



HOLY WEEK



DAY 5: BACKGROUND

Good Friday, the Friday of Holy Week, puts to us this question once again: Who do you say Jesus is?

Late Thursday night in Gethsemane, Jesus was arrested—betrayed by one of His own disciples and abandoned by His others. The Chief Priests and the Sanhedrin called for secret trials in the dead of night, and the verdict was handed down that Jesus would be crucified (Mark 14:53-65). This was an official order the Roman Prefect, Pontius Pilate, would have to give. And reluctantly, on Friday morning, he did (Mark 15:1-15).

After a severe beating, Jesus was nailed to a cross where He would remain for six hours until dead (Matthew 27:27-44).

He was crucified between two thieves. As He hung there, weak, bloody, and exposed, people from the crowd taunted and mocked Him—scoffing that if He really was the Son of God, then why didn't He come down from the Cross (Matthew 27:40)? They could not begin to fathom the irony of their logic. That cross was the reason the Son of God had come, and His place as our atoning sacrifice was one only He could occupy. It was Jesus' presence on the cross, not His ability to come down from it, that would prove His divinity. They knew not what they did.

One of the thieves started in with contemptuous words of his own, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself. Save us!" But the gravity of the scene settled on the other thief as he watched Jesus take the brutality of His captors to God in the form of a prayer for mercy. The thief also watched Jesus give His own grieving mother to His treasured friend. Seeing the grace by which Jesus received this death, the second thief broke into sobs, saying to Him, "Forgive me. I am here for the wrongs I have done, but You have done nothing. Please, remember me when You pass from this place into Your waiting kingdom" (Luke 23:39-43, my paraphrase).



At around 3:00pm, Jesus died (Luke 23:44-46).
Never before or since has more been lost and gained at the same time as at Jesus' crucifixion. The world gained the atoning sacrifice of Christ. But for many of those present, their hearts broke because the One they believed to be the Savior of the world was dying at the hands of Rome. They couldn't stop it, and they didn't yet realize—He was dying for them.

Many had put their hope in Jesus, and though He had told them earlier that He would suffer many things and rise three days later (Mark 8:31), how could they possibly have known this was what He meant?

(Excerpt from shereadstruth.com)

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READ:

Matthew 27:1-61 NIV

1 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. 2 So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor. 3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. 4 “I have sinned,” he said, “for I have betrayed innocent blood.” “What is that to us?” they replied. “That’s your responsibility.” 5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. 6 The chief priests picked up the coins and said, “It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.” 7 So they decided to use the money to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners. 8 That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9 Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: “They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, 10 and they used them to buy the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.”

JESUS BEFORE PILATE

11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” “You have said so,” Jesus replied. 12 When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. 13 Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” 14 But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor. 15 Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. 16 At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. 17 So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?”

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18 For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him. 19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him." 20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. 21 "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. 22 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" 23 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" 24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" 25 All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!" 26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

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THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

32 As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. 33 They came to a place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). 34 There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. 35 When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 36 And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. 37 Above his head they placed the written charge against him: this is Jesus, the king of the Jews. 38 Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” 40 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 41 “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 42 He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” 43 In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

44 From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. 45 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). 46 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” 47 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 48 The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” 49 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

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51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split 52 and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53 They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. 54 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!" 55 Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. 56 Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

57 As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. 58 Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. 59 Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

Isaiah 52:13-15 NIV

13 See, my servant will act wisely;
he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.
14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him—
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being
and his form marred beyond human likeness—
15 so he will sprinkle many nations,
and kings will shut their mouths because of him.
For what they were not told, they will see,
and what they have not heard, they will understand.

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Isaiah 53:1-7 NIV

1 Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4 Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

RESPOND:

1. Have you accepted this gift that was given on your behalf? If no, why not?

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If you would like to step into right relationship with Jesus, you can right here and right now, if you could pray something like this...

Dear Jesus, I don't understand it all, nobody does. But in the best way I know how, I say yes to the perfect life you lived, I say yes to the fact that your Father God sent you to rescue what was lost and that is me, I say yes to your life surrendered on the cross, I say yes to the fact that you were resurrected from the grave three days later, reigning over death and allowing me a way to reign over death as well. Thank you Jesus for allowing me a place at your table, I say yes to your invitation.

If you prayed something like that, on the authority of God's word it says that you will be saved and your invitation at the table has been secured. Not only do you get to be with Jesus in eternity but He has put his very Spirit in you and has made you new. You get to spend eternity with a ragamuffin group of humans who have said yes to the invitation of the King as well. Welcome to the family.

There is not a lot to say, let us take a moment and pause and reflect on the weight and beauty of this moment.

PRAY:

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ACTIVITIES:

ADULT ACTIVITY

In this moment on Good Friday, things seemed pretty grim. Yet, we cannot forget that Sunday is coming, when the King would get up out of the grave and show the enemy that what he wanted to use for evil, the King yet again used what was meant for evil and leveraged for good. A good reminder of grim beginnings turning to good is biscuits. See the biscuit starts a dense dough, but end up rising and yielding something tasty and wonderful. That's exactly what Jesus crucifixion did for all of mankind.

Joanna Gaines' JoJo's Biscuits (taken from RealSimple.com)

Hands-On Time:

20 minutes

Total Time:

1 Hour 15 Mins

Yield:

20 biscuits

Ingredients:

- 4 cups self-rising flour, plus more for the work surface
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3 sticks salted butter ($\frac{3}{4}$ pound), cold, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces or grated
- 2 large eggs, beaten, plus 1 large egg for brushing
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups buttermilk, or as needed, plus 1 tablespoon for brushing

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HOW TO MAKE IT:

Step 1

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and baking soda. Add the butter and use a pastry blender to cut the butter into the flour until the pieces are even and about the size of peas.

Step 2

Stir in the beaten eggs with a wooden spoon until combined. Stir in $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups buttermilk until the dough comes together into a sticky mass. If it is too dry, add more buttermilk 1 tablespoon at a time, mixing after each addition, until it reaches the correct consistency. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to overnight.

Step 3

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Step 4

Scrape the dough onto a floured work surface. Use your floured hands to press it into a round roughly 14 inches across and about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick.

Step 5

Use a floured $2\frac{3}{4}$ -inch round cutter to cut out about 20 biscuits. If necessary, collect and pat out the scraps to cut more biscuits.

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Step 7

In a small dish, beat together the remaining egg and 1 tablespoon buttermilk. Brush the mixture on the top of the biscuits.

Step 8

Bake until golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool slightly in the pan on a rack.

Step 9

Biscuits are best the day they are made (and ideally fresh out of the oven!). Serve with strawberry jam or gravy, if desired. Store leftovers in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days.

PRE-K ACTIVITY:

Day 5: Jesus died on a cross

In today's story, we learn that Jesus died on a cross and was buried in a tomb. But tell you children not to worry, this isn't the end of the story. Tell them that three days later, on Easter, Jesus came back to life. He's Alive! He's Alive!

Activity – Build a tomb

Point out that a tomb is similar to a cave. Use a blanket or sheet draped over chairs or other furniture to build a tomb. Place something in front of it to serve as a stone (preferably something your child can move). Explain that after Jesus died they placed His body in a tomb. After three days, some women found that the tomb was empty because Jesus is alive. Shout, "Jesus is Alive!"

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Alternate Activity – Decorate A Cross

Draw a cross on a piece of paper. Give your child art supplies to decorate it. Once he has finished decorating it, invite him to cut it out. Hang it on your refrigerator and remind him that Jesus died on a cross. But encourage him that Jesus didn't stay dead. He is alive! And that's why we celebrate Easter because Jesus is ALIVE!

KIDS ACTIVITY:

Day 5: Jesus Trial and Crucifixion

Get outside to take a nature walk. This can be in your backyard or at a local park. While you are exploring God's creation, look around and find sticks to make your very own 'remembering cross'. Be creative to design and decorate your cross any way that you would like. While you are working on this special project, talk about what Jesus did for us and why it was so important.

Set an alarm for 3pm on Friday and explain to your children that Jesus died at 3pm. Read Matthew 27:45-50 and take time to pray as a family thanking God for Jesus.



Thank you for going on this journey of Holy Week with us. Let us fix our eyes on the fact that Easter Sunday is coming, but not forgetting that we had to walk the week before Sunday to get there.

On the journey together,

Your New Vision Family
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