

Shadows In the Bible

Simon of Cyrene

Sometimes the Bible has several people with the same name. There are several Mary's in the gospels. We can read about a few James. It can get confusing because the name Simon in one part of the gospels is actually another man called Peter by Jesus. So, if I want to talk about Simon of Cyrene, I must be careful.

Further to this is who this shadowy man was. I call him a shadow just because he enters and exits the scene in one verse only. Yet, he is fortunate or unfortunate to receive the duty of helping the Lord Jesus to the cross. Who wants that distinction? All we really know about this Simon is that he was in the crowd that was watching Jesus parade to the cross. He was picked because he was there. We could speculate on the reasons but we just don't know.

It's easy to go down rabbit trails. Simon of Cyrene could be a colored man because of two points. In Mark, Simon is said to be the father of Alexander and Rufus. Clearly Mark related that information to the readers on purpose. In Romans 16 a Rufus is mentioned. In Acts 13 a man from Cyrene named Simon is called from Niger. Is this the same Simon and his skin colored? Is Rufus in Acts 16 Simon of Cyrene's son? So many rabbit trails without much data to support it.

All we really have is two choices. The first three gospels are called synoptic because they share most of the same story. John is set aside as somewhat different. Matthew, Mark, and Luke basically give us the same line. Simon of Cyrene was picked from the crowd to carry the cross for Jesus. Jesus was beaten and probably bleeding and weak. We are never told when Simon put the cross down or what became of him. I suspect he high tailed it out of there.

Simon of Cyrene is a famous biblical character. Yet, he only gets one verse. In John he is not even mentioned. It's a shadow figure in a passing moment. Did he even know who Jesus was? To some, he probably had one of the greatest honors to bear the cross for Jesus. How far did he have to haul that thing? Did he stay to watch? Was he part of the other mentioned Simons? We can speculate because it's fun but we just don't know who this shadowy figure really was but Simon of Cyrene does.