

HOLY WEEK: PARTICIPANT
WEEK 7: WEEK OF APRIL 14
GOLGOTHA
Luke 23:26–56

OPENING

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
Was there ever grief like His?
Friends through fear His cause disowning,
Foes insulting His distress
Many hands were raised to wound Him,
None would intervene to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him
Was the stroke that justice gave.

—“Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted” (*LSB* 451, v.21)

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 23:26-56), Luke relates the journey to Golgotha and the crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus. Golgotha (translated as “The Place of a Skull” was a place named either for the shape of a rock there or for how much death happened there. It was hard to miss this place of shame as you exited the city of Jerusalem so all could see the penalty for being a criminal in the Roman world.

As Luke details the response of the crowds that followed throughout the day to see Jesus die, the differences between the sinful human actions and Jesus’ final act of true love are shown in stark opposition. Yet despite the vile acts of the human heart, Jesus’ death is a pure sacrifice of atonement made for them and for us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As Jesus is being led to the cross, and a crowd of curious onlookers and mourners follow after Him, He prophesied by speaking to the “Daughters of Jerusalem”. What is He foretelling of here and how does it show His love shining through these intense moments leading up to His death?

2. The sinful people at Jesus’ crucifixion, both onlookers and soldiers, scoffed at Jesus. In what ways do verses 34-38 tell that they mocked him? Ironically, how is Jesus responding to their mocking?

3. The moment of Jesus’ death was known by many. Compare verses 44-47 with Matthew 27:45-54. What image of the city develops in your mind? What are some physical events that took place at the death of Jesus?

4. What irony do we see in the change of the people’s actions at Golgotha after the death of Jesus?

5. Read Deuteronomy 21:22-23. How is this good news for us and how does Luke 23:50-56 fulfill that passage from Deuteronomy.

CONCLUSION

As sinful people Holy Week is a time of reflection and repentance. It is uncomfortable to be aware of how much suffering our sins caused Christ on the cross. Christ's payment on the cross was the one act in history strong enough that the temple curtain could be torn in two. Because of that sacrifice of the innocent lamb we now have a direct line to go to God with our petitions. Christ's death and rest in the tomb fulfilled the words of the Old Testament prophets that promised a savior: "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed." – Isaiah 53:5.

CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, you put the weight of all of our sins on your Son so that He could bear the punishment we deserve. Instead of answering His prayer to remove Your cup of suffering You laid it all on Him because of Your love for us.

As we repent of our sins and acknowledge the cost that our sins had on Jesus, help us to be always reminded of Your love that put this plan of Salvation into motion. Thank you for making us holy through Jesus' payment on our behalf and help us to live in the joyful knowledge that we are holy to You.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who died on the cross for us. Amen.