

The Crucifixion and Burial Harmonizing the Gospel Accounts

In instances where the Bible records several accounts of an event like the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Matt 27:26-66; Mark 15:15-47; Luke 23:25-56; John 19:1-42), a careful process of combining the accounts into one may help you observe all of the pertinent details and gain a more complete understanding of the event.

Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them, (Mark 15:15a; Matt 27:26a; Luke 23:25a)

but he delivered Jesus to their will. (Luke 23:25b; Matt 27:26b; Mark 15:15b)

Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him. (John 19:1)

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole Roman cohort around Him. (Matt 27:27; Mark 15:16)

They stripped Him (Matt 27:28a)

They dressed Him up in purple (Mark 15:17a; Matt 27:28b; John 19:2b)

And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head. (Matt 27:29-30; Mark 15:17b-19; John 19:2a-3)

Pilate came out again and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find no guilt in Him." Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!" (John 19:4-5)

So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God." (John 19:6-7)

Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." (John 19:8-11)

As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar." Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. (John 19:12-13)

Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!" So they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified. (John 19:14-16)

After they had mocked Him, they took the purple robe off Him and put His own garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him. (Mark 15:20; Matt 27:32)

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When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus – Luke 23:26), coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus. (Luke 23:26; Matt 27:32; Mark 15:21)

And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him. But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. "For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US,' AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.' For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?" Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him. (Luke 23:27-32)

They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. (John 19:17; Matt 27:33; Mark 15:22; Luke 23:33a)

There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between. (John 19:18; Luke 23:33b)

They tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh; but He did not take it. (Mark 15:23; Matt 27:34)

Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." (John 19:19-22)

But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. (Luke 23:34; Matt 27:35; Mark 15:24)

It was the third hour when they crucified Him. (Mark 15:25)

And sitting down, they began to keep watch over Him there. (Matt 27:36)

And above His head they put up the charge against Him which read, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." (Matt 27:37; Mark 15:26)

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be"; this was to fulfill the Scripture: "THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS." Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household. (John 19:23-27)

At that time two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left. (Matt 27:38; Mark 15:27)

[And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with transgressors."] (Mark 15:28)

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And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him and saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. HE TRUSTS IN GOD; LET GOD RESCUE Him now, IF HE DELIGHTS IN HIM; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" (Matt 27:39-43; Mark 15:29-32a; Luke 23:35)

The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." (Luke 23:36-38)

One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" (Luke 23:39; Matt 27:44; Mark 15:32b)

But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:40-43)

It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, because the sun was obscured; (Luke 23:44-45a; Matt 27:45; Mark 15:33)

At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" which is translated, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they began saying, "Behold, He is calling for Elijah." (Mark 15:34-35; Matt 27:46-47)

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. (John 19:28-29; Matt 27:48; Mark 15:36a)

Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" (John 19:30a)

But the rest of them said, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him." (Matt 27:49; Mark 15:36b)

And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last (yielded up His spirit – Matt 27:50; John 19:30b). (Luke 23:46; Mark 15:37)

And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. (Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45b)

The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. (Matt 27:52-53)

Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening (saw the way He breathed His last – Mark 15:39), became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God (innocent – Luke 23:47)!" (Matt 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47)

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And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts. (Luke 23:47)

Many women were there looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee while ministering to Him. Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James (the Less – Mark 15:40) and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee (Salome – Mark 15:40). (Matt 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41; Luke 23:49)

When evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, (Mark 15:42; John 19:31a)

so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. (John 19:31b-33)

But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN." And again another Scripture says, "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED." (John 19:34-37)

Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council (rich – Matt 27:57), who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God (disciple of God – Matt 27:57, good and righteous / he had not consented to their plan and action – Luke 23:50-51, but a secret one for fear of the Jews – John 19:38a), and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. (Mark 15:43; Matt 27:57-58a; Luke 23:50-52; John 19:38a)

Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. (Mark 15:44-45; Matt 27:58b; John 19:38b)

Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, (Mark 15:46a; Matt 27:59a; Luke 23:53a)

Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. (John 19:39-40; Matt 27:59b; Mark 15:46b; Luke 23:53a)

Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid (Joseph's own new tomb - Matt 27:60a). Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb (hewn out in the rock - Matt 27:60b; Mark 15:46b; Luke 23:53) was nearby, they laid Jesus there. (John 19:40-42; Matt 27:59-60a; Mark 15:46a; Luke 23:53)

It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. (Luke 23:54-55)

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph were looking on (sitting opposite the grave – Matt 27:61) to see where He was laid. (Mark 15:47; Matt 27:61)

he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away. (Matt 27:60c; Mark 15:46c)

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Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes and on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. (Luke 23:56)

Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, and said, "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I am to rise again.' Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how." And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone. (Matt 27:62-66)