

BIBLE READING DAY 47, THURSDAY: APRIL 14

At the Cross

Matthew 27:39–54; Mark 15:22–37; Luke 23:34–49; John 19:17–37

They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he refused it. It was the third hour when they nailed him to his cross.

“Father, forgive them,” said Jesus, “for they do not understand what they are doing.”

They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. It was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews’; instead, write ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’”

“What I have written, I have written,” answered Pilate.

When the soldiers had nailed Jesus to the cross, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, a part for each soldier. But his tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. Therefore, they said one to another, “Let us not tear it, but let us draw lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was in fulfillment of the scripture,

They parted my garments among them and cast lots for my raiment.

Those who passed by reviled him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and build it again in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!”

In the same manner the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, “He saved others, but he cannot save himself! He is the King of Israel! Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusts in God; let God now deliver him, if he cares for him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God!’”

The soldiers also mocked him, coming up to him and offering him vinegar, and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!”

One of the criminals hanging there reviled him, saying, “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

But the other, rebuking him, said, “Don’t you even fear God—you who are receiving the same punishment? And we rightly so, for we are receiving a proper reward for what we did; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

“I tell you truly,” said Jesus, “today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing close by, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” (that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”) Some of the bystanders, hearing this, said, “This fellow is calling Elijah.”

Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said, “I thirst!”

Then one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with vinegar, stuck it on a reed, and held it up to him to drink. But the rest said, “Wait! Let us see whether Elijah will come to save him!”

When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished! Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." And he bowed his head and died.

Behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, rocks split asunder, and tombs were opened; and after the resurrection of Jesus, many saints who had fallen asleep in death rose and came forth from the tombs and went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those with him keeping guard over Jesus saw the earthquake and all that took place, they were filled with fear and exclaimed, "This man really was God's Son!"

All the crowd who had gathered to see the spectacle, when they saw what happened, returned home beating their breasts. And Jesus's friends, and the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance and saw these things.

Because it was the Preparation Day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate to have their legs broken and have them taken away. So, the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. These things took place in fulfillment of the scripture,

Not a bone of him shall be broken.

And again, another scripture says,

They shall look on him whom they pierced.

At the Tomb, Matthew 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50; John 19:38-41

Now when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was a disciple of Jesus and was looking for the coming of the kingdom of God. He was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man, and had not consented to their decision and action. He gathered courage and went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate wondered whether Jesus were already dead and called the centurion and asked him how long he had been dead. After learning from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph.

Joseph then came and took away his body. Nicodemus, who at first had come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes—about a hundred pounds' weight. They took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen winding cloths with the spices, according to the burial custom of the Jews, and laid it in Joseph's own new tomb which he had cut in the rock, in which no one had as yet been laid, and rolled a great stone against the door of the tomb and departed. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus, saw where he was laid.

On the next day, following the Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate saying, "Sir, we remember that while he was still alive, that impostor said, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore, command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first."

"You shall have a guard," said Pilate. "Go make it as secure as you can." And they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and stationing a guard of soldiers.

Approximate Timeline of Jesus's Public Ministry														
EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	FIRST PASS-OVER	SUMMER	FIRST BOOTHS	WINTER	SECOND PASS-OVER	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	FINAL PASS-OVER

DEVOTIONAL DAY 47 (THURSDAY APRIL 14)

Be prepared for What Only God Can Do!

Based on Matthew 27: 39-66; Mark 15:22-37, 42-47; Luke 23:34-39, 50; John 19:17-41

We make a lot of preparations in our lives. We prepare for the first day of school. We prepare for Christmas. When my LifeGroup goes on mission trips, we spend a lot of time preparing. We will spend months praying about the trip. We will gather supplies, make contacts, get vehicles ready and take care of personal home matters. Even with all these preparations, things don't always go as we planned. People drop out, locations get changed and activities must be revised. None of that stops God from working!

The same on the day of the crucifixion. We see in the Scriptures that there were several witnesses to the death of Jesus. They were not all affected the same way. Nor did they respond in the same way. We also read that people were making preparations. Jesus, hanging on the cross, still took the time to take care of His mother by giving the beloved disciple, John, that responsibility. The Jewish people recognized that it was Preparation Day and they had to get their households ready for the Sabbath. Some of the followers of Christ knew they had to take care of his body before the Sabbath. Joseph of Arimathea was even prepared by having a tomb available which he gave up for Christ. The Pharisees prepared to have guards watch the tomb so nobody could steal the body of Jesus.

With all that activity, the people weren't making preparations for the most important day yet – the Resurrection. They didn't know what God was doing nor what would be coming. They weren't making preparations to encounter the miraculous.

Can the same be said of us? As we approach Easter Sunday, what are we preparing for? Are we preparing to see God move and do what only He can do?

Father God, as we approach Resurrection Sunday, prepare our hearts to see the miraculous. Prepare our hearts to draw closer to You. Prepare us to have a spirit of worship and praise. And use us to share the message of Easter to those around us who have never heard.

--By Barbara Little

WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?

PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?

ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs

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