



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #320
Friday... Day of Agony and Atonement

Jesus Bears His Cross to Golgotha

Jesus Mourns for Jerusalem on the Road to Golgotha
LK 23.26-32 (Parallel Texts: MT 27.31-34; MK 15.20-23; JN 19.16B-17)

^JSo the soldiers took charge of Jesus. ^MWhen they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. ^JHe was carrying his own cross as he headed out for the place of ‘the Skull,’ which is called Golgotha in Aramaic.

26 ^LAs the soldiers led him along, they seized ^Ma certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, ^Lwho was on his way in from the country, and they laid the cross on him ^Mand forced him ^Lto carry it behind Jesus.

27 A large number of people were following him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. 28 Jesus turned and said to them,

“Daughters of Jerusalem, I command you to stop weeping for me; you must keep on weeping 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!” (Hos. 10.8)*

31 *“For since people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”*

32 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. They came to the place called Golgotha. ^{MT}There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with myrrh; but after tasting it he refused to drink it.

NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This “superscript ID” is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	On the Road Out of Jerusalem to Golgotha
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week

	E. Friday: Day of Agony and Atonement
	Jesus Bears His Cross to Golgotha
Title	Jesus Mourns for Jerusalem On the Road to Golgotha

The writer of the DJN would like to express his sense of being overwhelmed with the task of writing about the life of Jesus in this publication, especially regarding the story of our Lord's death. Words fail. No description, explanation, or "insight" does his glory justice. I feel like a child trying to drain the ocean with nothing but a leaky bucket.

As readers, please be ever mindful that the portion of the DJN that matters is the text of the gospel itself. My comments are not worthy to be on the same page with the Scriptural account of Jesus' life and glory that was fully inspired by God, the Holy Spirit.

Today's reading describes Jesus' journey from the Praetorium to Golgotha. This place, "the skull," was a site outside the city gates of Jerusalem. See Hebrews 13:10-14 for a Scriptural explanation of the significance of being outside the city.

This was one of the main roads leading into the city from the west side, so many travelers would see and take warning from Roman crucifixions at this site. It is a popular story among modern Christians that the "skull" described the shape of a hill, but there is no early historical evidence for this view. The most ancient explanation was that it was a place of execution, and therefore skulls could be found on the site. We simply do not know the background of the term "the skull" for sure.

Jesus left the praetorium carrying his own cross. However, he was so weakened from the scourging, and then the cumulative effects of three beatings concentrated on his head and face, that he could not physically sustain the weight of the cross for roughly the half mile required to leave the city gates. The soldiers forced a man named Simon, a Gentile from Cyrene, to carry the cross for Jesus.

Simon's role in the narrative is important for several reasons. First, it was ironical that his name was Simon. It should have been Simon Peter carrying that cross for Jesus, but he had fled in shame after his threefold denial of Jesus.

Secondly, Simon's forced service as a substitute cross-bearer for Jesus reminds us again of the meaning of Jesus' death as a substitute sin-bearer for us. The need for Simon to carry Jesus' cross also highlights the reality of Jesus' physical sufferings. He truly gave his body for us, as he had memorialized in his Supper the night before.

Mark referred to Simon's sons Alexander and Rufus in a routine way. He assumed all of his readers would know who Simon was because his sons were universally known and recognized in the early church. This shows us that Simon became a believer and pillar of the church. Simon is therefore an example of what should happen to all people when they look carefully at how Jesus died. The cross leads us to faith in Jesus like nothing else.

The main point of today's reading is the selflessness of Jesus. This is what Luke made the center of his brief description in our base text. We see the glory of Jesus' selflessness in two stunning ways.

First, consider the way Jesus mourned for Jerusalem. The many women who were following him along the road to Golgotha were weeping and crying for him. He stopped and commanded them to stop mourning for him, but to weep for themselves instead! If anybody ever deserved sympathy and sorrow

for his sufferings it was Jesus. Unlike us, he deserved none of it. Yet Jesus knew that no amount of weeping for him was going to change what he had to do. Gethsemane had sealed that for him.

It was the will of God the Trinity for him to suffer unimaginable pain in our place. The women's tears were appreciated by Jesus, but they were useless. They could not change a thing.

On the other hand, the women had a chance to repent themselves, and give themselves to prayer and intercession for their sinful countrymen. Their weeping for themselves would not be in vain. Because Jesus died as the Lamb of God, their mourning and tears of repentance for their own people-- beginning with their own need for contrition--could make a difference in eternity. Jesus had a practical view of prayer. It should be directed where it will make a real difference, for nothing is impossible with God.

The second evidence that Jesus had no thought for himself, but only for those he loved and was dying to save, was his refusal of gall or myrrh when he reached Golgotha. The drink was given to deaden the pain of having the nails driven into wrists and ankles in the gaps between the bones.

Crucifixion was a very slow death. Some people lasted up to 48 hours on the cross. The pain-killing function of the drink was a last sip of mercy before unspeakable suffering would wrap the victims in ever-increasing torture. The worst thing about the cross was that people wanted so badly to die, but they could do nothing to hasten death's coming.

Jesus refused to lessen his pain in any of his suffering. He was not doing it for himself, but for us. The only way to pay our price of death in our place, was to taste it as fully as he could. It was priceless grace.

Jesus refused to cheapen the price he paid for you and me. There was never a selfish thought or motivation in Jesus' being. Never. He was pure love in all he said and did, no matter what the consequences were for him.

APPLICATION:

How often do we take the easiest way out of suffering for our Lord?

How selfish are our motives in our prayers, and dealings with other people?

How often do we say, "Don't pray for me. Pray for yourself, and those you love instead?"

What part of Jesus' example in this text speaks to you the most? How will you follow Jesus in this, as your way of honoring him for what he did for you?