

sp. merit

The Crucifixion of Jesus

I was just passing through Jerusalem at the time. Then I saw many crowds of people, all walking in one direction; I followed them.

A young man was carrying a large, wooden beam; next to him walked another man, he looked sad and frail. Roman soldiers forced them up the hill; I wondered what was going on. The large crowds were mocking and jeering the weak man, I learned that his name was Jesus.

Then, people stopped walking; we were in a place called Golgotha. *This must be where everyone was going*, I thought. *I wonder what's going on.* There were several, large wooden poles fixed into the ground. The beams were attached to them, to make the shape of a cross. I soon realised what was happening, these men were going to be crucified. Crucifixion is a Roman method of execution. There were three men altogether, 'Jesus' was being fixed to the middle cross and the other two either side of him. Jesus had been stripped of his clothes and possessions. The roman soldiers gambled for his clothing, I thought it was wrong, but who am I to judge?

"What have these men done to deserve this?" I wondered aloud. A man came towards me and replied. "This man is Jesus of Nazareth; he had many followers but many enemies also. He cured people, miracles they called it. I have no idea how he did it but it seemed to work. I once spoke to a lady who'd been given the gift of sight by Jesus. He was tried for blasphemy, Pilate found him innocent but the people insisted that he was guilty, thus he's here today". The man trailed off at the end, and looked kind of sad. Another man spoke to me afterwards "He tried to change our religion; he told people he was the son of God and performed black magic to get people on his side". I also spoke to two Roman Soldiers; one had seemed sad for the man and didn't like being on crucifixion duty; another seemed to be worried that Jesus would have overthrown the Romans. I could see the people there that day had very strong views on whether Jesus was innocent or guilty. The crowds still mocked and insulted Jesus as he hung on the cross. I learned that the two other men were thieves and they shouted at him to save the three of them, if he really was the son of God. Then, suddenly, at noon, there was a great darkness. It lasted a long time, whilst Jesus just hung on the cross, not dead, but not really alive either.

Then, a few hours after the darkness began, Jesus cried out "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" I had no idea what this meant, some people believed he had been calling for Elijah but others told me he had said "My God, My God, why did you abandon me?" I felt sorry for him, maybe he was the son of God... maybe. Some people, among those who thought it was Elijah he'd

called for, soaked a sponge in cheap wine and gave it to him to keep him alive so they could see if Elijah would bring him down from the cross. Jesus did not take the wine; personally I thought this was yet another form of humiliation for this poor man. Then, with a loud cry, Jesus died; it was about three o'clock in the afternoon. Some, probably heartless people, cheered and others cried, either because they had known him personally or just because it had been such an upsetting ordeal. I noticed it was no longer dark. I didn't really know what to feel. I was partly upset, as I think this man was innocent, and even if he wasn't, he didn't deserve this punishment. I was also partly relieved, that it wasn't me, up on that cross.

The next day I found out that when Jesus died, the curtain, hanging in the temple of Jerusalem, had torn in two. That curtain was the barrier between man's sin and God; Jesus really had been the son of God, now the barrier was removed.