

**Lesson 57**  
**Time – 4/2/30 to 4/3/30 AD, 14 Nisan**  
**Approaching Noon on Wednesday Morning**

In the last lesson we studied the period between the time that Jesus was nailed to the Cross and the time that a supernatural darkness fell on the earth. Before that darkness fell, Jesus made three statements that are recorded in the New Testament:

First, He had prayed to the Father saying: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Next, He had spoken to His Mother and to His disciple and cousin, John the Apostle. He had said: “Dear woman, here is your son,” and “Here is your mother.”

Finally, He had spoken to the dying thief crucified beside Him who had said to Him: “Remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He had said to him: “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Shortly after that, darkness fell over the earth which lasted about three hours. During that time Jesus suffered the physical pain of Crucifixion. During that hole in the fabric of time He also suffered the unknowable spiritual pain of dying for the sins of the world. Just as that time was about to come to an end, He uttered His fourth proclamation on the Cross. It was “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

At the end of the last lesson we studied Psalm 22 which began with His fourth proclamation which was: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” We saw that Psalm 22 not only included that declaration, but that it also included the thoughts He would think while He was suffering on the Cross. Just after that declaration, the darkness faded and light shone forth. The end of the darkness evidently signaled the fulfillment of His punishment for our sin.<sup>1</sup>

In this lesson we will take up all that happened in the interval between the cessation of the darkness and Jesus’ last breath.

***The Third Interval***  
***Between the end of the darkness and Jesus’ death***

We aren’t told precisely how long this period was. Since all three things He said during this time were logically connected to each other, I suspect it wasn’t more than a few minutes. During this time Jesus cried out three times:

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<sup>1</sup> *Darkness is often equated with the judgment of Hell.*

First, He said to the guards: "I am thirsty."

Next, He said to the Father: "Into your hands I dismiss my Spirit."

Finally, He said to the ages: "It is finished."

Below are the accounts of those cries in the four Gospels.

### The First Cry

**John 19:28** Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

Matthew and Mark recorded that Jesus had just cried out "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Evidently Jesus' throat was so parched that many of the people standing there misunderstood and thought Jesus was calling Elijah.<sup>2</sup> Knowing that He had two things more to cry out and wanting to be understood He asked for some of the soldiers' wine.

**John 19:29** A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

**Matthew 27:48-49** Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

**Mark 15:36** One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

Before Jesus had been nailed to the cross, He had refused the wine mixed with drugs (myrrh) offered by the party of Jewish women.<sup>3</sup> A little later, before the darkness had set in, the Roman soldiers had offered Him some of their wine. He had also refused that.<sup>4</sup> He had now called for a drink. This served two purposes. First, it was to provide a promised sign to His disciples, and second it was to provide his dry throat with the power to make his victory proclamation.

Just after the Last Supper Jesus had said:

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<sup>2</sup> *Matthew 27:46-47, Mark 15:34-35*

<sup>3</sup> *Luke 23:36-37*

<sup>4</sup> *Matthew 27:34. Mark 15:23*

Matthew 26:29, Mark 14:25 “I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

Luke 22:18 “For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

Jesus was now drinking wine in the presence of His disciples to signify that the Father’s kingdom was assured for them.<sup>5</sup> Jesus was now ready to drink this “fruit of the vine” because He had won the victory that had given them citizenship with Jesus in the Kingdom of God!

### **The Second Cry**

John 19:30a **When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.”**

The Kingdom won, the signifying drink having been taken, Jesus proclaimed His victory.

### **The Third Cry**

Luke 23:46 **Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”<sup>6</sup> When he had said this, he breathed his last.**

Matthew 27:50 **And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.**

Mark 15:37 **With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.**

John 19:30b **With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**

His work finished; Jesus dismissed His spirit. At that time, His spirit left His body and went to Paradise <sup>7</sup> where He would be reunited with the dying thief as He had promised. In the last lesson we studied how Jesus’ fourth cry on the cross <sup>8</sup> had been

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<sup>5</sup> *There is no indication in the scripture that this wine was mixed with myrrh. The word translated “wine vinegar” here referred to the sour wine commonly drunk by the Roman soldiers. It was 100% “fruit of the vine.” This is what was offered here to Jesus.*

<sup>6</sup> *Psalms 31:5*

<sup>7</sup> *As we studied in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31), Paradise (also called Abraham’s Bosom) was located in the heart of the earth. Although technically a part of “Hell,” it was a pleasant place of comfort where Old Testament believers awaited the coming of the Messiah and His cry “It is finished!”*

<sup>8</sup> *Psalms 22:1a “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*

prophesied in the Messianic Psalm 22. In the same way this last cry was also prophesied in the Messianic Psalm 31. We will study that Psalm in detail a little later in this lesson.

**Matthew 27:51a** **At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.**<sup>9</sup>

**Mark 15:38** **The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.**

**Luke 23:45b** **And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.**

As the Curtain concealing the Holy of Holies was torn asunder, that opening would have revealed that the Holy of Holies was empty. The Ark of the Covenant hadn't been in it since the Babylonian captivity. However, at that moment the meaning of the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant had just been fulfilled to the west, above and behind the Temple on Mt. Zion. From that moment there was really no need for the Temple. Its shadows had been completed and made real by the real Temple of Christ's life and death. That true Temple had been built by "the carpenter from Nazareth" who was the promised "Son of David."

**Matthew 27:51b** **The earth shook and the rocks split.**

It is a fact that Herod the Great had added thirty feet in height to the original Second Temple which had been built by Zerubbabel and Joshua.<sup>10</sup> At an unspecified subsequent point of time this additional superstructure collapsed. In Nero's time they had work underway to restore the collapsed part (BOOK XV, CHAPTER 11, Verse 3, Antiquities of the Jews, Flavius Josephus). However, the whole Temple was destroyed before it was completed. This invites speculation whether or not the earthquake described here was the cause of the collapse recorded by Josephus. If so, you can imagine the confusion and terror that must have reigned on the Temple Mount.

Jesus' cry "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." was prophesied in the Messianic Psalm 31:5. We will take time to study that now.

### **Psalm 31**

Although this Psalm is not explicitly quoted in the New Testament as a Messianic Psalm, the entire text, and the fact that verse 5 of this Psalm contains the last words that Jesus spoke (Luke

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<sup>9</sup> *At that moment the Temple would have been full of worshippers bringing their Paschal Lambs for slaughter.*

<sup>10</sup> *Zerubbabel was the Persian Governor from the Royal Line of David (Matthew 1:12-13) and Joshua was the High Priest. This foreshadowed the fact that the real Temple would be built by One who would be King and High Priest forever.*

23:46 “Into your hands I commit my spirit”) both mark this clearly as a Messianic Psalm written in the voice of Christ.

***Psalm 31***  
***For the director of music. A psalm of David.***

Like Psalm 22, this Psalm was also written by David. It was inspired by the Holy Spirit and given by David to Asaph and Heman,<sup>11</sup> to be sung both in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant which had been brought up to Jerusalem, and at the Tabernacle in nearby Gibeon.<sup>12</sup> This was clearly written after David had become King in Jerusalem. It was only then that the Tabernacle and Jerusalem had come under his jurisdiction. Only then would he have had access to the “director of music.” As such, it was clearly written after the years of his flight from Saul. The intense danger that is referred to also could not refer to David’s danger at the time of the Absalom revolution. These words were sent to the director of music. David had no access to either place during the Absalom revolution since he had fled from Jerusalem and Judah at that time. So, these words cannot be describing a situation that David experienced. However, they do fit the pattern of the Messianic Psalms in the voice of Jesus Christ, particularly as they exactly include Jesus’ last words on the cross.

**Psalm 31:1 *In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame;*<sup>13</sup> *deliver me in your righteousness.***

Jesus Christ on the cross, hanging beaten and naked, with His beard torn out in tufts was not shamed. He was about to be glorified. That would happen when the Father raised Him up from the dead. Jesus, who had taken upon Himself the sins of the world, would be delivered without compromising the righteousness of the Father because Jesus Himself was righteous and sinless.

**Psalm 31:2 *Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me.***

Beginning with Genesis, we see the LORD being described as “the Rock.”<sup>14</sup> Deuteronomy 32:4 puts it this way: “He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.”

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<sup>11</sup> *1 Chronicles 6:31-44, 15:17.*

<sup>12</sup> *2 Chronicles 1:3 “and Solomon and the whole assembly went to the high place at Gibeon, for God’s Tent of Meeting was there, which Moses the LORD’s servant had made in the desert.”*

<sup>13</sup> *The verb here “let me never be put to shame” is in the cohortative mood and expresses confident expectation. The more precise translation would be, “You will never let me be put to shame.”*

<sup>14</sup> *Genesis 49:24 “But his (Joseph’s) bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.”*

The strength that Jesus had from trusting in the Rock was also promised to us: Isaiah 26:3-4 “You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.”

**Psalm 31:3 Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me.**

This crying out to the Father as His rock had been prophesied in the Messianic Psalm 89:

Psalms 89:26-27 “He will call out to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.’ I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.”

**Psalm 31:4 Free me from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge.**

Satan had engineered this trial and this death as a trap for Jesus. Satan thought it would frustrate Jesus’ mission. Little did Satan suspect that Christ’s death on the Cross had been God’s plan all along. Furthermore, as Proverbs 28:10 prophesied, “He (*Satan*) who leads the upright (*Jesus*) along an evil path will fall into his own trap, but the blameless (*Jesus*) will receive a good inheritance.” The trap that Satan set for Jesus demonstrated the justice of Satan’s own ultimate condemnation. What defense could he have for rejecting the righteous and loving LORD who underwent what He did to make redemption possible for all things in heaven and in earth.<sup>15</sup>

**Psalm 31:5a Into your hands I commit my spirit;**

These were the last words that Jesus spoke on the cross: Luke 23:46 “Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’ When he had said this, he breathed his last.”

**Psalm 31:5b redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.**

The question might be raised, “How could this apply to Jesus?” We know that He redeems us by His blood, so how could He possibly need redemption Himself? His redemption of us is recorded in the following:

Titus 2:13b-14a “Jesus Christ, - gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own.”

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<sup>15</sup> *Colossians 1:16 “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.”—Colossians 1:19-20 “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”*

Galatians 4:4-5 “But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”

However, in Psalm 69:18, another Messianic Psalm, it also speaks of the redemption of the Messiah. Psalm 26:11 also speaks of this redemption. Perhaps the sense is that Jesus Christ, having totally identified Himself with fallen mankind, still had to rely on the acceptance by the Father of His redemptive payment for all mankind of whom He was a part. Perhaps this is also the sense in which it is spoken of in Hebrews:

Hebrews 9:12 “He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.”

That is one reason the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus into the presence of the Father was so significant. It signified the acceptance by the Father of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ for Jesus as well as the rest of the redeemed.

**Psalm 31:6 I hate those who cling to worthless idols; I trust in the LORD.**

Those who persecuted Jesus clung to the worthless idol that was greed for money (or power):

John 16:13-14 “‘No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.’ The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.”

When Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers in the Temple He gave the High Priests (Annas and Caiaphas) the final impetus to kill Him. Paul also made clear that greed is idolatry in Colossians 3:5 “Put to death, -- greed, which is idolatry.”

**Psalm 31:7 I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul.**

Jesus trusted that He “will be glad” in the future, because the Father already had seen his affliction in the past. There are no surprises or uncertainty in the Father’s promises.

**Psalm 31:8 You have not handed me over to the enemy but have set my feet in a spacious place.**

By faith, Jesus saw the future of the Father’s promises which included the entire universe.

**Psalm 31:9 Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief.**

This returned to the present (prophetically) of Jesus’ suffering on the cross. This is what Isaiah later said of Him: Isaiah 53:3 “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and

acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

**Psalm 31:10a My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning;**

This described the total consumption of His life by the judgment He bore for us at the end.

**Psalm 31:10b my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.**

This described the physical debilitation of His body from the beatings and scourging He underwent as well as the crucifixion.

**Psalm 31:11a Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors;**

This brings to mind Jesus’ parable of the “true neighbor” in the story of the Good Samaritan. Although the Samaritan was held in contempt, he was the one who had mercy. The Samaritan represented Jesus in that parable.

**Psalm 31:11b I am a dread to my friends-- those who see me on the street flee from me.**

Here, the Lord seemed to recall the reaction that He had seen among those He recognized as His erstwhile followers and friends as He was led through the streets of Jerusalem on the way to the Cross and to His trials before Pilate and Herod.

**Psalm 31:12 I am forgotten by them as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery.**

Many of those who had called Jesus a friend were now only too anxious to turn their back on Him as if they had never known Him. The comparison of Jesus to broken pottery is reminiscent of the story in Judges. There Gideon’s men had burning torches concealed in clay pots. When the men shattered the pots, the light blazed forth and the enemy fled (Judges 7:17-20). The comparison is also reminiscent of Psalm 22:15 where Jesus compared himself to a potsherd (broken pottery).

**Psalm 31:13 For I hear the slander of many; there is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life.**

This described Jesus’ experience at His trials. The Sadducees, Pharisees and Herod Antipas had all conspired to find a charge to bring against Him. When they couldn’t find a real charge they resorted to baseless slander.

**Psalm 31:14 But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, “You are my God.”**

This was “the mind of Christ” during all these trials. It should be ours in the middle of our trials. The LORD is our God, and we should trust what kind of God He is.

**Psalm 31:15a My times are in your hands;**

Jesus entrusted to the Father the days of His life. He was confident that the Father would faithfully rule on the length of His life. This is a verse that any Christian who contemplates suicide should understand. Suicide is not an act of faith. It is an ultimate denial of the LORD’s sovereignty over our lives. Sometimes the LORD prolongs the suffering of our dying. It is a time when we can trust the LORD in the time of greatest adversity. It is an opportunity to give a great testimony which will be rewarded in eternity.

**Psalm 31:15b deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.**

Jesus trusted that He would have ultimate deliverance from those whose intent was to dispose of Him and His mission. This included Satan and his demons.

**Psalm 31:16 Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.**

Jesus focused on the character of the Father and His love. During our trials, we get to do the same by keeping our eyes on Jesus, in whom we see the nature of the Father. John 14:9b “Anyone who has seen me (*Jesus*) has seen the Father.”

**Psalm 31:17a Let me not be put to shame, O LORD, for I have cried out to you;**

The verb here “let me not be put to shame” is in the cohortative mood and expresses confident expectation (as it does in verse 1). The more precise translation would be, “You will not let me be put to shame.” Jesus was confident in the Father’s answer to this prayer.

**Psalm 31:17b but let the wicked be put to shame and lie silent in the grave (*Hell*).**

The “wicked” here is in the plural. The phrase “let the wicked be put to shame” is also in the cohortative mood and expresses confident expectation. It describes the ultimate fate of Satan and his demons as well as that of the wicked men who carried out Satan’s scheme. The Hebrew word translated “grave” by the NIV here is **שְׂאוֹל** {sheh-ole’} which is translated “Hell” as often as it is “grave.” It described the destination of the souls of those “wicked,” not the physical bodies.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Before the ascension of Christ, Hell included both Paradise for believers and the Torments for unbelievers. It also included the Abyss for some of the fallen angels.

**Psalm 31:18 Let their lying lips be silenced, for with pride and contempt they speak arrogantly against the righteous one.**

The Hebrew word translated “the righteous” here is, צַדִּיק {tsad·dēk’}. It is an adjective in the masculine singular. It should thus be understood as the “righteous one.” The “righteous one” is Jesus Christ. Those who would be put to shame and silenced in “Sheol” were described as liars and proud. Jesus described Satan as “the father of lies” in John. Speaking to the Pharisees He had said of them:

John 8:44 “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer <sup>17</sup> from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Satan’s primal sin was described as pride in Ezekiel and Isaiah:

Ezekiel 28:17 “Your (*Satan’s*) heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.”

Isaiah 14:13-14 “For you (*Satan*) have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”  
KJV

**Psalm 31:19 How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you have wrought for those who take refuge in you before the sons of men!**

In contrast to the reward of Satan and his adherents is the reward of those who trust in the LORD “before the sons of men.” The LORD has stored it up from eternity past. This not only refers to the rewards awaiting Jesus Christ, but also all those who are in Him and it is “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20).

**Psalm 31:20 In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues.**

All who are in Christ have the comfort of knowing that the presence of God is always with us. We are never alone.

**Psalm 31:21 Praise be to the LORD, for he showed his wonderful love to me when I was in a besieged city.**

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<sup>17</sup> *Satan was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, because he knew that by deceiving Adam and Eve he would cause their deaths.*

This reflects on the deliverance of the Son by the Father. Jerusalem was the besieged city. It was besieged by all the invisible forces of Satan.

**Psalm 31:22** **In my alarm I said, “I am cut off from your sight!” Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help.**

In His incarnation, Jesus felt abandoned by the Father and the loss of His presence when He cried out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Psalms 22:1, Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34), yet He was never actually out of the sight, hearing or thoughts of the Father. When His suffering was over the Father came to Him speedily.

**Psalm 31:23a** **Love the LORD, all his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful,**

The word translated “the faithful” here is in the plural. It refers to all “his saints” (believers). The same principles of the Word that Jesus Christ relied on while on the Cross should be applied by all “the faithful,” who have believed in the LORD. We thus can participate in “the mind of Christ.”

**Psalm 31:23b** **but the proud *one* he pays back in full.**

“The proud” here is in the singular and should be understood as “the proud one.” This refers to Satan.

**Psalm 31:24** **Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.**

The example of Jesus Christ should give us faith in the Father’s faithfulness to us, and show us how we should think in the trials of life. This is the message in Romans 15:

Romans 15:3-4 “For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: ‘The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.’ For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

### ***Continuing with the Events after Jesus gave up His Spirit***

**Matthew 27:52-53** **The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.**

We aren’t told who these people were who came out of the tombs. They aren’t specified by sex, so they were probably both men and women. They were called “holy” so that means they were all Old Testament believers. They probably included some of the believing deceased of that generation, like John the Baptist. They probably included some of the great prophets of long

before like Elijah and Moses, who had earlier appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. Hermon). They evidently had bodies that, to the naked eye, were not distinguishable from the bodies of everyone else. According to Matthew, their tombs had broken open at the hour of Christ's death at the time of the earthquake. However, they didn't make their appearance in Jerusalem until after Jesus had been raised from the dead. Their ministry in Jerusalem seemed to have occurred after Jesus' resurrection while Jesus was in Galilee with His disciples. They, and all of the rest of the saints who had been confined in Paradise (also called Abraham's Bosom), were taken up into the presence of the Father when Jesus ascended to Heaven forty days later. You can imagine the impact of the witness of these resurrected saints on many unbelievers who would be at Pentecost fifty days later when Peter gave his call to believe and three thousand responded (Acts 2:41).

We will recall here what Jesus had just done:

**Luke 23:46-47** **Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."**<sup>18</sup> **When he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."**

**Matthew 27:50-51,54** **And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. --- When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"**<sup>19</sup>

**Mark 15:37-39** **With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"**

**John 19:30b** **With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**

The centurion was one of the few Gentiles to witness the sight. He was struck to the soul at what he had seen of Jesus during those four hours since he had escorted Jesus to the cross and His execution. Remember, the centurion had heard the people mocking Jesus saying: "Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" (Matthew 27:40b). He had probably also heard the Jewish leaders claim before Pilate that Jesus had said the He was the Son of God.<sup>20</sup> Besides that, since garrison duty in

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<sup>18</sup> *Psalms 31:5*

<sup>19</sup> *This Centurion, who was in charge of crucifying Jesus, was drawn to Him by the Father: John 6:65 "He (Jesus) went on to say, 'This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.'"*

Jerusalem lasted at least six months, the centurion would probably have been in Jerusalem when Jesus had come up for the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication. He was undoubtedly aware of who Jesus was thought to be by many of the Jews. He probably was aware of much of what Jesus had done on those visits. He would have heard of the reports of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Luke says that he “praised God.” I can’t help but think that the only way he could have “praised God” was to have believed in Jesus Christ like the dying thief had. Furthermore, the testimony of this private moment must have later been related to the Church by the centurion himself. I like to think that Luke may have gotten this testimony from the centurion in person many years later during his travels with Paul. Luke may have even met him in Rome itself.

**Luke 23:48** **When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away.**

On the other hand, the Jews, who should have understood what they had seen by the testimony of their own Scripture, did not praise God. They were only struck with an uneasiness in their hearts about the scene in which they had just participated.

### ***The Final Acts at the Cross***

**John 19:31a** **Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath.**

John makes it perfectly clear that Jesus was crucified on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. That was the day in which every house was to be “prepared” (the day of Preparation) by being cleansed of any leaven. The next day, beginning just after the twilight during which the Passover Lamb was to be killed, was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That day was to be a ‘special Sabbath.’”

**John 19:31b** **Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath,**

In Deuteronomy it was forbidden to allow a body to spend a night hanging on a tree (the cross):

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 “If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse.”

This speaks of the fact that Jesus bore God’s curse for us.

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<sup>20</sup> *Jesus had implied that He was the Son of God and His disciples had said they believed He was the Son of God. John the Baptist had flatly proclaimed that he had seen the Son of God (John 1:34) on earth. However, until Jesus’ trial before the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:63-64, Luke 22:70) He had never said it Himself.*

**John 19:31c-32** they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other.

The special agony of a normal crucifixion came from the fact that the position of the body, with the arms stretched out, makes it nearly impossible to breathe. The only way to catch a breath is to push up, against the spikes in one's heels, or to pull up against the spikes driven through the lower arm at the wrists.<sup>21</sup> This causes intense pain. However, no matter the pain, the overpowering instinct of the victim to breathe forces the victim to push with his legs or pull with his arms (or both) and torture himself again and again to catch just one more breath. The breaking of the legs makes this impossible, and the victim soon suffocates.

**John 19:33** But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

As we have already seen, Jesus had already died by dismissing His spirit.

**John 19:34** Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.

John, who wrote this account, was at the foot of the cross. He may have been the only disciple close enough to see this sudden flow. I have seen this comment by John interpreted in other ways. However, it seems obvious to me that the blood was real blood, and the water was real water. It was not what looked like blood (red blood cells), and what looked like water (blood serum). Blood and water both have great theological significance and stand for spiritual cleansing and renewal. Jesus himself spoke of the significance of the water that would come out of Him:

John 7:37-38 "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.'<sup>22</sup> Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.'"

John 4:13-14 "Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'"

Jesus had also spoken of the figurative significance of His blood: Matthew 26:26-28).

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<sup>21</sup> As we have already seen, in that day the wrists were called part of the hand.

<sup>22</sup> Isaiah 55:1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."

John 6:53-56 “Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.

Matthew 26:27-28 “Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’”

I believe that the Father caused this miraculous flow. It was meant to be a miraculous sign. It wasn't the normal oozing out of decomposing blood out of spear wound. I believe that it was a gushing, rushing flow which was completely miraculous in nature. First came the rush of blood which fulfilled meaning of all the blood of the all the Old Testament sacrifices. It was poured out at the foot of the Cross which was the real altar of which the Altars of the Temple and Tabernacle only spoke. It spoke of Christ's atoning death. Next came the gushing water which spoke of the life we have in Him. Why was it first blood and then water? Why not just water? I think God was underlining the fact that without the blood,<sup>23</sup> there could be no water. The spot from which the water flowed was the foot of the Cross. The Cross was not just the true altar, but it had also become the new “Tree of Life.” It is at that spot that the River of the Water of Life will flow in Eternal Jerusalem.<sup>24</sup>

**John 19:35 The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.**

When John testified that he was “the man who saw it” in person, he was talking about what he had just described, the miraculous flow of blood and water. He seems to have been protesting against all those who doubted this testimony. Remember, John was standing at the foot of the cross, while the other disciples were standing at a distance. At this time, since Jesus was dead, most of the other Jewish witnesses had gone away. Only John, the four women, and the thirteen Roman soldiers were still watching.

**John 19:36 These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken,”<sup>25</sup>**

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<sup>23</sup> *Hebrews 9:22-23 “In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”*

<sup>24</sup> *Besides being the location of the Tree of Life, that spot will also be where the Throne of the King is (Revelation 22:1-2).*

<sup>25</sup> *Psalms 34:20, Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12*

John pointed out that the fact that they didn't break Jesus' legs fulfilled the imagery of Jesus as the true Passover Lamb:

Exodus 12:46 "It (*the Passover Lamb*) must be eaten inside one house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones.

Numbers 9:12 "They must not leave any of it (*the Passover Lamb*) till morning or break any of its bones. When they celebrate the Passover, they must follow all the regulations."

Psalms 34:19-20 "The righteous one <sup>26</sup> may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken."

<sup>John 19:37</sup> **and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."**<sup>27</sup>

John also pointed out that the fact that in piercing Jesus' side with a spear they fulfilled another Messianic prophecy:

Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."

### **IF YOU WERE THERE ON THE DAY OF THE PASSOVER IN 30 AD**

Put yourself in the place of a Jew who was standing there in Herod's Temple on that day in Jerusalem in 30 AD. As many as a million worshippers had gathered in Jerusalem from all over the world.<sup>28</sup> Most of the pilgrims were still at their tents on the Mount of Olives looking down on the Temple from the East. Those standing in the Temple would have been one of at least 100,000 men who had been entrusted with bringing the Passover Lamb for their group to be sacrificed at the Temple by one of the thousands of priests assembled there for that purpose. According to the Law of Moses given in the desert at Mt. Sinai, the lambs from a family's own herds were to be slaughtered by the head of each household while standing at the entrance of their tent. However, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD, under the circumstances which had prevailed for many centuries, different customs prevailed. The people no longer had their permanent homes in tents within sight of the Tabernacle. The people were no longer predominantly herders. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD, the lambs to be sacrificed were sold at the Temple by the High Priest's

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<sup>26</sup> Here the word for "righteous" here is צַדִּיק {tsad-deek'} and is in the singular. As such it is better translated "the righteous one." The word "man" does not appear. Remember, only Jesus is "the righteous one." We are only righteous on his credit.

<sup>27</sup> Zechariah 12:10

<sup>28</sup> According to Josephus, in 65 AD the Jews claimed that two and a half million gathered for Passover.

servants. They were sacrificed in the Temple by Levitical priests. According to the Law of Moses, the lambs were to be slain at twilight (about 6 PM that time of year). However, there would have been tens of thousands of lambs that needed to be sacrificed at the moment of twilight. Because of the lack of a sufficient numbers of priests to accomplish that, the Priests started at 2:00 PM.<sup>29</sup> For the purposes of the ritual, those four hours before sundown was considered “twilight.” However, the sacrificial animals were usually gathered in the Temple by noon when further labor by all but priests in the Temple was forbidden. A Jewish man standing among the crowd with his lamb on the Temple Mount on that day would have heard rumors of the sudden arrest and trial of the man called Jesus. He might even have been among those tens of thousands who had joyously welcomed Him into the city just four days before. Rumors probably filtered through the crowd from the late arrivers that they had seen Jesus being led out to be crucified on the ridge of Mt. Zion that overlooked the Temple from the west. That would have drawn many eyes up toward the west and above the western wall of Jerusalem. On that high rocky outcropping, was where the Romans conducted crucifixions. The Romans respected Jewish traditions enough to do the executions outside the city wall, but they made sure they were in a place where everyone in the city could see the dying victims. There, on the north slope of Mt. Zion, about 600 yards away, those crowded in the Temple would have seen two crosses being pulled into place with two figures on them. Then they would have seen that a third cross, that was in the middle, being lifted up. Nailed to that cross was Jesus Christ! Almost immediately, just as it turned noon, darkness covered the earth like a blanket. Confusion and terror reigned among the packed multitude on the Temple mount. For three hours it endured as everyone wondered what this meant! This was no eclipse. It was too long. Anyway, it was the day of the full moon (14 Nisan) when solar eclipses were impossible.<sup>30</sup> Some few who might have been at the “Pavement” behind the Fortress Antonia about an hour before might have trembled when they remembered their own words that morning, “Let His blood be on our heads.” After three hours, there was a jolting shudder, as the earth convulsed. From inside the temple there was a tearing sound unlike any other anyone had ever heard. Suddenly the darkness disappeared. Some of the priests ran out of the Holy Place and shouted that the massive veil across the Holy of Holies had been torn in two as if by an invisible hand. The Holy of Holies, kept in perpetual darkness and mystery, and hidden from eyes of men had been revealed to the priests inside. It was empty.

Only then, as the darkness had lifted, was it possible to look back on that western hill and again see Jesus, on the cross. The sacrifice of the Passover lambs, delayed by the darkness, could then have begun, but everybody was troubled by what they had seen. About that time they might have seen the body of Jesus being taken off of the Cross. It might have occurred to them that the twilight of the true Passover had passed and the sacrifice that God had promised to provide Himself had been made.<sup>31</sup> As the sun began to set behind the west slope of Zion, they might

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<sup>29</sup> *Wars of the Jews, Book VI, Chapter 9, Paragraph 3 by Flavius Josephus* “So these high priests, upon the coming of that feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour till the eleventh” (2:00 PM to 5:59 PM).

<sup>30</sup> *At full moon the earth is between the Sun and the Moon. An eclipse of the Sun is impossible.*

have seen the empty cross. It might have seemed like the lengthening shadow from that distant cross was falling across the Temple itself.

We have good reason to believe that the location of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is close to the original Golgotha. You can get some idea of what the scene would have looked like from the picture on the next page. It shows that the Cross and Sepulcher are directly west of the Temple and higher. They could have been seen easily from the Temple.

On Mount Zion at Christ's death, the cross was the sword of God. Jesus was struck by it. He was struck for us, as had been prophesied.<sup>32</sup> It was also the sword which God had placed to guard the way to the Tree of Life.<sup>33</sup> Those in the Temple that day could have seen in Jesus on the Cross, their "Tree of Life" where they could attain eternal life. However, they had to choose to eat of it through faith. Those at the Cross could have seen an extraordinary gush of blood and water from the side of Jesus after His death. It was a sign of that water and blood which we were to drink of Him. They thereby saw a shadow of the past and a forecast of the future.

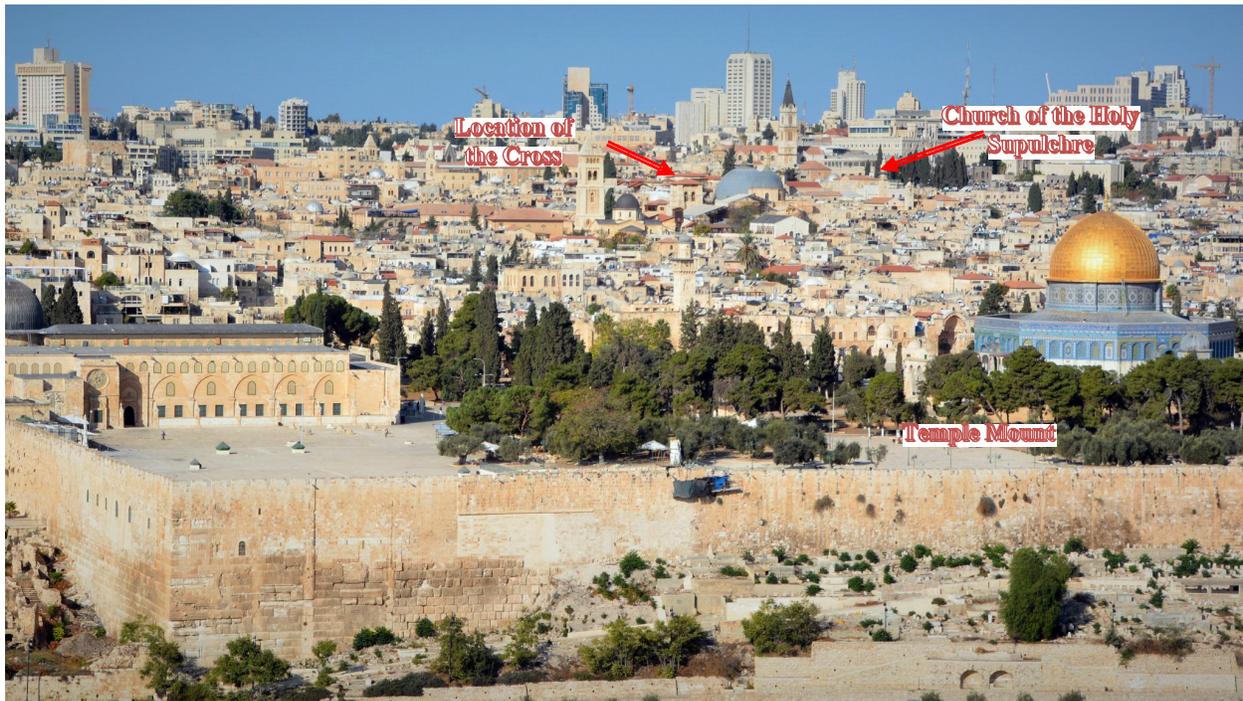
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<sup>31</sup> *Genesis 22:14 "So Abraham called that place (Mt Zion) 'The LORD Will Provide.' And to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.'"*

<sup>32</sup> *Zechariah 13:7 "Awake, O **sword**, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the LORD Almighty. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against hand against the little ones.*

*Luke 2:34-35 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a **sword** will pierce your own soul too."*

<sup>33</sup> *Genesis 3:24 "After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."*



### **Modern Jerusalem**

***The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is in the background to the left on Mt. Zion  
The Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount below it is in the foreground.  
The Prospect is East to West from the Mount of Olives***

The past was Eden, where there was the Tree of Life, a flashing sword, and a river that watered all the earth.

The Future is the Millennial throne where there stands the Tree of Life, and the River of the Water of life flowing from the throne of God.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Revelation 22:1-2 “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Psalms 29:10 “The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever.”

Zechariah 13:1 “On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.”

Psalms 46:4 “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.”

Joel 3:18 “In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the LORD’s house and will water the valley of acacias.”