:21

"A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross."

- Mark who wrote this gospel, was Barnabas' cousin and traveled with Paul on his missions to the gentiles, Acts 12:25





- **Mark, who wrote his gospel for a gentile audience, identifies Simon of Cyrene to the readers as the father of two prominent Christian's sons that they knew. Why would he do that?**
- **There would be no point to name them, using only their first names, unless they were already known by the readers**

The Sons of Simon of Cyrene Were Well Known Christians in Rome

- Paul, in writing to the Roman church mentions Simon's family:

“Greet Rufus, chosen of the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me too.” Romans 16:13

- So, we start with Simon, probably reluctantly carrying the literal cross of Jesus, and we end with his wife and two sons bearing the spiritual cross of Jesus Christ
- His embarrassment led to his enlistment
- His compassion led to his commitment
- His sympathy led to his salvation and the spiritual success of his family

#3 Simon's Experience Was Recorded for a Purpose

- This African man's story is small in length in the Bible; but it teaches us some important lessons
- The expression we have today of, "that must be their cross to bear," comes across as something uncomfortable in life that we just have to "deal with!"
- Jesus' lesson on cross-bearing is different: Matthew 16:24

"If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake will find it."

Cross Bearing

- When you decide to follow Jesus, you'll be picking up problems that you otherwise wouldn't have (like Simon of Cyrene). But to spiritually convert his family was worth it.
- When you decide to follow Jesus, you may lose your job or your friends because you publicly object to what goes on.
- Saying, "No," to selfishness, greed, and lust is Cross Bearing
- When you decide to follow Jesus, people may act toward you as they did toward Him, and you identify with His sufferings

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:11-12

The Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Repent of Sins

Acts 17:30

Confess Christ

Acts 8:36

Be Baptized

Acts 8:38

