

...The Easter Story

(Continued from previous page)

14 “Why?” Pilate demanded. “What crime has he committed?”

But the mob roared even louder, “Crucify him!”

15 So to pacify the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

16 The soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the governor’s headquarters (called the Praetorium) and called out the entire regiment. 17 They dressed him in a purple robe, and they wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head. 18 Then they saluted him and taunted, “Hail! King of the Jews!” 19 And they struck him on the head with a reed stick, spit on him, and dropped to their knees in mock worship. 20 When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

The Crucifixion

21 A passerby named Simon, who was from Cyrene,^[b] was coming in from the countryside just then, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus’ cross. (Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.) 22 And they brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means “Place of the Skull”). 23 They offered him wine drugged with myrrh, but he refused it.

24 Then the soldiers nailed him to the cross. They divided his clothes and threw dice^[c] to decide who would get each piece. 25 It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. 26 A sign announced the charge against him. It read, “The King of the Jews.”²⁷ Two revolutionaries^[d] were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.^[e] 28 Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council^[h] were trying to find evidence against Jesus, so they could put him to death. But they couldn’t find any. 29 Many false witnesses spoke against him, but they contradicted each other. 30 Finally, some men stood up and gave this false testimony: 31 “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this Temple made with

human hands, and in three days I will build another, made without human hands.” 32 But even then they didn’t get their stories straight!

33 Then the high priest stood up before the others and asked Jesus, “Well, aren’t you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?” 34 But Jesus was silent and made no reply. Then the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

35 Jesus said, “I am.^[i] And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand^[j] and coming on the clouds of heaven.^[k]”

36 Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, “Why do we need other witnesses? 37 You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?”

“Guilty!” they all cried. “He deserves to die!”

38 Then some of them began to spit at him, and they blindfolded him and beat him with their fists. “Prophesy to us,” they jeered. And the guards slapped him as they took him away.

Peter Denies Jesus

39 Meanwhile, Peter was in the courtyard below. One of the servant girls who worked for the high priest came by 40 and noticed Peter warming himself at the fire. She looked at him closely and said, “You were one of those with Jesus of Nazareth.^[l]”

41 But Peter denied it. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said, and he went out into the entryway. Just then, a rooster crowed.^[m]

42 When the servant girl saw him standing there, she began telling the others, “This man is definitely one of them!” 43 But Peter denied it again.

A little later some of the other bystanders confronted Peter and said, “You must be one of them, because you are a Galilean.”

44 Peter swore, “A curse on me if I’m lying - I don’t know this man you’re talking about!” 45 And immediately the rooster crowed the second time.

Suddenly, Jesus’ words flashed through Peter’s mind: “Before the rooster crows twice, you will

deny three times that you even know me.” And he broke down and wept.

Jesus’ Trial before Pilate

46 Very early in the morning the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law - the entire high council^[a] - met to discuss their next step. They bound Jesus, led him away, and took him to Pilate, the Roman governor.

47 Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

Jesus replied, “You have said it.”

48 Then the leading priests kept accusing him of many crimes, 49 and Pilate asked him, “Aren’t you going to answer them? What about all these charges they are bringing against you?” 50 But Jesus said nothing, much to Pilate’s surprise.

51 Now it was the governor’s custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner—anyone the people requested. 52 One of the prisoners at that time was Barabbas, a revolutionary who had committed murder in an uprising. 53 The crowd went to Pilate and asked him to release a prisoner as usual.

54 “Would you like me to release to you this ‘King of the Jews?’” Pilate asked. 55 (For he realized by now that the leading priests had arrested Jesus out of envy.) 56 But at this point the leading priests stirred up the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. 57 Pilate asked them, “Then what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?”

58 They shouted back, “Crucify him!”

59 The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. “Ha! Look at you now!” they yelled at him. “You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. 60 Well then, save yourself and come down from the cross!”

61 The leading priests and teachers of religious law also mocked Jesus. “He saved others,” they scoffed, “but he can’t save himself! 62 Let this Messiah, this King of Israel, come down from the cross so we can see it and believe him!”

Even the men who were crucified with Jesus ridiculed him.

The Death of Jesus

63 At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock. 64 Then at three o’clock Jesus called out with a loud voice, “‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’” which means “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”^[f]

65 Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. 66 One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a reed stick so he could drink. “Wait!” he said. “Let’s see whether Elijah comes to take him down!”

67 Then Jesus uttered another loud cry and breathed his last. 68 And the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

69 When the Roman officer^[g] who stood facing him^[h] saw how he had died, he exclaimed, “This man truly was the Son of God!”

70 Some women were there, watching from a distance, including Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James the younger and of Joseph^[i]), and Salome. 71 They had been followers of Jesus and had cared for him while he was in Galilee. Many other women who had come with him to Jerusalem were also there.

The Burial of Jesus

72 This all happened on Friday, the day of preparation,^[j] the day before the Sabbath. As evening approached, 73 Joseph of Arimathea took a risk and went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. (Joseph was an honored member of the high council, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come.) 74 Pilate couldn’t believe that Jesus was already dead, so he called for the Roman officer and asked if he had died yet. 75 The officer confirmed that Jesus was dead, so Pilate told Joseph he

could have the body. 76 Joseph bought a long sheet of linen cloth. Then he took Jesus’ body down from the cross, wrapped it in the cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone in front of the entrance. 77 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus’ body was laid.

The Resurrection

78 Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus’ body. 79 Very early on Sunday morning,^[a] just at sunrise, they went to the tomb. 80 On the way they were asking each other, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” 81 But as they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled aside.

82 When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked, 83 but the angel said, “Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth,^[b] who was crucified. He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. 84 Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died.”

85 The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, and they said nothing to anyone because they were too frightened.^[c]

[The most ancient manuscripts of Mark conclude with verse 16:8. Later manuscripts add one or both of the following endings.] [Shorter Ending of Mark]

Then they briefly reported all this to Peter and his companions. Afterward Jesus himself sent them out from east to west with the sacred and unfailing message of salvation that gives eternal life. Amen.

(Continued on page 6)

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And Don’t Forget to Pray for Rain!



Russell Davis
Agent

611 Austin Street
PO Box 1079
Robert Lee, Texas 76945
(325) 453-4505 office
(325) 453-4524 fax
(325) 650-1904 mobile
TXFB-INS.COM

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Financial Advisor

2412 College Hills Boulevard
Suite 102
San Angelo, TX 76904
325-223-8244

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