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The Longest Day in the World

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THE LONGEST DAY IN THE WORLD

Jesus, my Lord, lived the longest day in the world. *all history!*

If the world is about 6,000 years old, then mankind has lived through two million, two hundred ninty thousand days. There have been many long days for suffering humanity, but none so long as the one Jesus suffered in A. D. 33.

Matthew tells of the day's beginning. "Early in the morning (perhaps 6:00) all the chief priests and the Jewish elders took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death. They put him in chains and then delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor ." Matthew 27:1-2.

Jesus had already been judged guilty of BLASPHEMY by the Jews the night before. The penalty for this was death by stoning according to Leviticus 24:15-16. But there was a more painful and horrible death than this — the Roman crucifixion. The Jewish rulers wanted Jesus to suffer this. So there had to be a Roman trial too.

Seated in the assembly was Pilate, the fifth Roman procurator of Judea. He was a covetous and cruel master over the Jews. They hated him intensely—except when they needed his vote for ^a death. *penalty.*

Standing before this vile man was Jesus, a teacher, a lover of others, a kind man to the sick and to little children. For WHAT? could such a man be on trial here? Pilate wondered the same thing.

"Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked in Matthew 27:11.

Jesus was silent, except to say, "You have said this."

"Don't you hear the accusations against you?" Pilate cried.

Jesus said nothing. Pilate was astonished. Matthew 27:14.

7/6.

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1148.

Knowing that Pilate would not be impressed by the charge of blasphemy against the God of the Jews, the Jewish leaders had prepared three false accusations. First, Jesus was a revolutionary against Rome. *a seditionist.* This could bring crucifixion. Second, He had taught the people not to pay their Roman taxes. The penalty for this was crucifixion. And third, He said that He was the true King, and not Caesar at Rome. *These were all lies.* Luke 23:1-2.

No loyal Roman governor could treat such political accusations lightly. Treason against Rome! How could such a charge be overcome? Caesar was so fickle and so temperamental—and so shallow. If even the slightest mention of ~~such~~ treason, whether true or false, reached his ears, he would at once demand "Why was not this rebel crucified immediately?" "Take no chances with the enemies of Rome, and especially none with the Jews."

But Pilate did take a chance.

In John 19:5 Pilate exclaimed before the enraged mob, "Behold the Man!" *Painting to Jesus.* Three times in John 18 and 19 Pilate said:

"I find no guilt in Him." 18:38.

"I find no guilt in Him." 19:4.

"Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." 19:6. *no*

But the Jews reminded Pilate that they could not administer the supreme penalty.

This caused him to ask, "Shall I crucify your king?" John 19:15.

The Jewish reply was deafening: "We have no king but Caesar!" ~~19:15.~~

Then Pilate tried again: "I will chastise Him and release Him." ~~Lk. 23:16.~~

This brought on an even greater uproar: "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." *Lk.* 23:21.

Again Pilate tried to reason with the maddened Israelites. "Why, what evil hath He done?" ~~23:22.~~

5 min. gone

This righteous question brought on the lethal question: "Are you a friend of Caesar's if you let this man go? Every man who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar!" John 19:12.

Feebly, Pilate made one last effort to ~~be~~ ^{do} right. The governor always released one prisoner at the time of the Passover. He offered to release Jesus. But the throng demanded, "Away with this man and release unto us Barabas." Luke 23:18. Pilate freed the murderer.

When Pilate saw that he could not prevail, but rather a riot was in the making, and fearing that his lack of control over the mob might be grounds for a reprimand from Rome, with a simple gesture he dipped his fingers into a bowl of water. This was his cleansing ceremony.

"I am innocent of the blood of this just person," he said, "see ye to it."

"Then answered the people, His blood be upon us and on our children." Matthew 27:24. *and it was!*

Crucifixion was reserved for slaves, rebels and false prophets. It was too ignominious for a Roman citizen under any circumstances. Now both the Jews and the Romans thought it just right for Jesus. This day was dragging by very slowly. It was to be a long day.

From Pilate, Jesus went to the common hall. This was to the side of the Pretorium, where Jesus had been condemned. Our Lord's hands were tied to metal rings in the columns supporting the ceiling. His clothing had been stripped from his back and he was bent over to stretch the skin tight. When the lictor's / or whipman's powerful arm swung forward at the end of the whip ~~at the~~ ^{cords} and down, the bits of metal and bone/cut viciously into ~~into~~ the flesh *and* ~~and~~ muscles of Jesus' back. Soon the leather strips and the pieces of

bone and metal were soaked with blood. Again and again Jesus ~~moaned~~ moaned and gasped as the ruthless whip cut into the tissues of His back. And in a simple gesture the lictor measured the remaining life in the body, and as ~~rapidly~~ ^{suddenly} as he had started the scourging — he stopped.

Motionless and hardly breathing, Jesus was lifted into a seat. The world's greatest display of mockery was about to begin. A scarlet robe was ~~draped~~ around his raw and bleeding back. A crown was forced upon His head. A crown of thorns that dug deeply into the tissues of his scalp. What difference did this pain make? He would be dead before long anyway. A reed was forced into his hand and in derision the soldiers mocked Him saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!"

In silent agony Jesus sat before these heathen soldiers. They laughed at Him. They pushed Him. They slapped His face. They spit in His face. They snatched the reed from His hand and ~~drove~~ ^{by repeated blows on his head} the thorns deeper into His skull. Matthew 27:26-30.

If ever Jesus would have wanted to call down twelve legions of angels from Heaven to destroy wicked men, surely it would be now. But He uttered not a word.

The scarlet robe was ~~wrenched~~ ^{then} from Jesus' back. They planned to crucify Him in his own garments.

Jesus was lifted to His feet and ushered out the doorway into the court. open/~~was~~ His lungs filled with sweet and refreshing air. His mind cleared and his strength ebbed back into his aching limbs. And none too soon. Two soldiers brought a heavy wooden cross and commanded Him to take it on His shoulder. Another soldier carried a hand full of large metal spikes and an ~~ugly~~ ugly hammer. It was nearing ~~mid-morning~~ mid-morning and the day ~~had~~ ^{like} already seemed an eternity for Jesus.

Many a man had died of the Roman scourging — long before he reached ~~the place of crucifixion~~ the place of crucifixion. But as long as Jesus could stand and walk, He would be compelled to carry His cross.

Alongside the Lord walked a Roman with a sign in his hand. It was printed in Greek, Hebrew and Latin. It read, "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Matt. 27:37. This inscription was written by Pilate himself. J. 19:19.

The sun was ^{higher} ~~rising~~ overhead now. The heat was biting into Jesus' wounds as the lictor's whip had done earlier. His fever was rising at a rapid pace. His face was on fire.

Jesus stumbled along and drug the cross as long as ^{his} strength would permit. He was determined to drink every bitter drug in the cup of suffering. He had to, if He were to bear our sins and carry our griefs. The spirit was willing, but the body was weak. Jesus dropped to one knee first; then his trembling increased. One more effort and the cross was off the ground again—~~again~~—but not for long. This time He crashed to the ground on both knees and the falling timbers threw Him on his back. Pain shot through His arms, down His legs, over His shoulders and almost burst His head ~~wide~~ open. Jesus could not lift His cross alone ^{anymore}. "They found a man of Cyrene, Simon, by name: him they compelled to bear His Cross. Matt. 27:32.

The procession of Death shuffled through the streets of Jerusalem, through the gate and on toward the place of the skull. From Pilate's palace, to ~~the~~ Calvary, was about 3/5ths of a mile. Jesus, sick and weak and weary, stumbled along the way, helping Simon of Cyrene ~~to~~ carry the cross as best He could. The land began to slope upward now and Golgatha was just ahead. And on Golgatha was crucifixion.

11 MIN
GONE

The procession was just nearing the top of the hill when Jesus fell back, paused to take a deep breath, took up the cross again and pushed forward. Finally/they reached the crest of the skull.

People by the hundreds had gathered around the base of Golgatha to see another spectacle of suffering. Thieves would be hung there today. They would writhe in agony, in the presence of the curious. They would curse their tormenters. They would spit blood on their executors. Then the heat of the blazing sun and the exposure to the elements, and the incessant dripping of blood would drive these wretched ~~souls~~ ^{bodies} into shock. ~~Then~~ ^{For} hours they would hang as ~~mere~~ ^{mere} breathing bodies —virtually without souls. And should the crucifixion come on Friday, ^{mercy} would attend it. Before the coming of the Sabbath the soldiers would come and break the leg bones of the senseless carcasses. ~~MMMMMM~~ Sweet death would come. Society ~~had~~ ^{will have} had her revenge. Justice ~~had~~ ^{will have} been served. This was Crucifixion!

All Roman soldiers were not bad. And the bad ones were not totally inhuman. One came to Jesus with a cup of vinegar, mingled with gall. Although this drink would not lessen the pain so much, the drug would anesthatize the mind. It would not register cognition of what was happening to the body. It would not ^{the} allow/memory of one hour to be heaped upon the memory of the next. / Jesus refused to drink. He must remember the agony of humanity, the frailty of ^{human} mentality, and the suffering of the human ^{body} being.

Jesus, along with two thieves, ~~were~~ ^{was} stripped of ~~their~~ ^{this} clothing and a simple cloth was wound around ~~their~~ ^{his} loins, between ~~their~~ ^{this} thighs and the end tucked in at the back. Outer garments, inner-garments and sandals were heaped in a pile to the side. ~~MMMMMM~~ All was in readiness for crucifixion.

In a polite society the view of the Crucifixion is almost unbearable.
It is nearly as bad as SIN is in the ^{sight} ~~view~~ of God.

There is no easy / or better way / to crucify a man, so it was rudely done.

The executioner laid the crossbeam on the ground behind Jesus.
Centurians ~~then~~ backed Him upon it and tripped Him off balance. The dry,
thirsty timber soaked in His blood as He was pinned to its frame.

A centurian now held each arm and each leg as the executioner
began his ugly work. He took a five-inch nail and his hammer. A soldier's
knee was placed on the right wrist of Jesus. Everything was steadied
as the Roman placed the point of the nail into the palm of Jesus' hand.
One mighty stroke / drove the ~~iron~~ ^{point} through the flesh and deep into the wood.
Another stroke or two and the company was ready for the left hand.
The process was repeated. / Jesus groaned softly. Sweat and blood ~~was~~ ^{were}
pouring from his fevered body.

The longer spikes were used for the feet. And this bloody job
was soon over also. The worst was yet to come. The day was getting longer.

The centurians grabbed the cross beams, at the given signal, and
lifted Jesus heavenward. This is what He meant when He said, "And I, if
I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32.
A hole had been chisled out of the rock. The higher the body was raised
the more of the body's weight pulled against the nails. Finally the
cross stood straight up. The zenith of agony had come! The soldiers
directed the base of the cross to the hole in the ground ~~and~~...paused,
and then let the cross fall into the slot with a sudden jolt. Flesh
tore at both ~~feet and hands~~ ^{hands & feet of Jesus} and blood flowed freer. Then the soldiers
stood back to gaze upon the nature of their work.

Fire flashed again through every nerve, muscle and sinew of Jesus' body, as the cross so rudely found its place in the earth.

Muscle cramps began to form in Jesus' arms, legs and chest.

A momentary paralysis almost prevented Him drawing air into His lungs ^{at all.} in all the universe. The greatest and grandest spirit/was now in its supreme test.

When the blurring left the eyes of Christ, He could see the milling throng of doubting Jews, the stationary Roman guards—impersonal in their feelings. This was just a job to them. The Jewish leaders stood with sneers and smirks. Tears were flowing from the eyes of the gentle women at the cross. Only the Apostle John was in sight and he wasn't very near the cross at this time.

~~THE~~ The Jewish leaders began to speak: "He saved others; himself He cannot save. See! Can He?" "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him! for He said I am the Son of God." Matthew 27:42 and 43.

Jesus slowly raised His head from the hideous to the heavenly.

1. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34.

Jesus then saw John—closer this time. He spoke to ~~MMMM~~ His mother first.

2. "Woman, behold your son." And then "Behold your mother." John 19:26-27.

The two thieves had both been skeptical about this one dying between them. But now one saw things differently. Never had he seen or heard such things. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom", he pleaded.

3. Jesus replied, "I tell you this: today you will be in Paradise with Me." Luke 23:43.

Shortly thereafter the earth turned dark and stayed in blackness for three hours. The light of heaven had been turned off. The Father

would see no more! Three long, dark, agonizing hours Jesus hung above man and below God.

"Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.....He hath poured out His soul unto death and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Isaiah 53:4-12.

4. When Jesus could stand it no longer his soul, his mind and his spirit cried out, "My God, My God, why did you abandon me?" This was His fourth saying on the cross.

5. Then more in a breathy gasp, than articulate speech, Jesus uttered two more pityful words: "I thirst." John 19:28.

6. And again, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Luke 23:46.

7. And finally, three words: in a barely audible whisper: "It is finished." John 19:30.

The body of Jesus, supported by the nails in His hands and feet, *finally* sagged forward. He was still. He was dead

The longest day in the world came to an end about 3:10 p.m. — the afternoon before the Passover Feast—A. D. 33.

INVITATION:

It was all over now. Jesus hung motionless on the cross. The people began to wander away from this scene of pain and death. They were not so sure now that they had received the satisfaction they ~~had~~ expected in coming to this spectacle. They were not sure at all! And many were confused and others even sorry they had come.

Little had happened that they had expected to happen. And much had been said and done by Jesus that left them stunned and sad.

Most of the people walked back into Jerusalem. For another two hours or so they could turn toward Golgatha and see three crosses standing. The view was different now, *somehow*

the one between the other two.

It was the same center cross. The same body nailed to that tree. It was the same outstretched arms. But they looked so much alive now. They seemed to be beckoning to the whole world. They seemed to be inviting a sin-sick and warped and twisted people to love, and forgiveness *to* *to be saved.* and ~~salvation.~~

These are the same arms that reach out to you and me today.

Jesus says: "Come unto me / all ye that labor and are heavy laden / and I will give you rest. Come / take my yoke upon you, / and learn of Me, / for I am meek and lowly in heart, / and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy / and My burden is light." Matt. 11:28-30.

JESUS CALLS THE SINNER today *openly* to confess His name and be baptized for the remission of sins. *math. 10:32 + acts 22:16,*

If we will do this, then the events of the Longest Day in the World will NOT have been in vain.

COME AS WE STAND AND SING!