

Good Friday: The Day the Innocent Died for the Guilty

Note: This is the next installation of Charisma's Holy Week series.

As dawn broke over Jerusalem, the city stirred awake unaware that this day would mark the most pivotal moment in human history. Jesus of Nazareth, the healer, the teacher, the miracle-worker—now bound and bruised—stood before the religious and political powers of the age. Betrayed by a kiss and abandoned by His closest friends, He faced a series of sham trials, false accusations and merciless injustice. Yet, He did not resist. He had come for this.

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In the early morning hours, Jesus was led before Caiaphas the high priest and the Sanhedrin. They searched for testimony against Him, but none could agree. Finally, the high priest asked directly:

“Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God.” (Matt. 26:63)

Jesus replied, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (v. 64)

The high priest tore his garments in outrage and declared Him guilty of blasphemy. The decision was made—He must die. But the Jewish leaders lacked the authority to carry out a death sentence under Roman rule. So they brought Jesus before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

Pilate found no fault in Him. Even after questioning, and learning that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Him to Herod Antipas, who mocked Jesus and sent Him back. The crowd, stirred by the chief priests, demanded crucifixion. Pilate, trying to avoid further unrest, offered to release one prisoner according to custom—Jesus or Barabbas, a known insurrectionist.

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“Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” they said, “Barabbas!” Pilate said, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said to him, “Let Him be crucified!” (Matt. 27:21–22)

Pilate symbolically washed his hands, declaring himself innocent of Jesus’ blood and handed Him over to be scourged and crucified.

The Roman soldiers stripped Jesus, put a scarlet robe on Him and twisted a crown of thorns into His head. They mocked Him, spat on Him and beat Him. Then they led Him out to a place called Golgotha—“The Place of a Skull.”

There they crucified Him.

Nails were driven into His hands and feet. He was lifted up between two criminals, fulfilling the words of Isaiah: “He was numbered with the transgressors” (Isa. 53:12). Above His head, a sign read: “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”

Even as He hung there in agony, Jesus prayed:

*“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”
(Luke 23:34)*

The soldiers gambled for His garments. Bystanders mocked. The religious leaders jeered, saying, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save."

One of the criminals crucified next to Him joined in the insults. But the other rebuked him and turned to Jesus:

"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." (Luke 23:42)

And Jesus replied with eternal assurance:

"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (v. 43)

Darkness fell over the land from noon until 3 p.m. At the end, Jesus cried out:

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46)

Then, with a loud voice, He declared:

"It is finished!" (John 19:30)

"Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." (Luke 23:46)

At that moment, the earth shook. Rocks split. The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom—signifying that the barrier between God and man had been removed. Even a Roman centurion, witnessing these things, declared:

"Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matt. 27:54)

The Lamb had been slain. The perfect sacrifice had been offered. He bore our griefs, carried our sorrows and was pierced for our transgressions. Though the sky was dark and hope seemed lost, redemption was unfolding.

Jesus' body was taken down before sundown, and a man named Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for His body. Gently, they wrapped Him in a clean linen cloth and laid Him in a new tomb cut out of rock.

The stone was rolled into place.

The world went silent.

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