

Final Words

Various
March 29, 2024
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Tonight we want to consider the final words of our Lord Jesus as he hung on the cross for each saying was significant and we would do well to ponder their implications as we prepare our hearts for Resurrection Sunday. Most of what I will share tonight will come directly from the Scriptures and I have tried as much as one is able to draw a chronological order out of the four Gospel accounts. Remember that Jewish Law required the testimony of two or three witnesses in order to be considered valid. God did us one better, giving us three synoptic accounts, Matthew, Mark and Luke along with the more theologically oriented Gospel of John.

In order to consider Jesus' seven sayings from the cross, we need to reflect on the events that led to Him being executed. Last week we saw Jesus present Himself to the people of Jerusalem as the Messiah on Palm Sunday, riding into town not astride a steed or a war horse, but humbly on the foal of a Donkey. And instead of overthrowing the hated Romans, Jesus overthrew the tables of the money changers in the Temple and further infuriated the religious leaders by His scathing denunciations of their hypocrisy.

And as we pointed out last week and will see again tonight, **All that happened** to Jesus was in fulfillment of OT prophesy. Jesus was not to be the conquering king at this time but rather, the Suffering Servant predicted by Isaiah in chapter 53 of his prophecies. Jesus first advent was for the purpose of conquering sin and death, not the Romans. All was happening just as God the Father had planned. In fact, according to John's Gospel, Jesus had already predicted these events three times to His disciples. So...

Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. (Matthew 27:1)

Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" ³⁰ "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you." (John 18:28-30)

John reports them saying. Luke adds that they accused Him:

"We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king." (Luke 23:2)

³¹ Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.”
“But we have no right to execute anyone,” they objected.

Under Roman Law, the Jews were not authorized to perform executions and even if they had been allowed, under Jewish law the prescribed penalty for blasphemy was stoning. God’s plan, however, required Jesus to die on the cross. John explains that...

³² This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

³⁴ “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

³⁵ “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

³⁶ Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

³⁷ “You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

³⁸ “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. (John 18:31-38)

Notice friends, how many times it is reiterated in these accounts that Jesus was completely innocent of the

charges that were brought against Him, or any other sin for that matter...

⁵ But they insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.”

⁶ On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean.

⁷ When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign or a miracle of some sort. ⁹ Herod plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer.

¹⁰ The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. ¹² That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

¹³ Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. ¹⁶ Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.” (Luke 23:5-15)

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?" ¹⁸ For he knew it was out of self-interest that the religious authorities 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. (Matthew 27:12-21)

And the whole crowd shouted, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" ¹⁹ (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.)

²⁰ Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. ²¹ But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

²² For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him."

(Luke 23:18-22)

And Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. (John 19:1)

That simple statement does not convey the terrible truth. The Romans used a whip-like device, with long leather thongs through which bits of bone or metal were threaded. Victims would be whipped or scourged until their flesh was torn open often revealing bones or internal organs. It was a vicious means of torture, and in addition Jesus faced the cruel mockery of those in charge:

² The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe ³ and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face.

⁴ Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him."

⁵ When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

⁶ As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"

But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

⁷ The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

⁸ When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, ⁹ and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer.

¹⁰ "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"

¹¹ Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

¹² From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.”

¹³ When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha).

“Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews.

¹⁵ But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!”

“Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered. (John 19:1-15)

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!” (Matthew 27:12-25)

A most damning response indeed...

²⁴ So Pilate decided to grant their demand. ²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, Barabbas, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will. (Luke 23:18-25)

²⁶ As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put

the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. (Luke 23:26)

According to John, Jesus started out carrying His own cross but apparently He was so brutalized and weakened by the scourging and blood loss that He could not continue to bear the physical weight of His cross to the place of His execution. Thus Simon from Cyrene was conscripted to carry the Lord’s burden. According to church tradition, Simon came to faith in Jesus and thus the Lord would bear the weight of His sin. Luke continues...

²⁷ A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. ²⁸ Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ ³⁰ Then

“they will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’” (a quotation from Hosea 10:8)

³¹ For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?” (Luke 23:26-31)

That time would come forty years later in AD 70 when the Romans would utterly destroy the city and the temple. The green tree represents Jesus, the Son of God and Man, there present in the flesh, the dry speaks of the time coming after His death. All four Gospels report that Jesus was not executed alone, but with two others. John does not give any details about those men but Matthew

and Mark both identify them as rebels. And Luke describes them as...

³² Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. (Luke 23:26-33)

Jesus, at the Last Supper, had quoted the prophet Isaiah from chapter 53:12 who predicted this would happen to the Suffering Servant of the Lord. Jesus explained to His Apostles the significance of being crucified with criminals, in advance:

It is written: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors’; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.” (Luke 22:37)

As they were crucifying Jesus...

Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. ²⁵ It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. (Mark 15:23, 25)

Matthew adds...

There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. (Matthew 27:34)

Wine mixed with bitter herbs or myrrh created a potion that dulled the sense of pain. The mixture of sour wine and gall was often given to the suffering to ease their pain in death.

Jesus refused this gall-laced concoction after He tasted it and realized what it was. In a supernatural display of courage, the Son of Man rejected anything that would numb the suffering He endured for our salvation. Sin against a holy God required extreme punishment, and, in order to completely fulfill His position as our substitute, Jesus wanted nothing that took away from that punishment. To accept wine with gall would lessen sin’s punishment, and Jesus had come to bear the full brunt of God’s wrath against sin, not to take any easier way out. And yet,

³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34a)

Even in His agony, Jesus’ concern was for the forgiveness of those who counted themselves His enemies. He asked the Father to forgive the thieves on the cross who jeered at Him. He asked the Father to forgive the Roman soldiers who had mocked Him, spit on Him, beat Him, yanked out His beard, whipped Him, put a crown of thorns on His head, and nailed Him to the cross. Jesus asked forgiveness for the angry mob that had mocked Him and called for His crucifixion.

But we must understand that Jesus’ prayer, “Father, forgive them,” does not mean that everyone was forgiven, unilaterally, without repentance and faith. What it does mean that Jesus was willing to forgive them—

forgiveness was, in fact, the reason He was on the cross. The words “Father, forgive them” display the extent of the merciful heart of God.

Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them,” because He was fulfilling Old Testament prophecy:

“He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

From the cross, Jesus interceded for sinners. Today, risen and glorified, Jesus remains the

“...one mediator between God and mankind” (1 Timothy 2:5).

Jesus also prayed, “Father, forgive them,” because He was displaying the principle He had taught in the Sermon on the Mount:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:43–44)

Jesus, the persecuted One, there on the cross, prayed for His persecutors even though..

³⁵ The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” (Luke 23:26–35) (blank)

And not only did He suffer the physical pain, and the scorn and mockery of the people but also the humiliation of being hung naked before everyone. And Scripture tells us that this too was according to divine prophecy:

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

²⁴ “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said,

“They divided my clothes among them

and cast lots for my garment.” [Psalm 22:18]

So this is what the soldiers did. (John 19:23–24)

¹⁹ Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰ Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. ²¹ The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.”

²² Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.” (John 19:19–22)

Pilate unknowingly wrote the truth in all three of the common languages of the day, for each of their speakers to read and realize. And yet...

³⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ 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!”⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him.⁴² “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.”⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, “I am the Son of God.”⁴⁴ In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him. (Matthew 27:39-44)

³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence?”

⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

⁴³ **Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”** (Luke 23:39-43)

This second saying from Jesus on the cross speaks of the forgiveness that He was buying for all who would trust and believe in Him. Jesus, and Jesus alone could make this assurance. The second criminal had recognized His sinful condition, and seeing the dignity in the response of Jesus to all that was happening, the man turned in faith and trust to the One who could save him from that sin. Even in the midst of His agony, Jesus offers this man hope and forgiveness. By saying, “Truly I tell you,” Jesus emphasizes the certainty and truthfulness of his words. He assures the criminal that “today,” meaning

immediately after their deaths, they will both enter Paradise or heaven together. His promise to the repentant criminal demonstrates his mercy, grace, and willingness to forgive even the most undeserving. As are we all.

The third saying of Jesus is recorded in John 19:25ff

²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, **“Woman, here is your son,”**²⁷ and to the disciple, **“Here is your mother.”** From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. (John 19:25-27)

Typically, a dying son would commit his mother into the care of another member of his immediate family. In the case of Jesus, that would have been James, Jude, or another male sibling. But Jesus knew that none of His half-brothers were disciples yet—they had not accepted His claims about Himself nor had committed to His mission. Thus, Jesus most likely chose John out of profound spiritual concern for His mother. Even nearing death, Christ was compassionately focused on spiritual matters.

With the words, “Woman, behold your son,” Jesus invited His mother to look to John, His much-loved disciple and friend, to be her son now. Jesus was departing from her, but John would take the Lord’s place in her life as much as was possible. John was the only apostle brave enough to take a stand with the women

who had accompanied Jesus to the cross. The rest of Christ's disciples had previously scattered, abandoning the Lord in fear. Establishing a new family of God was at the heart of Christ's mission and ministry. Through relationship with Jesus, believers become members of a new family. As the Lord completed His earthly ministry, His words to Mary, "Woman, behold your son," and to John, "Here is your mother," profoundly illustrated God's new family, the Church, being born there at the foot of the cross. Undoubtedly these women were among those mentioned in Acts as they and the Apostles joined together constantly in prayer.

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ 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?").

⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah." (Matthew 27:45-14)

But this was not a call to Elijah at all. It was actually a quotation from the Messianic Psalm 22:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?

⁷ All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.

⁸ "He trusts in the LORD," they say,
"let the LORD rescue him.

Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him."

I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart has turned to wax;
it has melted within me.
(Psalm 22:1, 7-8, 14)

The prophet Isaiah says this about the Messiah:

"Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 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" (Isaiah 53:4-5).

Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13).

He was made a sin-offering, and He died in our place, on our behalf, that He might reconcile us to God. It was this, doubtless, that intensified His sufferings and part of why Jesus said, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Because Jesus was not merely human, but actually God in the flesh, He abhorred sin, and so He bore not only the wrath of the Father but the horrific weight of the sin of the world in those terrible hours. The suffering He endured was due to us and our sin, and it is by that suffering by which we are saved.

And although the Father never stopped loving His Son, Jesus for a time felt the desolation of being humanly being separated from His Father's presence as our sin crushed down upon Him. It was at this time that

“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, **“I am thirsty.”** 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. (John 19:28-29)

The apostle John links Jesus’ statement “I am thirsty” to the fulfillment of Scripture. There were, in fact, at least twenty Old Testament prophecies fulfilled during the twenty-four hours surrounding the Lord’s death. By highlighting how Old Testament Scriptures were fulfilled throughout Jesus’ crucifixion, John showed that everything was happening according to God’s good and perfect plan. When Jesus said, “I am thirsty,” from the cross, He was alluding to a prophecy in Psalm 22:15:

“My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.” (Psalm 22:15)

As we saw earlier, the apostle John had cited this same psalm earlier regarding the dividing of Jesus’ garments among the Roman soldiers (John 19:23). In response to Jesus’ request for something to drink, the soldiers offer Him wine vinegar: Wine vinegar was the cheapest and easiest wine for soldiers to acquire. It was probably diluted with water. As we also saw earlier, Jesus had initially refused a drink of vinegar, gall, and myrrh

offered to Him to relieve His suffering. But here, several hours later, Jesus states, “I am thirsty,” thus asking for a drink. This time, the soldiers give Him some. This was a fulfillment of Psalm 69:21:

“They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.” (Psalm 69:21)

In addition, the words “I thirst” remind us that Jesus was fully human. Several other times in Scripture we see Jesus’ humanity on display:

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. (John 4:6)

Jesus was, at times, thirsty, asking a woman at that well for a drink. At times, He needed to sleep and we find Him doing so in the back of the boat out on the Sea of Galilee in the midst of a storm. Scripture says that He was hungry at times as well. In short, Jesus was fully human even though He was also fully God. How do we explain that? We can’t; it’s too big an idea for human beings to truly comprehend. We simply must accept that this is what the Scriptures teach, in fact, the author of Hebrews was inspired to explain:

For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he

might make atonement for the sins of the people.
(Hebrews 2:17)

According to John...

³⁰ **When he had** received the drink, Jesus said, **“It is finished.”** With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30)

The ordeal was over. Jesus had endured the mockery and scorn, the humiliation and the agony, and He had borne the weight of the sins of mankind and the wrath of Father. Nothing more need be done in order that people might be saved. “It is finished” translates a single Greek word: tet-el-estai. That word was used in that day by accountants. It would be stamped upon invoices to declare them “paid in full.” When Jesus uttered that word, He was declaring that the sin debt owed to the Father had been wiped away completely and forever. Not His debt, for He was perfectly sinless. Our debt.

Hebrews 9:12, 26 says, **“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...But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:12,26)

Just prior to His arrest, Jesus prayed His last public prayer, asking the Father to glorify Him, just as Jesus had glorified the Father on earth, having “finished the work you have given me to do” (John 17:4). The work Jesus was sent to do was to “seek and save that which was lost”

(Luke 19:10), to provide atonement for the sins of all who would ever believe in Him (Romans 3:23-25), and to reconcile sinful men to the holy God.

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

None other but God in the flesh, God the One and only Son could accomplish such a task. Also completed was the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies, symbols, and foreshadowings of the first coming of the Messiah. From Genesis to Malachi, there are over 300 specific prophecies detailing the coming of the Anointed One, all fulfilled by Jesus. And all completed there at the cross. And with that...

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. (Luke 23:46)

Jesus was quoting here from Psalm 31:5 as have many believers in the Lord God at the end of their lives, including the first martyr Stephen and later many others who were put to death for the faith. The moment we are saved, we commit our spirits into the Father’s hands; we trust Him for our salvation. From then on, life is lived in a day-to-day commitment of our spirits into the Father’s hands. We commit our spirits to Him in our service to Him, in our daily decisions, and in all our joys and

sorrows. And, when the time of our death comes, we follow Jesus' example and say yet again, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

Very early on when Jesus was challenged by the religious leaders after the first time He had overturned the money changer's tables in the temple.

¹⁸ The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

²⁰ They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" ²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

²³ Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. ²⁴ But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. ²⁵ He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person. (John 2:18-25)

Later He would declare categorically:

The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." (John 10:17-18)

And so, His agonies on the cross came to an end...**(blank)**

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

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!" (Matthew 27:50-54)

³¹ Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. ³² The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. 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. ³⁶ These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," ³⁷ and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

³⁸ Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.^[e] ⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. (John 19:31-42)

Matthew reports that the tomb actually belonged to Joseph:

Joseph placed [Jesus' body] 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.

⁶² The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³ "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

⁶⁵ "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard. (Matthew 27:60-66)

And with these words, the scene was set for Sunday morning...