

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JOHN 19

When it comes to roads there are different types: dirt roads, and paved roads, and country roads, and super highways, and back alleys, and cobblestone streets...

There are famous roads: Wall Street, Pennsylvania Ave., Sunset Boulevard, Peachtree Street, the German Autobahn, Boardwalk and Park Place, the Road to the Final Four... and of course, the Yellow Brick Road...

There're even famous roads in the Bible: In Acts 9, the angry rabbi Saul became a follower of Jesus on the Road to Damascus... In Luke 24, the risen Lord Jesus walked with two disciples on the Emmaus Road... In Acts 8, Philip met an Ethiopian on the Road to Gaza...

But of all the roads - biblical and otherwise - the most famous is the Via Dolorosa. It's the path Jesus took from Pilate's Judgment Hall to a hill called Golgotha, to the tomb of a rich man... "Via Dolorosa" is Latin for "the way of sorrows" - and indeed it was... Today, I want to take you for a walk down the Via Dolorosa...

I would prefer to charter a plane and fly you all to Jerusalem's Old City. We could explore its arches and stone streets - and even walk the alley-ways together.

Yet, there are Jerusalem-ites who comb those streets daily and never feel the importance of the events we'll discuss this morning... Likewise, there are people who read John 19 and take for granted what once occurred.

This is why I'm praying something else happens with us today. As we read John's account of the cross, I'm praying it hits us, "He did it for me!" From time to time this morning, we're going to push pause and take a moment to whisper to ourselves, "He did this for me."

For if we understand the real message of John 19, there will be tear stains in our Bible on these very pages.

Recall where we are in Jesus' final hours...

There was a scuffle in the Garden. Jesus was arrested. Then tried before the Jews at the house of Caiaphas. Afterward, he was taken to the governor, Pilate.

As a Passover present, Pilate was willing to release a prisoner. The Jews choose a brigand over Jesus.

The story continues in Chapter 19, "So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him." This was a precursor to crucifixion. It was called "the half-way death." The ordeal was so brutal that many victims never survived...

The scourging was carried out with a "flagellum" - a whip consisting of 12-13 leather thongs attached to a single handle. A lead ball at the ends of the cords weighed them down. Pieces of glass or metal were embedded in the thongs between the ball and handle.

The victim was tied by the wrists and dangled a foot off the ground. The beating consisted of 39 lashes at full force. It was carried out by professional, hardcore executioners, accustomed to *the sight of blood and screams of pain*. They had callous consciences.

The first blows caused welts on the shoulders and back... By the seventh or eighth blow, the glass and metal had sliced through the skin layers and were churning up muscle... It was not uncommon for a rib bone to fly off the body after a blow. The victim's back became the texture of hamburger. When the beating was over, the victim was cut down. He hit the pavement in a puddle of his own urine, feces, sweat, and blood.

The ancient historian, Eusebius, writes of the martyrs who endured these beatings, "(They were) torn by scourges down to deep seated veins and arteries, so that the hidden contents of the recesses of their bodies, their entrails and organs, were exposed."

Medical Doctor, William Edwards, gives a description of a scourging victim, "the iron balls would cause deep contusions... the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and subcutaneous muscles, and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh."

Let that sink in, "*Quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh.*" After this, Jesus literally looked like a sacrificed lamb. Now close your eyes and whisper, "He did it for me."

Verse 2, "And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head..." These "*thorns*" were "*briers.*" They were sharp, pointed needles. There are several species of Jerusalem plants that grow such thorns.

And the torturers didn't lightly lay this crown on Jesus' head. They smashed it in place. They literally screwed the needles

into His scalp - like little daggers that caused blood to flow down Jesus' disfigured face.

Here's the only crown King Jesus ever wore... *a crown of thorns...* Since it was man's sin that brought thorns and thistles into an originally, perfect world, now in bearing the sin of the world, it was symbolically fitting for Jesus to be crowned with a wreath of thorns.

“And they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they struck Him with their hands.” The prophet Isaiah spoke prophetically of an additional gory detail not mentioned in the Gospels...

Isaiah 50:6 is a prophecy quoting Jesus 700 years before His first coming, “I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out My beard; I did not hide my face from shame and spitting.” When my kids were babies, I had a beard, and at times, they would grab it with their little fingers and jerk - *it hurt!* But imagine grown men ripping out your beard - yanking out handfuls of skin, blood, and flesh.

Hey, close your eyes and whisper, “He did it for me.”

Today, when you go to Old Jerusalem, you can visit the place where this scourging took place. It's called the “Lithostratos”, which means “raised pavement.”

This was part of the Antonio Fortress - Pilate's judgment hall and Roman headquarters on the Temple Mount. In modern times, the pavement is several feet below street level, but excavations allow you to walk on the stones on which Jesus was scourged. The reddish tint gives you the impression that

they're stained with blood. In a sense, they are. Jesus' DNA is in the crevasses. For me, the Lithostratos is holy ground. It's a place for reflection. We pause there for as long as we can.

And an amazing discovery was found at the Lithostratos. Carved into the stones are lines and circles that make a game Roman soldiers played on their victims. It wasn't unique to Israel. It was found in Roman outposts around the empire. It was called, "The Kings' Game." It mocked the victim and entertained the calloused soldiers. This is why they twisted a crown of thorns on Jesus' brow and threw a purple robe on Him.

Apparently, it all was part of the game. **Here's a picture...** The **circle** represents the king's crown... **"B"** is the initial for Basilicus, which is Latin for *king*... The **scorpion** is the symbol of the Roman legion... The **double square** is the dice the soldiers tossed...

There's also a **horizontal line** that represents the victim's life... Later, a **sword crosses the line**, which indicates where in the game the victim loses his life...

This all adds to the horror of what was done to our Lord Jesus. Imagine, they played a game with God's Son. They were *making sport* out of *killing God!*

Verse 4, "Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him." Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.

And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!" In Latin, it's the phrase, "**ecce homo.**" Today, Pilate's words are a famous

phrase. It challenges the skeptic to examine the majesty, and miracles, and identity of Jesus.

If you take the time and make the effort to *Behold the Man*, your doubts will flee and your faith will grow. You'll fall down and worship Jesus as Lord and God.

But when Pilate uttered these words they were an attempt to conjure up sympathy for Jesus. As cruel as it seems, the awful scourging Pilate inflicted on our Lord was his attempt to engineer Jesus' release...

How could anyone with a shred of decency not pity a man Who'd just endured such torture. Surely, the Jews would say "*enough*" and mercifully set Jesus free.

But verse 6, "When the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"

"Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him." *The governor wanted no part in a lynching...* "The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid..."

According to Matthew 27:19, Pilate's wife - history knows her as Claudia Procula - sent word to her husband concerning Jesus... "Have nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him." *His wife's dream - and the power of Jesus' presence - and now Jesus' claim of being God's Son - all combined to shake Pilate up.*

He wants to placate the Jews - that's his job - but He can't escape the searching gaze of this man named "Jesus." Pilate is a politician - he's a professional compromiser - why won't the Jews work with him?

Verse 9, "And (he) went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Jesus isn't interested in chit-chat.

At this point, Jesus isn't going to release any new information to Pilate until Pilate obeys what he already knows to be true? *In fact, why should Jesus talk to anyone who won't obey what he's already told him?*

Could this be the reason He isn't speaking to you?

Pilate tries to threaten Jesus - flex his Roman muscle - "Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?" Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above." Pilate thinks he's in control, but he's just a pawn in a bigger drama. Everything was unfolding according to God's purpose.

In reality, it wasn't Jesus Who was on trial before Pilate - *it was Pilate who was on trial before Jesus!*

Jesus adds the observation, "Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." Jesus almost empathizes with the difficulty of Pilate's predicament.

Verse 12, "From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks

against Caesar.” Josephus, a Jewish historian, records that the Jews had already been complaining to Rome about Pilate's heavy-handed tactics and insensitivity toward their religion.

Pilate is between a rock and hard place. He wants to show Jesus justice, but at the same time, he's watching out for his own skin. Pilate is going to have to choose... *political expedience* or *personal integrity*?

“When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.” This was the Lithostratos. It was part of the Antonio Fortress, the Roman outpost in the Temple.

Realize, these types of pavement existed all over the empire. They were traditional sites of Roman justice.

History tells us that when Julius Caesar traveled into battle, he would carry a portable mosaic pavement that he would set up to judge his conquered opponents.

Verse 14, “Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. Unlike the other Gospel writers, John uses Roman time. It was the sixth hour or 6:00 AM. The Jews counted the hours of the day from dawn - the Romans began at midnight.

We'll talk about “*the Preparation Day*” in a moment.

“And (Pilate) said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” “But they cried out, “Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests

answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led Him away."

The motto of Rome was "Let justice be done, though the heavens fall!" As a Roman, Pilate had a great respect for justice, yet he couldn't hold off the hatred of the Jews. When they call into question his loyalty to Rome, Pilate breaks and he gives in to their demands.

In the end, he buckles to the political pressure.

There is a legend that following Jesus' resurrection, Pilate's wife Claudia became a Christian. Whereas, Pilate had a different plight. Because of his persistent Jewish disapproval, his superior, Vitellius, ordered him back to Rome. Yet the disgraced governor never arrived. A fourth-century church historian, Eusebius, tells us Pilate committed suicide en route to Rome.

Verse 17, "And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha..." The Greek word is "Calvaria" or "Calvary." It's a derivative of our English term "cranium." Jesus was taken to "the place of the skull."

In Jerusalem, north of the Old City, just outside the Damascus Gate, there is a former quarry. (We visit here on our tours.) Solomon harvested granite from this site to use in the construction of the Temple. And there is a rock cliff, which years ago looked eerily like a skull.

Today, the site is in front of a bus terminal, and the fumes from the buses are eroding the skull-shape - but you can still

see it... And just beyond the cliff is a tomb, and that tomb is surrounded by a beautiful garden...

In 1883, a British General named Charles Gordon identified this rocky cliff as "**Golgotha**" of Bible times. Today, the hill is called "**Gordon's Calvary.**"

Romans performed their crucifixions by busy roads, for all to see. They wanted to intimidate the populace.

Golgotha is alongside the Road to Damascus. Either Jesus was crucified on the top of the mountain for everyone to see - or at its base, right next to the road.

Our idea of a cross is the traditional shape of a lower case "t." But Romans configured crosses in different ways. Some were "Xs," "Ys," "Is" - even upper case "Ts." We're not sure the actual shape of Jesus' cross.

He was though forced to carry its crossbeam, which may have weighed as much as 75 pounds. And it was carried quite a distance from the Fortress at the heart of the city to Calvary, north of the city, outside its walls.

"Where they crucified Him..." And never skip over what this means... Crucifixion was the most heinous form of execution ever devised. CS Lewis noted, "**The crucifixion did not become common in art until all who had seen a real one had died off.**" If you'd seen a live crucifixion, you would've had nightmares for months.

The victim's body was stretched out on a piece of timber. His ankles were coupled together and a single iron spike was

driven through them into the wood. A large spike was also nailed through the victim's wrists.

The wood was then lifted to an upright position where the weight of the victim's body would press against the wounds causing searing pain.

Every breath required the crucified to press down on the wounds to hike up his torso and expand his lungs. Some victims collapsed and suffocated to death. Other men died of a ruptured heart. Non-oxygenated blood gets sluggish - the blood pressure drops - an overworked heart literally explodes in the man's chest.

Who crucified Jesus? The Jews? Yes, they played a role. *The Romans?* Yes, they also played a part. *But who really crucified Jesus?* Whisper, "He did it for me."

We drove the nails into Jesus' hands and feet.

It's said, "Every man is born with a fist full of nails, and he dies with his hands empty." We're all guilty!

"And two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center." Here's another indignity suffered by Jesus. Usually, the worst criminal hung centerstage.

Verse 19, "Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin." Jerusalem was, and still is, a cosmopolitan city. Jews worldwide visited Jerusalem at Passover.

Thus, this placard, describing the accusation against Jesus, could've been read in the three most common languages of the day - Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

Hebrew was the language of religion. Greek was the language of culture and philosophy. Latin was the language of law and government. All three - religion, culture, government - had a hand in crucifying Jesus.

Verse 21, "Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews." ' "Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." This was Pilate's last dig at the Jews. He didn't like the fact he'd been bullied into a verdict he didn't want to issue.

"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic." The normal number of executioners dispatched to a crucifixion were four soldiers and one centurion. Like all Jewish men, Jesus wore five pieces of clothing: a turban or headband, sandals, a belt, an outer cloak, and an inner garment.

Thus, there was a piece of clothing for each of the four men - along with an inner tunic they all could split.

But "Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece." Jesus' inner tunic, or undershirt, would've been knee-length. Like a woman's nightshirt. It was long and seamless, too valuable to rip in pieces.

Verse 24 "They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," (and John

adds) that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things." It was all prophetic. Details were foretold in advance. John quotes Psalm 22:18.

Here's the ultimate irony. Jesus bears the sin of the world, while the soldiers gamble away His shirt.

God's back is torn and bleeding. His heart is breaking. The veil in the Temple is torn in two from top to bottom - while soldiers shoot craps for a cloak to avoid tearing Jesus' tunic. They were so wrapped up in what they could get, they missed the most consequential act in the history of the world, which describes millions of Americans. We're slaves to stuff.

Here's their prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray my Keurig machine to keep. I pray my stocks are on the rise, and that my analyst is wise. That all the wine I sip is white, and that my hot tub is watertight.

That racquetball won't get too tough, and that all my sushi's fresh enough. I pray my smartphone upgrade works, and my career path won't lose its perks.

My microwave won't radiate, and my condo won't depreciate. I pray my health club doesn't close, and my money market grows. And if I go broke before I wake, I pray my Volvo they don't take." Rather than fixate on the tunic, let's take heed to Pilate, "*Behold the Man.*"

Hey, you need to remember, "He did it for me."

Verse 25, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and

Mary Magdalene.” Three Mary’s stood by Jesus as He hung from the cross. They showed more devotion and courage than most of the male disciples.

Check out the other three Gospels and you’ll find another name mentioned among the ladies at the cross, **“Salome”** - the mother of James and John.

It’s possible she was there in addition to the four women mentioned in verse 25 - or she could’ve been who John calls **“His mother’s sister”** - which is provocative... For if **Salome** was Mary of Nazareth’s sister, it would mean Jesus, James, and John were cousins, and that Jesus’ mother Mary was John’s aunt.

This family connection helps explain what happens next... **“When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved** (this is the way John refers to himself) **standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.”** Usually, a widow was taken in by her relatives. It could be that John and Mary were family.

It’s appalling that Roman Catholics worship Mary and ascribe to her traits that belong only to Jesus. Yet Protestants can be guilty of an unfair, *Mary backlash*.

For of all His disciples, Mary made the greatest sacrifices to follow. Three decades earlier, her whole world was turned topsy-turvy by the news that she would miraculously birth a child. Now at the foot of the cross, Mary watches that child brutally tortured and executed.

Her sacrifice had no atoning benefits, but it brought glory to God and exemplified whole-hearted surrender.

Think of what must've gone through Mary's mind as she stood at the cross... Did she remember the myrrh, the embalming fluid the wise men brought to her baby? Did the purpose of that present finally dawn on Mary?

Perhaps the words of old Simeon in the Temple still rang in Mary's ears, "Yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also." Now she suddenly feels the stab!

Mary had surrendered all her dreams to the will of God, and now Jesus rewards her sacrifice by ensuring her future. He turns her care over to the Apostle John. She would spend the rest of her life under his roof.

Verse 28, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth." This was the cheap vinegar wine that the soldiers drank.

Earlier on the cross, Jesus rejected the narcotic He was offered. This drink wasn't to deaden the pain. It moistened His lips so He could utter His final words.

And hyssop is a leafy plant. Its use means Jesus must've been crucified several feet off the ground since they needed a branch to reach the sponge to His lips.

"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" The phrase, "It is finished!" is actually one word in

the original Greek language, *"Tetelestai."* And it was used in a number of ways...

A **servant** finishing an assignment would say to his boss, *"Tetelestai..."* A **priest** inspecting a sacrifice and finding it faultless would declare it, *"Tetelestai..."* An **artist** upon putting the finishing touches on his painting might sigh, *"Tetelestai..."* And after a **customer** paid the balance of his bill, the merchant would write across the ledger, *"Tetelestai" (paid in full.)*

On the cross, Jesus did all this and more: God's Servant completed the task He was sent to do... Our High Priest initiated a flawless, sinless sacrifice... The Artist of God's poema, Jesus, put the finishing touches on the portrait of His redemption... And our Divine Accountant paid in full the penalty for our sin...

Jesus tied up all the loose ends of our salvation. On the cross, He finished His work of redemption. Now all that comes afterward is the realization of that work.

An eccentric old evangelist named, Alexander Wooten, was once working in his shop behind his house. He was visited by an exasperated young man.

The fellow asked, *"Sir, what must I do to be saved?"*

Wooten replied, *"It's too late!"* He became desperate, *"Please, isn't there anything I can do to be saved?"*

The evangelist explained, *"It's too late for you to do anything. The work is already done. All you have to do is believe!"* This is the glorious hope of the Gospel. And again, here we should whisper, *"He did it for me."*

Verse 30, “And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” The word translated “*bowed*” literally means “*to recline your head on a pillow.*” When Jesus finished His work on earth, He laid His head in the Father's lap.

And, “*He gave up his spirit.*” Jesus’ life wasn't taken from Him. He wasn't a *victim*, He was the *victor*.

Jesus voluntarily laid down His life for us.

“Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.” John says this was a special Sabbath, “*a high day.*” The normal Sabbath was on Saturday, but during Passover Week Judaism inserted a second Sabbath on Friday. John says Jesus was crucified prior to this special Friday Sabbath.

Thus, this Day of Preparation was Thursday.

This is one reason many Bible teachers, including myself, believe Jesus was NOT crucified on Friday, but Thursday. In the big picture, it doesn't matter, but I think we should celebrate *Good Thursday*, not *Good Friday*.

Remember too, Jesus predicted in Matthew 12:40, “As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

It's hard to account for 3 days and 3 nights - or 72 hours - if Jesus was only in the grave from Friday until Sunday morning... Some folks count partial days, but the phrase “*days and nights*” seems to imply 24 hours.

The Jewish day was reckoned from sunset to sunset. So since Jesus' crucifixion ended late in the afternoon, the women hurried up the burial so they could observe the special Friday Sabbath that started at sundown.

I believe Jesus' was crucified on a Thursday - but do your own research and draw your own conclusion!

“Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him.”

This was Rome's sole act of mercy. Victims often hung on the cross for days, but break their legs and they could no longer push themselves up, expand their lungs, and breathe. They died quickly of asphyxiation. Thus, breaking their legs put them out of their misery.

“But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.” Jesus was an exception to this Roman custom. The soldiers didn't need to break His legs since Jesus was already dead.

“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.”

Medical doctors tell us the only time the blood breaks down into water and plasma is in the case of a heart that ruptures. Jesus literally died of a broken heart.

There's also intriguing symbolism on display here.

When God created a bride for Adam, He opened his side and removed a rib. Now God opens up the side of *the last Adam, Jesus* - and removes blood and water that He uses to fashion for Jesus a bride, the Church.

Verse 35, “And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.” John was this eyewitness. He reports these events to stir up our faith.

And if John were here tonight, I think he would tell us to close our eyes and whisper, “He did it for me.”

“For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, “Not one of His bones shall be broken.” This was the fulfillment of Exodus 12:46.

The Law of Moses forbids the bones of the Passover lamb from being broken. And Jesus is our Passover.

Verse 37 points out another fulfillment of prophecy. “And again another Scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.” This is from Zechariah 12:10.

At Jesus’ second coming, last day’s Israel will look on Jesus and realize the mistake of rejecting Him. The NT teaches that in the end, Israel will repent and believe.

Verse 38, “After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews...”

This Joseph had been a *secret saint*, an *undercover Christian*... now the ole boy comes out of the closet.

And in a day like ours, when anybody and everybody with a twisted perversion is “*coming out*” and flaunting their sin, I think it’s time for those of us who love Jesus to come out and say so. *Let’s go public with our faith!*

Now Joseph “asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus.” There’s an ancient record of this

conversation... Pilate said, "*Joe, you're usually pretty stingy. Sure you want to give away a perfectly good tomb?*" Joseph answered, "Oy vey, Governor, you're right, but Jesus only needs it for the weekend!" It turned out to be just a three-day lease.

Verse 39, "*And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.*" Nicodemus could've saved money. This was the biggest waste of money in history... *the burial spices used on Jesus!*

It's interesting too, the amount of spices Nicodemus supplies... One hundred pounds were the preparations for a king. I'm sure this revealed Nicodemus' feelings about Jesus. He had embraced Jesus as *his* King!

Verse 40, "*Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.*" When Jesus came into the world, He was bound in swaddling clothes - now He exits this world bound up with strips of linen cloth.

Now in the place where He was crucified, there was a garden and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

Jesus was laid in "*a new tomb*" - an unused tomb. It was chosen because of its proximity to Mount Calvary.

Let me close with a question... *Do you know what flower is associated with Easter? The lily. And do you why? Because its blossom is shaped like a trumpet.*

*In Bible times, trumpets were used to announce big events. And in his final two chapters, John will blow his trumpet and sound the good news... **Jesus is risen!***