

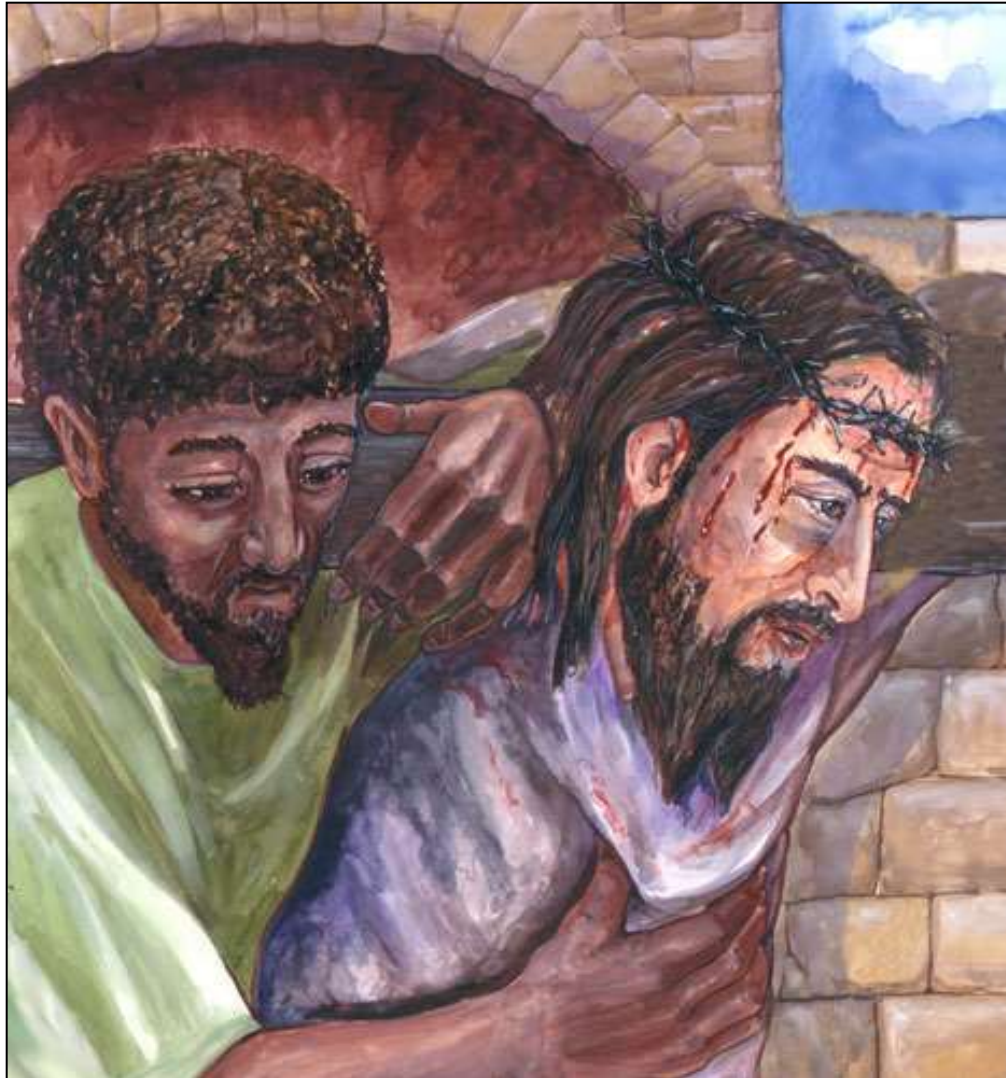
The Cross

the Tragedy and the Triumph

Luke 23 :26 - 56



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.



A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him.



Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children.



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!' Then "'they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"

For if people do these things when the tree is green,
what will happen when it is dry?



Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 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.



Jesus said,
"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

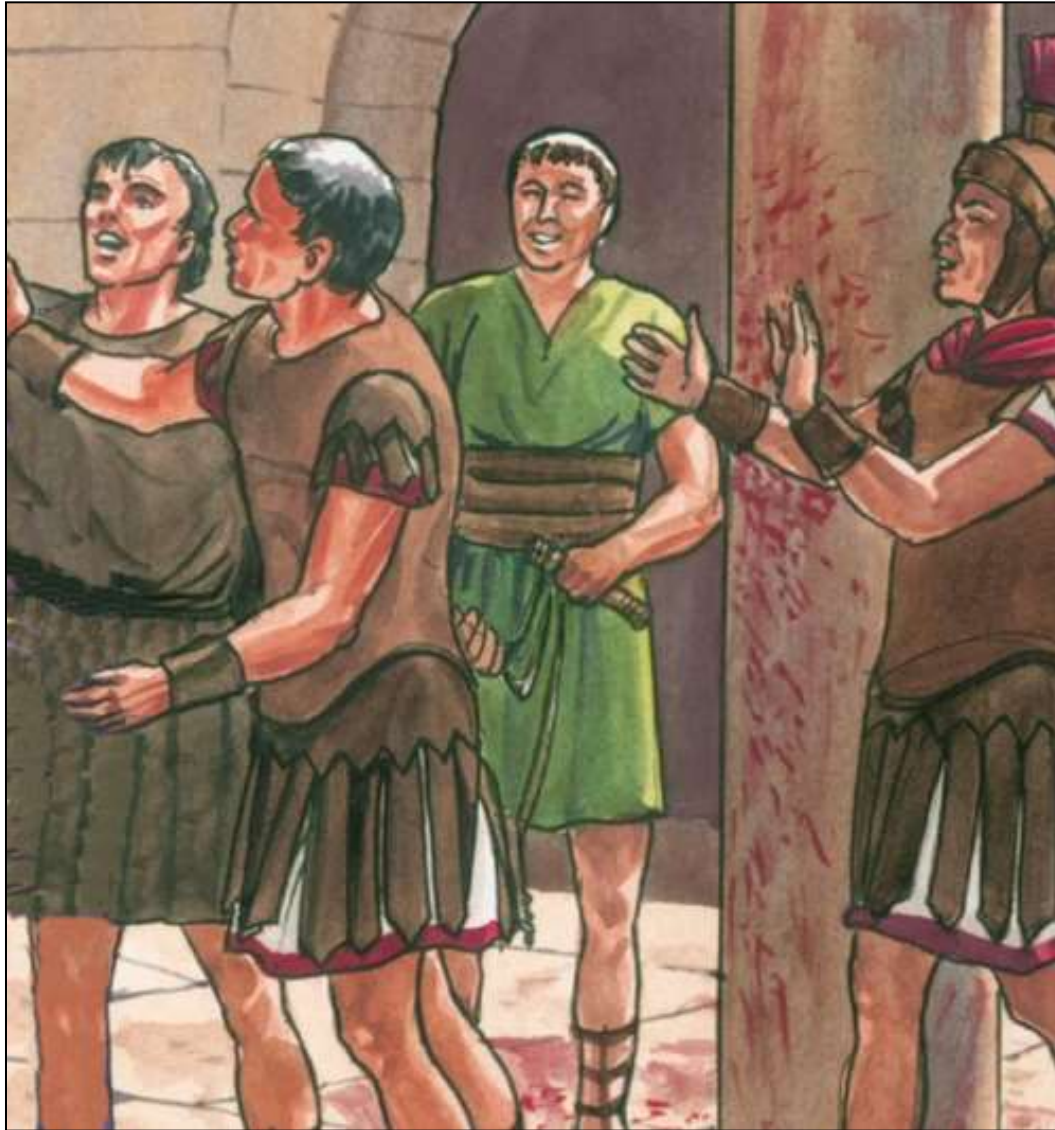


And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him.

They said, "He saved others;
let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One."



The soldiers also came up and mocked him.
They offered him wine vinegar and said,
"If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."



There was a written notice above him, which read:
THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.



One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."



Repentance

Then he said,
"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."
Jesus answered him,
"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."



It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land
until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining.
And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.



Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.



The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.



Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God



Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid.



It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.



Within the tragedy there were pointers to the Triumph
This was not a waste and a failure.

Colossians 2:15

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.