

June 19-25, 2023

Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19

“IT IS FINISHED”

Summary: *Matthew 27. Jesus is accused and condemned before Pilate—Barabbas is released—Jesus is mocked, crucified, and buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.*

Mark 15. Pilate decrees the death of Jesus—Jesus is mocked and crucified between two thieves—He dies and is buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Luke 23. Jesus is taken before Pilate, then to Herod, and then to Pilate again—Barabbas is released—Jesus is crucified between two thieves—He is buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

John 19. Jesus is scourged and crucified—He places His mother in John’s care—He dies, and His side is pierced with a spear—He is buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What is a more correct observation of the way to the crucifixion?

Jesus, bearing His cross (probably just the cross beam, as the upright post was most likely already at the crucifixion place), “. . . went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha.” (**John 19:17**) On the way, a man named Simon from Cyrene was made to carry the cross beam to the place of execution. (One can imagine that Jesus may have stumbled, although it is not mentioned.) The name Simon is Jewish; the place, Cyrene, is in modern day Libya. The suggestion is supported that Simon was a dark-skinned African man who had come to Jerusalem to worship during the Passover, by the present-day hundreds-of-thousands of dark-skinned Ethiopians who have held on to their biblical claim to be descendants of King Solomon and Queen Candace. People from Cyrene were also among the first believers in Jesus at the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:10**) Additionally, believers from Cyrene fled Jerusalem following the death of Stephen (**Acts 7**) and shared their faith in Antioch. (**Acts**

13:1) One of them, Lucius of Cyrene, was a teacher of early Saints in Antioch. The man could have been one of the hundreds of thousands of Jews of various ethnicities gathering in Jerusalem for Passover. What a memory for him; he carried the wood for the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb of God.

What was the location and placement of the crucifixion?

A Hill with crosses on it is not mentioned in the scriptures, nor does it seem to be historical at any other time or place. A site outside the city wall looks like the biblical described place. It was the Roman practice to crucify along the roadways. A roadway still passes through this ancient, abandoned quarry, still known by Jews as a place of execution (*makom yisakel*). Daylight had progressed about six hours. It was close to noon, and yet, “. . . there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.” (**Mark 15:33**) Crucifixion was a slow, strangling death. Breathing required very painful movements, and speaking was virtually impossible.

What were Jesus’ final spoken words?

During His agonizing physical, mental, and spiritual anguish, He spoke several

times. Mostly it was in concern of others. The Bible records seven things that Jesus said while on the cross. **(1)** To those who nailed him: “. . . Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.” **(Luke 23:34)** **(2)** To those who were crucified with him: “. . . for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise [world of spirits].” **(Luke 23:41-43)** **(3)** To His Mother: “When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!” **(John 19:26)** I sense that Jesus is confirming His and his mother’s mission. **(4)** To John the Beloved: “Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.” This was an Apostolic responsibility in addition to what the family members would be doing. **(John 19:27)** **(5)** To the Guards: “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. **(John 19:28)** **(6)** To His Father: “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthni?* That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” **(Matthew 27:46)** The late Apostle, Melvin J. Ballard said, “In that hour I think I can see our dear Father behind the veil looking upon these dying struggles until even he could not endure it any longer; and, like the mother who bids farewell to her dying child, has to be taken out of the room, so as not to look upon the last struggles, as he bowed his head, and hid in some part of his universe, his great heart almost breaking for the love that he had for his Son. **(Melvin J. Ballard in Bryant S. Hinckley, Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin Joseph Ballard, pp. 154-55)** “And when Jesus had cried with a loud

voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.” **(Luke 23:46)** **(7)** To all of us: “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” **(John 19:30)** He completed His atonement mission.

How can I better understand the significance of a “high day?”

There are seven biblical festivals observed by Jews that do not necessarily occur on a weekly *Shabbat* (a seventh-day Sabbath). They are called High Days, *miqra* (assembly) in Hebrew. **(Leviticus 23)**. Two of the extra Sabbaths occur in spring on the first and last day of the Feast of unleavened bread (Passover). A third occurs in the summer, the Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot*). The fourth is the Feast of Trumpets (*Yom Teru'ah*) The fifth is the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*); and the sixth and seventh are the beginning and ending days of the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) Sometimes the word *shabbaton* is used to mean all seven festivals. The Gospel of John speaks of the day following Jesus’ death, “. . . that sabbath day was an high day” **(John 19:31)**.

How did Jesus provide mercy even in His last mortal moments?

The Jewish priests did not want the crucified bodies hanging on the cross on Sabbath days, for that evening was the beginning of an extra Sabbath day, a High Day. **(John 19:31)** So, they besought Pilate that the prisoners’ legs might be broken. This would hasten their deaths because they could not press against the nails in their feet to gasp for breath. Once dead, their bodies might be taken away. That may have been the shortest crucifixion time period in history, a merciful result for the convicts crucified with Jesus. “However, when the soldiers saw that Jesus was dead already “. . . they brake not his legs.” **(John 19:33)**

What was the “manner of the Jews” to bury?

Dedicated followers of Jesus Help with the Burial when Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, and “. . . a disciple of Jesus . . . besought Pilate that he might take the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave.” (John 19:38) With the help of Nicodemus, “. . . took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices . . . Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jew’s preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.” (John 19:40-42) Two Sabbaths in a row prevented the Jews of burial or mourning, The scurrilous events of that day

preceded the Passover which was due to begin at any moment. The Passover, which began with a special Sabbath or High Day, that week preceded the regular Friday-night/Saturday Sabbath. “The Jews [Priests] therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,)” (John 19:31) Now, the bodies also had to be buried before those Sabbaths. “Jewish teaching provides specific guidelines for how the deceased should be properly mourned by the family through defined practices in Judaism. Overt mourning on Shabbat and Jewish holidays (high days) is generally forbidden. (<https://www.shiva.com/learning-center/commemorate/jewish-holidays/shabbat>)