

**Context**

1] Jesus during His ministry has made it plain that he expected to be put to death in Jerusalem  
 2] Having arrived the week before and been welcomed by the crowd as King, he is seized at night, and under extreme pressure from the Jewish leaders, condemned to death by the Romans.

26 And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus.

*Nb Simon, named because he was familiar to readers? (unlike thief and centurion).....*

*... mentioned in (Mark 15:21) as father of Alexander and Rufus (nb Mark's Gospel, from Peter to Rome) Paul, in his letter to the church in Rome, greets a Rufus "chosen in the Lord" (Rom 16:13)*

*Nb Simon travel hundreds of miles from Cyrene (nr Tripoli) just arriving in Jerusalem as a pilgrim & diverted!  
\*Be prepared like Simon to be diverted and pressed into the Lord's service – it could change your life!\**

27 And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him.

*Nb Many of multitude at entry? (19:37 cf 6:17) now helpless disillusioned bystanders?*

28 But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' 30 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' 31 For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

*nb Daughters of Jerusalem – mainly in song of Solomon (1:5; 2:7; 3:6) – local inhabitants not from Galilee Children usually taken as a sign of blessing (Ps 127:3)*

*Anticipating the rebellion and Roman destruction of Jerusalem some 40 yrs later in Ad 70*

*Cf calling to the mountains and rocks, 'fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb' (Rev 6:16)*

*\*God knows the beginning from the end\**

*\*In the cross do not feel sorry for Jesus; feel sorry for yourself*

*\*Recognise the appalling tenuousness of our existence\*.*

32 Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with Him. 33 And when they came to the place that is called 'the Skull', there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on His right and one on His left.

*Nb not 'two other' criminals but 'two others who were criminals' i.e. they were guilty He was innocent*

*Cf As He foretold – 'He was numbered with transgressors' (22:37)*

*nb 'The skull' - an identifiable geographic location*

*On right and left – innocence framed by guilt!*

34 And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

*cf Stephen to his executioners - Father lay not this sin to their charge (Acts 7:60)*

*cf The Word's command - Forgiving one another as Christ forgave you (Eph 4:32)*

*\*GRACE The Lord pleads forgiveness for those who are crucifying Him\**

And they cast lots to divide his garments.

*Nb in heinous disdain - Gambled for Herod's splendid clothing (23:11)*

*\*Beware exacting cheap benefits at Jesus' expense\**

35 And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save himself, if He is the **Christ** of God, His Chosen One!"

*?The crowd that had cheered Him were cowed – now helpless bystanders. They just watched*

*Rulers of the people – elders etc (23:13)– scoffed – the Christ of God?*

*Cf the Devil in the temptation so Jesus – if you are the Son of God... (4:9)*

*Cf the Father's assurance - This is my Son, the chosen one, listen to Him (9:35)*

*? remembering pronouncements 'Salvation has come to this house (19:9)*

*\*God will not respond to these kinds of tests.\**

*\*Address your questions to Jesus\**

**36** The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up and offering Him sour wine

*Nb In Luke's account - sour wine from soldiers must have been part of their mockery*

*Cf "They gave me poison for food and for my thirst they gave me sour wine" (Ps 69:1)*

**37** and saying, "If you are the **King** of the Jews, save yourself!"

*"The king of the Jews" was Pilate's mockery of Jewish leaders. He had asked Jesus this (23:3) and found Him not guilty of making this treasonable claim (23:22). He put this up to anger the religious leaders.*

*\*Be very careful how you address Jesus\**

**38** There was also an inscription over Him, "This is the King of the Jews."

*\*Note 'many a true word is spoken in jest!'\**

**39** One of the criminals who were hanged railed at Him, saying, "Are you not the **Christ?** Save yourself and us!"

*Nb Bitter and faithless – there is no indication that he received any reply from Jesus*

**40** But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"

*Nb Chief priest and elders ... asking for a sentence of condemnation = capital sentence (Acts 25:15)*

*\*Fear God – it is the beginning of wisdom (Ps 111:10; Pr 9:10)*

**41** And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."

*! Extraordinary? A Jew accepting that the Roman invaders' death sentence for Him is just!*

*Nb His statement though is 'before God' – they are unjust/unrighteous – he is just/ righteous*

*Cf for us, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God (2Cor 5:21)*

*(Nb God judges justly (1 Pet 2:23) {same root as righteous in gk dikaios})*

*\*Recognise the justice of our sentence under God, of death.\**

**42** And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your **Kingdom**."

*Nb He recognised that Jesus was THE King of all creation - His request was in the context of faith*

*Cf Of His Kingdom there will be no end (1:33)*

*(Jesus) I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom (4:43)*

*\*Call humbly on the King\**

**43** And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

*Nb 'today' – the crucifixion was the day before Sabbath. It had to be completed by the start of Sabbath – 6 pm that evening (cf John 19:31,32)*

*Cf 'Paradise' (Rev 2:7) Persian word a walled garden of the King to which the favoured were invited.*

*\*Jesus answers faith.\*      \*Hear His welcoming reassurance\**

## **Conclusion**

1] Acknowledge Jesus as King – (unlike, the rulers, the soldiers, the first thief.)

2] Note the second thief's qualification for being first in the Kingdom—does that not give us all hope?!

**KV**    *Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom (42)*

**MP**    *This faithful man was the first one who recognised the King, Jesus.*